



April 18, 2014

Dear Mr. Grover,

This letter is to update you on further negative developments around the TB in patient clinic in the city of Yekaterinburg, Russia. As per the initial submission by the Andrey Rylkov Foundation of April 2010, and the follow up information of February 2013.

Please be informed that since we last contacted you in February 2013, we have again filed an official complaint to the prosecutor's office in the city of Yekaterinburg. The prosecutor's office responded that health matters fall under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Health so the complaint was forwarded to the health department of the city of Yekaterinburg. The prosecutor's service channeled the complaint to the authorities whose activities we are challenging by way of official complaint. The Ministry conducted a formal investigation and informed us that no major violations of Russian laws were found. Additionally, the ministry informed us that a special room for dead bodies was arranged in the TB clinic in order to prevent the holding of dead bodies in the corridors of the clinic. This was part of our initial complaint.

The ministry then convened a meeting with civil society organizations where we once again informed the ministry about the unacceptable situation in the clinic. The Deputy Minister promised to address the situation by May 15, 2013. Minutes of the meeting were retained by the ministry who subsequently refused to share them with us.

By May 15, 2013 no action had been undertaken by the ministry to address the complaint. Moreover, health authorities stopped accepting and/or registering patient complaints. Only a fraction of the complaints were acted upon by the ministry and those which were failed to address the subject of the complaint.

Out of despair of the circumstances clinic patient Yurii Yesin decided to go public about the situation in the TB clinic. An interview with Mr Yesin was published in the federal newspaper *Moscow Komsomolets*.

Instead of trying to improve medical services in the TB clinic, the Chief Doctor of the clinic Ms Fominykh brought defamation charges against Mr Yesin in civil court. Mr Yesin was not informed of the trial and the court issued judgment against him in his absence, with no chance of defence. Encouraged by the victory against Mr Yesin Ms Fominykh brought further complaints of labeling, defamation and drug propaganda against civil society organizations Chance+ and New Life. According to Ms Fominykh the civil society organizations lobbied for opioid substitution therapy. Both civil society organizations are now under investigation by the prosecutor's office. The Heads of these organizations have been already interrogated by prosecutors and harassed by police.

Based on the aforementioned facts we submit that Russian authorities continue to violate the right to health as stipulated in Art 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The authorities have failed to undertake any positive steps to conduct an effective and thorough investigation of these alleged human rights violations; the authorities have failed to improve the situation in the TB clinic and the authorities have not undertaken any positive steps to provide patients with evidence based and effective treatment, including opioid maintenance therapy.

The authorities continue ignoring their international obligations to protect and fulfill the right to health under Article 12 of the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”. Moreover the authorities have gone against the very civil society organizations who are attempting to bring information about human rights violations to their attention. These violations of the right to health have been further aggravated by government action against human rights defenders, contrary to the “The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders”.

We kindly request that you consider the above information in addition to previous submissions on the matter and request that the Government of the Russian Federation take all reasonable steps to address human rights violations at the TB clinic in the city of Yekaterinburg and act to prevent comparable violations in similar institutions, including by providing patients with combined TB and drug dependence access to opioid maintenance therapy.



Anya Sarang,

Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice