

ners," where people have been leaving bouquets of flowers as a sign of solidarity with the ousted judges.

The support is, in part, a reflection of just how much opposition has been building to Musharraf's rule. "They did crystallize a lot of the resentment against the regime, which people probably felt they couldn't express purely by political means," says Frederic Grare, a Pakistan expert at the Carnegie Endowment

for International Peace in Washington.

So far, most lawyers and many judges are standing firm, despite the threat of prison and financial hardship. "Treason cases are being lodged against protesting lawyers and political activists," says Rahman. "The police are treating us like criminals." Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan, a lawyer and Parliament member who was arrested on the day of Musharraf's decree, has reported to colleagues that he

is imprisoned in a cell equipped with a powerful light that never turns off.

Lawyers are continuing to boycott courtrooms run by judges who have sworn the new oath. "We are not fighting for raises in our salaries or other financial benefits," says Ejaz Khattak, a Karachi city court lawyer. "Our struggle is for the supremacy of law." ●

With Kevin Whitelaw in Washington

RUSSIA

Sentenced to Silence

Psych wards mute dissent, straitjacketing government critics

By Alastair Gee

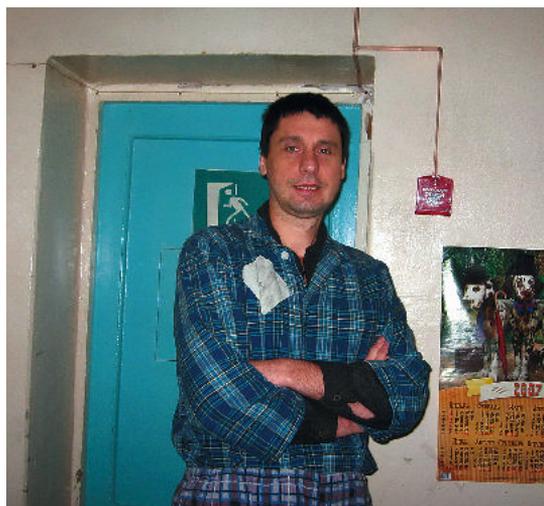
MOSCOW—Human-rights activists are seeking the release of Andrey Novikov, a 41-year-old journalist who has been held in a Russian mental hospital since February. Prosecutors say Novikov was confined for writing articles inciting terrorism. But supporters argue he was targeted for criticizing Russia's military actions in Chechnya—suggesting that the old Soviet practice of sending critics to psychiatric wards is back.

Dozens of Russians have been wrongfully hospitalized in recent years, say activists and experts from the Independent Psychiatric Association in Moscow. Many allegedly were sent to mental wards by relatives or business partners intent on seizing patients' property. A few, like Novikov, are said to have been locked up after angering authorities. The charges are taken so seriously that Russia's Constitutional Court is reviewing laws about forced hospitalization.

There's no evidence that President Vladimir Putin or his government has ordered such hospitalizations. Yet they have increased, along with a crackdown on dissent. (Authorities violently broke up opposition rallies earlier this year.) "Hospitalizations are a continuation of the Soviet regime," says Alexander Podrabinek, a Soviet-era dissident who in 1978 was exiled to Siberia for publishing a book about punitive medicine. "Modern Russia is not a totalitarian system, but we're moving in this direction."

Novikov's ordeal began in late 2006, when he was charged with extremism over provocative articles about the

Chechen war and sent to a clinic for tests. There, patients beat and tried to rape him. Released after 43 days, he was agitated when he returned home, so on February 14 his father called the police, and Novikov was locked up again. He has been held ever since. "I'm fed tablets; they affect me very strongly. I'm in a bad condition," Novikov said in early No-



Andrey Novikov stands captive in a Russian mental clinic.

member from a hospital in Rybinsk before staff made him get off the phone. Court documents cite "paradoxicalness" and a "tendency to be argumentative" as evidence of Novikov's mental illness. But a commission led by Yury Savenko, head of the Independent Psychiatric Association, says Novikov is of sound mind.

Muffled. Another recent case involves journalist Larisa Arap, 49, a member of Gary Kasparov's United Civil Front, which opposes President Putin. In July, Arap was imprisoned in two Murmansk

mental hospitals for 46 days, sometimes tied to a bed and forcibly injected with sedatives. Her supporters say she was hospitalized for her political affiliations and for speaking about abusive practices in Russian mental wards, like the use of electroshock therapy on children.

Government officials question her sanity. "To simply assert that Larisa Arap is healthy because she's a member of a certain group is absurd," says Pyotr Shelishch of the parliament's legislation committee. But psychiatrists led by Savenko said that although Arap had some psychological problems, she didn't need hospitalization. She was released after Russia's human-rights ombudsman came to the same conclusion. Arap suffers pain from beatings she says she received in a clinic. "My life is a nightmare. I know they could murder me at any moment."

Allegations of Russians being unjustly sent to mental wards by relatives are also increasing. One such case involves a 33-year-old schizophrenic woman who has been held in a Moscow hospital for 15 months—far longer than necessary, according to Savenko's group. She remains confined allegedly because her parents are in a property dispute over the family's apartment and can't agree on where their daughter should live. Moscow's health department has twice called for her discharge.

Abuses in psychiatry will most likely worsen, says Savenko. Russian law stipulates that only state-approved psychiatrists can testify as experts at trials. And it's not just patients who need to worry. Before Savenko was due to speak about psychiatrists' crimes at a recent conference, he was handed an anonymous note containing compromising information about a member of his organization. He took it as a threat but still delivered his speech. "The state," he says, "has prepared the ground on which psychiatry can be used for nonmedical purposes." ●