

HIV activist Irina Teplinskaya statement regarding planting of drugs

Written by Linda Wong
Sunday, 21 August 2011 14:11 -

Dear all, Below and attached please find a statement from Irina Teplinskaya, a long time HIV and OST activist, member of EHRN steering Committee. All additional materials (such as appeals to Courts can be found at: <http://rylkov-fond.ru/blog/lichnye-svidetelstva/teplinskaya-fs-kn/>, in Russian)

To: President of the Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice (FAR) Ms. Anya Sarang

From: Irina Abdyusheva Born 22/10/1966 Passport № 27 09 237528,

Statement

I have been most afraid of this since I started litigation against the Russian Government. In February 2011, I made a request to the Ministry of Health in Kaliningrad Oblast to provide me with drug dependency treatment in the form of opioid substitution therapy (OST) based on my drug treatment medical records, which date back to 1983. My request was denied on the grounds that OST is prohibited in Russia. I appealed the [Kaliningrad] Ministry of Health's decision in the District Court of the Leningrad Oblast, with reference to the Russian Constitution and all international legal instruments. On May 27, 2011, the District Court of the Leningrad Oblast did not satisfy my appeal in which I challenged the Ministry of Health. After having received this response, I appealed to the Regional Court of Kaliningrad. On August 3, 2011, the Kaliningrad Regional Court upheld the District Court's decision. I was then going to file a complaint with the Constitutional Court of Russia and the European Court of Human Rights.

From May 14th to yesterday, August 18th, I underwent drug rehabilitation in Ukraine. Meanwhile, my trustees were dealing with the legal process of filing complaints to the Constitutional Court of Russia and the European Court of Human Rights.

Yesterday, August 18, 2011, I arrived at Kaliningrad from Kiev at 14:45, and at the passport control, I realized that something was wrong. After I had my passport stamped and crossed the border, I placed my hand luggage on a baggage carousel. In this bag, I had two Kiev cakes, which I myself put into an absolutely empty bag. I still had to collect my check-in luggage (a sports bag). However, I was not allowed to enter the Russian territory. Indeed, four men in civilian clothes, an agent with a sniffer dog, and four women from airport services were waiting for me in the security aisle. The men in civilian clothes introduced themselves as Federal Security Service officers from the airport, showed me their identity cards (a person named

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Eugene Drapp led this process) and told me that I had to undergo a personal search. I was brought into a room; and the dog sniffed my hand luggage. The dog did not find anything, because I had nothing. When I said that I still had a check-in bag to collect, the Federal Security Service officers wanted to take the baggage ticket/tag from me and find this bag. I refused. I explained that the bag was not locked; and that it would be easy to open and plant something inside the bag. I therefore went with them to the luggage compartment. They called customs – there were now about 15 people. I found my bag and they began to search it. They only searched the checked-in luggage since the customs officials are not responsible for hand luggage. All other present witnesses were airport employees; I was therefore isolated from civilians. They wrote up a report on the interrogation (I have the copy). The report included the list of all items that were in the bag and concluded that no illegal items intended for trafficking were found. In the bag were my personal belongings, soap supplies, washing powder and anti-retroviral therapy (ART). The washing powder was in a plastic bag—I packed it this way as it did not fit into my bag. I had a week supply of ART drugs, but it was largely in bulk, because a trusted person from Kaliningrad sent the drugs to me by postal mail when I was in Ukraine. There were 14 tablets of Epivir, 14 tablets of Ziagen in a jar labelled Epivir, and 28 tablets of Intelens in a plastic bag – as packaged as I received them by mail. In the inventory, the powder was recorded as a washing powder and the tablets – according to their names. I told them that I was taking HIV treatment. After that, I was again taken to the room for a personal search and was left with the two female employees from the airport: they did a search on me but they were also witnesses. I was strip searched; yet, they found nothing. They sealed my laptop and other belongings, and searched the sports bag once again. Only powder and therapy already set aside as seized were found, and marked "unknown powder" and "unknown pills". Even though the pills were thoroughly described – color, size, shape, numbers and letters carved on them. After my urgent plea (ARV therapy cannot be interrupted), and calls to the authorities, they gave me ARV drugs for 2 days. The rest has been sealed, signed, and the same airport employee-witnesses may have put their signatures on these items.

The cakes were pulled out of the shopping bag, unpacked and everything was searched again. Having searched the cakes, the Federal Security Service officers suddenly asked me to give them my bag, although it was obvious that the bag was empty. I was surprised, but passed the bag to them, because I saw that there was nothing in there. When one of them began to shake it, one pill came out, as if from a sleeve. I had never seen such a pill before. It was the size of a Tsitramon, bright white, with one side stating "40", and the other side deeply divided into 4 parts– each part of the convex and sharp like little pyramids. The pill was also sealed. I wrote in the report that the ART drugs and washing powder are mine, but I had never seen this pill – it was not there when I was packing. I realized the full horror of what had happened: I would not be allowed into the Russian Federation territory due to accusations of drug smuggling. This pill did not appear by accident; it is an illegal drug.

I was then taken to the border control directorate (Federal Security Service), and ARV tablets and powder were sent for a test. I wrote an explanation, personally describing all that had

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happened, and expressed my concerns. In addition, I described the story with the pill, and stated that this pill is not mine. I was at the border control until 23:30. They took both passports so that I cannot leave Russia.

I would like to emphasize that the search was conducted illegally– the witnesses who attended were the same women who searched me – the airport customs officers.

Today, the investigator told me that the examination results of the tablet, which they planted on me, showed that this tablet was methadone. Now, I'm going to an investigator. I do not know what happens after that.

I think that they planted methadone just because I fought and argued for the removal of legislative barriers in Russia to the treatment of drug addiction with substitution therapy with methadone and buprenorphine. I believe that this was done in order to discredit my social position, out of revenge for my attempts to protect the rights of people who use drugs in the national and international bodies, including courts of Kaliningrad.

I want to say that the past two months that I spent in Ukraine, I did not take methadone or any narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances. My rehabilitation was in a drug-free environment. I am ready to do all necessary tests to confirm this.

Please provide any help in protecting my rights violated by the actions of law enforcement agencies. Herewith, I trust the Andrey Rylkov Foundation (FAR) to represent my interests in all Russian and international bodies and organizations, and disseminate information on everything that happens to me to all the media, web sites and other information sources. Also, I trust FAR to disclose my medical information on the diagnosis and my personal data in my interest as necessary.

Irina Abdyusheva (Teplinskaya)

August 19, 2011, Kaliningrad

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