



Statement by the Civic Solidarity Platform on cases of compulsory psychiatry

10 October 2013

We, members of the Civic Solidarity Platform, express our concern with the increasing use of punitive psychiatric treatment in the OSCE region, in particular in the post-Soviet states.

If in 2012, human rights organisations noted at least two attempts to use psychiatry as a method of pressure on human rights defenders and civic activists, so far in 2013 there have been at least four cases of the political use of psychiatry – in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia:

- Raisa Radchenko, a civic activists from Ukraine, was forced to undergo compulsory medical treatment as an act of revenge for her civic activism;
- Zinaida Mukhortova, a lawyer from Kazakhstan, has been kept in a mental hospital for her work defending human rights and fighting corruption;
- Ihar Pastnou, a psychiatrist from Belarus, was kept in a mental hospital where he had worked as a result of his public criticism of state policy and the local health care system;
- Mikhail Kosenko, a participant in a demonstration on Bolotnaya Square in Moscow on 6 May 2012, was sentenced on 8 October 2013 to indefinite compulsory psychiatric treatment at a mental hospital.

It is a historical fact that during the Soviet times punitive psychiatric treatment was widely used to pressure civic activists. Bearing this in mind, we, the undersigned:

- demand the international community immediately react to the cases detailed above and raise concerns about these cases with the governments of Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia;
- state that the use of psychiatry for political aims is unacceptable in modern democratic societies;
- demand the aforementioned states denounce the practice of compulsory medical treatment, immediately stop pressuring civic activists, and restore the rule of law so as to prove their commitment to democratic values;
- call on professional psychiatrists' to oppose attempts to use them as a tool of repressions and stick to the Hippocratic Oath and international standards such as the UN Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and the Improvement of Mental Health Care.

Signed by:

Kharkiv regional foundation Public Alternative (Ukraine)
International Youth Human Rights Movement
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law
Center for Civil Liberties (Ukraine)
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Vanadzor (Armenia)
Public Verdict Foundation (Russia)
Crude Accountability (USA)
Association of Ukrainian Human Rights Monitors on Law Enforcement
Moscow Helsinki Group (Russia)
Human Rights Club (Azerbaijan)
Citizen Army Law (Russia)
Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims
Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
The Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House (Belarus)
International Partnership for Human Rights (Belgium)
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Armenian Helsinki Committee
Netherlands Helsinki Committee
Promo-LEX Association (Moldova)
UNITED for Intercultural Action (Netherland)
Albanian Helsinki Committee
Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights (Russia)
Human Rights Monitoring Institute (Lithuania)
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law
Centre for National and International Studies (Azerbaijan)
Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union
Belarusian Helsinki Committee
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
Nota Bene (Tajikistan)