

# Cults, Drug Addicts Fomented Ukraine Revolution — Russian Drug Tsar

December 12, 2014



A protester shouts during clashes with pro-government forces at Independence Square in Kiev.

Russia's top anti-drug cop claims to have identified the cause of the Ukrainian revolution — which, he said, was enacted by brainwashed methadone addicts.

Ukraine is one of more than 50 countries offering opioid replacement therapy to heroin addicts, who receive a milder opioid such as methadone in a palliative bid to ease withdrawals and drug cravings and decrease the danger to addicts.

Russia is among the most vocal opponents of the UN-endorsed therapy, which the Federal Drug Control Service calls a form of drug addiction.

Using the opioid replacement methadone instead of full-scale rehabilitation programs is what triggered the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, the service's head Viktor Ivanov said Friday.

Rehabilitation in Ukraine "was left to society, and totalitarian sects were quick to capitalize on that," Ivanov was cited as saying by Interfax.

The drug tsar did not name any sects, but said the alleged cultists "lured a lot of people into their webs and got them hooked on methadone."

"They served as cannon fodder on the Maidan and later in southeastern Ukraine," Ivanov said of the methadone users.

Last winter's revolution in Ukraine largely happened in Kiev's Independence Square, known as the Maidan. Some Maidan activists later joined volunteer battalions fighting a pro-Russian uprising on Ukraine's eastern border.

Russia banned methadone therapy on the Crimean Peninsula after annexing it from Ukraine in March. About 20 out of 800 methadone therapy patients in Crimea died within two months of the annexation, Radio Liberty reported in June, though Russian officials denied it.

Russia has 8.5 million drug users, or 7 percent of the population, Ivanov said last year. He claimed his agency had curbed the spread of the drug epidemic, which kills 100,000 Russians every year.

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