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Drug Chief Voices Tepid Support to Roizman

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's top narcotics cop has voiced cautious support for Yevgeny Roizman, whose controversial drug rehabilitation fund, City Without Drugs, has come under increasing police pressure in recent months following the death of a patient from one if its clinics.

Federal Drug Control Service chief Viktor Ivanov said he supported Roizman for having created a "rehabilitation situation" and being an example of society "beginning to react to a need," he told Ekho Moskvy radio on Saturday.

Although the endorsement was weak and caged in qualifiers — Ivanov said Roizman didn't always use "legal methods" — it was nevertheless a kind word from a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, which in Russia often signals clear skies ahead.

Police have raided Roizman's offices and opened three criminal investigations into conditions at his women's clinic since June 17, when Tatyana Kazantseva, a 29-year-old patient, died

after being rushed to the hospital in the city of Berezovsky, a suburb of Yekaterinburg.

Roizman has said he's being punished for accusing local police officers of corruption. On Friday, he announced on his blog that he was gathering signatures for an appeal to Putin to support his fund.

City Without Drugs' tough rehabilitation methods, which include isolating heroin addicts from the outside world — with their relatives' permission — and forcing them to go cold turkey, have been criticized as illegal by rights groups.

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