

RADIOGRAPHY OF ATTACKS

AGAINST NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2019

Introduction

The Radiography of Attacks on civil society organisations of the Republic of Moldova represents a joint effort to document factual and analytical information and events attempting to deteriorate the environment for the activity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Moldova. This is the third edition of the Radiography and it covers the period of January 1 - 31 December 2019. Similar documents were also developed in 2016-2017¹ and 2018².

For the purposes of this document, attacks mean in particular statements and actions by politicians, especially those from the government, publication of articles and media reports or public interventions that portray the non-profit sector as organizations promoting the interests of foreign countries or serving the interests of political parties. In other cases, these attacks take the form of legislative initiatives aimed to deteriorate the CSOs' working environment.

The activity of monitoring and documenting the attacks emerged in the context of a growing number of actions aimed at discrediting and denigrating independent CSOs, after they have expressed their dissenting position regarding several actions of the government over the last few years.³ The purpose of the document is to draw attention to orchestrated attacks against the CSOs and to persuade public authorities, private institutions and their supporters to stop them and allow the CSOs to operate freely. This document also aims to enable the CSOs to formulate a response to attacks against them.

This year's radiography included both attacks on civil society and the reactions of national CSOs as well as findings of international organizations, such as the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

The information included in the document was obtained from media resources available on-line and from social networks. The monitoring and documentation of the attacks took place during 2019. The monitoring may not to be exhaustive. Attacks are presented in chronological order starting with January 2019. Some attacks are presented in a single block, depending on the event (for example: the parliamentary elections of February 2019) or the subject of the attack (defamatory articles against a specific CSO). The document provides online references to the web pages where the relevant materials have been published. Some links are no longer active, but the authors of the radiography have evidence of the publication of the materials in question.

¹ Radiography of attacks against non-governmental organizations from the Republic of Moldova, September 2016-December 2017, available at: https://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-02-21_radiografia-atac-ONGs_fin.pdf.

² Radiography of attacks against non-governmental organizations from the Republic of Moldova, January-December 2018, available at: http://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-19-timeline-atac-OSC_2018_final.pdf.

³ Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Visit to the Republic of Moldova, 2019, A/HRC/40/60/Add.3, par. 36-37, available at: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/60/ADD.3>.

The phenomenon of attacks on the civil society is not an isolated issue characteristic for the Republic of Moldova, but rather a trend in the countries from the south eastern region of Europe with a fragile level of democracy. The methods and tools by which this is done are becoming more and more sophisticated and widespread.⁴ One of the many negative outcomes of these actions is the constraint imposed on the CSOs and civic activists to self-censor or to "scale back" on their activities.⁵ Based on the experience of other states in the region, stigmatization of the CSOs can be a precursor to some persecution actions by the state authorities.⁶ The initiative to document and monitor attacks [is inspired from Hungary](#), a country whose not-for-profit sector has been facing similar challenges for a few years now. The document is drafted and presented by the signatory organizations indicated at the end of the document that collaborated on data collection.

If you have any information that can be qualified as an attack on the CSOs, it can be sent to the following e-mail address: ilie.chirtoaca@crjm.org subject to be included in the next monitoring report.

Summary of the main findings concerning the attacks in 2019

Attacks on CSOs in 2019 were fewer than in previous years. This may also be due to the major political changes in the Republic of Moldova in June 2019. Parliamentary elections took place in February 2019 and for three months the politicians were busy creating the parliamentary majority and the new government. However, during the election campaign there were attacks on the CSOs involved in the election monitoring process. The appointment of the Government took place only in the summer of 2019, so the legislative activity of the Parliament was reduced. Therefore, in 2019 there were fewer legislative initiatives, and those that did exist were in favour of the rule of law and there were fewer situations in which CSOs had to react against undemocratic initiatives. This probably explains the fewer number of attacks in 2019 as compared to previous years.

The attacks that took place in 2019 focused mainly on some events such as the parliamentary elections in February 2019, the judiciary reform announced by SANDU Government in the summer of 2019 or the selection of judges to the Constitutional Court. Several CSOs were the direct target of attacks in 2019, including Promo-LEX Association, Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM), Amnesty International Moldova (AIM) and Soros Foundation-Moldova (SFM). Promo-LEX has been attacked by several politicians and public authorities, which were disturbed by the alternative monitoring reports performed by Promo-LEX in the parliamentary elections of February 2019, or by the monitoring activity and reporting on human rights in Transnistrian region. AIM was attacked after criticizing police inaction in cases of harassment and aggression in the pre-election campaign. The LRCM was attacked in the context of the judiciary reform announced by the Ministry of Justice. A judge of the Supreme Court of Justice declared that the LRCM must be liquidated. The president of the LRCM was attacked in connection with his participation as a member of the governmental commission for the selection of constitutional judges. In the case of the SFM, several portals with a dubious reputation spread false information that the SFM funds had been misused in political interests.

⁴ Balfour R., Bouchet N., Policy brief "Supporting Civil society in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans: Old and New Challenges", 2018, GMF Europe Program, available at: <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/supporting-civil-society-eastern-europe-and-western-balkans-old-and-new-challenges>.

⁵ Amnesty International, "Laws designed to silence: the global crackdown on civil society organizations" (2019) ACT 30/9647/2019, p. 2, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3096472019ENGLISH.PDF>.

⁶ Buyse A., „Squeezing civic space: restrictions on civil society organizations and the linkages with human rights”, (2018) The International Journal of Human Rights, 22:8, p. 966-988, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642987.2018.1492916>.

As in previous years, the authorities are trying to shrink the space for the civil society activity through legislative measures. The Program of Activity of CHICU Government as of 14 November 2019 included a single activity concerning civil society, and namely “*Strengthening the watch-dog role of civil society organizations and not admitting their involvement in political activities*”. The member organizations of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum stated that the restriction included in the Government Program on non-admission of the CSOs involvement in political activities contradicts international standards and denies the CSOs' right to be engaged in public policy activities and participate in debates on the topics of public interest. The Government Action Plan for 2020-2023 approved on 11 December 2019 no longer included the objective of limiting the political activities of the CSOs.

In this document we also analysed the situation of the CSOs in the Transnistrian region. In 2018, the legal framework was amended, introducing restriction for the CSOs receiving external funding for involvement in so-called “political activities”, which are essentially public policy activities. The legislation provides for a complex reporting mechanism and drastic sanctions for both organizations and for the founders of the CSOs and even for the people who participate in the activities carried out by these organizations. The terminology used in this report regarding the situation of the CSOs in Transnistrian region cannot imply any political position of the authors and cannot be interpreted in these respects. The use in this analysis of terms such as “legislation”, “Constitution”, “President”, “Ministry”, “minister”, “prosecutor”, etc. does not imply their legitimation or *de jure* recognition of these normative acts, the administration or the institutions from Tiraspol. These terms are used exclusively for the convenience of the reader and to provide identification of the documents, administration and de facto institutions of the so-called Transnistrian Republic (“PMR”) as accurate as possible.

In 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Michel FORST presented a report following his visit to Moldova in June 2018, in which he indicated that human rights defenders in the Republic of Moldova face several challenges, including the phenomenon of shrinking space for the activity of the civil society. Mr. Forst noted that public authorities have stigmatized and discredited human rights defenders and their work, including through politically affiliated mass media. Mr. Forst received information about intimidation actions and threats to the address of human rights defenders by the representatives of public officials, especially when they criticized decisions taken by the Government. CSOs promoting political rights have been accused of not being equidistant and of having a foreign agenda that is not in line with national interests.

In 2019, a journalistic investigation⁷ revealed that in the years of the ruling of the Democratic Party of Moldova, in 2016-2017, 51 representatives of civil society, journalists and opposition politicians were abusively wire-tapped within the framework of three criminal cases initiated based on social-media messages on Facebook or statements at press conferences. According to Mr. Chiril MOȚPAN, former chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security, Defence and Public Order,⁸ among the representatives of civil society who were wire-tapped are Arcadie BARBĂROȘIE, Director of the Institute for Public Policy; Vladislav GRIBINCEA, Executive Director of the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova; Sergiu TOFILAT, member of the WatchDog.md Association; Lilia CARASCIUC, Executive Director of Transparency International Moldova; Sorin MEREACRE, President of the East Europe Foundation; Adrian LUPUȘOR, Executive Director of Expert-Grup; Cristina PERETEATCU, Executive Director of Amnesty International Moldova; Galina BOSTAN, President of the Centre for Analysis and Prevention of Corruption.

⁷ RISE Moldova, The Ministry of Interceptions, 14 June 2019, <https://www.rise.md/articol/ministerul-interceptarilor/?lang=ru>.

⁸ JurnalTV, Shadow Cabinet: Populist measures taken by Chicu Government, time 1:00:30,

<https://www.jurnaltv.md/news/d3ac7baa77c438af/cabinetul-din-umbra-masurile-populiste-ale-guvernului-chicu.html>.

Among the journalists who were wire-tapped are Constantin CHEIANU, Val BUTNARU, Anatol DURBALĂ, Vasile NĂSTASE, Alina RADU, Natalia MORARI, Mariana RAȚĂ, Petru MACOVEI, Ion TERGUȚĂ, Valentina URȘU, Ion PREAȘCĂ, Cornelia COZONAC, etc. In September 2019, the Prosecutor General initiated a criminal investigation concerning the alleged abusive wire-tapping and submitted the case to the Anti-corruption Prosecutor's Office for the purpose of the criminal prosecution.⁹ The Prosecution Office reported that during the criminal investigation, 4 investigating officers were charged on indictment, including a head of a subdivision within the National Investigation Inspectorate of the General Police Inspectorate, and 3 prosecutors. In December 2019, the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office heard several journalists as witnesses in this case.¹⁰

Some of the media portals that published defamatory articles on CSOs or were replicating them from other portals with dubious reputation, became inactive or rebranded after the change of the Government in June 2019 (for example www.actual.md or www.today.md). These web portals published materials in favour of the Government led by the Democratic Party of Moldova and to the detriment of the opposition and were engaged in campaigns to denigrate civil society (see details in the previous editions of the Radiography for 2016-2017¹¹ and 2018¹²).

The "active" media portals in 2019 were: www.telegraph.md, www.timpul.md, www.noi.md, www.publika.md, www.basarabialiterara.md, www.hotnews.md, www.24h.md or www.blocknot-moldova.md. Among the blogs that published biased and defamatory information about CSOs and/or their representatives, we can mention the blogs by Bogdan ȚÎRDEA, MP, member of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), Eugen LUCHIANIUC and Anatolie CHIRILOV, the latter two being vociferous supporters of the DPM initiatives. At the same time, new web pages of similar typology appeared in 2019, such as the web page www.scheme.md, a web portal created on 30 July 2019. It is not known who owns this portal, and all the materials are published without mentioning the author. It has mainly published defamatory articles concerning some CSOs and their representatives, SANDU Government and right-wing parties. All these portals replicate the materials and use identical texts, changing only the headlines.

The list of signatories is available at the end of the document and remains open.

⁹ Anti-corruption prosecutor's office, press release, 22 November 2019, https://www.facebook.com/ProcuraturaAnticoruptie/posts/736767723399918?_tn=-R.

¹⁰ Media Azi, Criminal proceedings for wire-tapping: How the Prosecutor's Office comments on the summoning as witnesses of the persons from Moșpan's list, 19 December 2019, <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/proces-penal-pe-cazul-intercept%C4%83rilor-cum-comenteaz%C4%83-procuratura-citarea-%C3%AEn-calitate-de>.

¹¹ Radiography of attacks against non-governmental organizations from the Republic of Moldova, September 2016-December 2017, available at: https://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-02-21_radiografia-atac-ONGs_fin.pdf.

¹² Radiography of attacks against non-governmental organizations from the Republic of Moldova, January-December 2018, available at: http://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-19-timeline-atac-OSC_2018_final.pdf.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>15 January 2019</p> <p>Report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders</p> | <p>Michel FORST, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, presented a report on his visit to Moldova from 25-29 June 2018.</p> <p>UN Special Rapporteur indicated that human rights defenders in the Republic of Moldova face several challenges, including the shrinking of space for the activity of the civil society. Mr. Forst noted that public authorities have stigmatized and discredited human rights defenders and their work, including through politically affiliated mass media.</p> <p>Mr. Forst received allegations of intimidation and threats towards human rights defenders by public representatives, particularly when they had criticized decisions taken by the Government. Civil society organizations involved in political rights have been accused of dishonesty, lack of equidistance, and following a foreign agenda not aligned with national interests. The promotion of human rights is portrayed as a political activity by representatives of State political bodies.</p> <p>It was stated in the report that some groups of human rights defenders are particularly vulnerable, such as lawyers, journalists, independent judges, defenders of sexual and transgender minorities rights, women's rights defenders and human rights defenders from Transnistria.</p> <p>The Special Rapporteur has recommended to public authorities, among other things, the adoption of the draft law on non-commercial organizations adopted as agreed with civil society organizations, and if any changes are proposed, they undergo a genuine consultation with civil society organizations.</p> |
| <p>January -February 2019</p> <p>Attacks against Promo-LEX Association in the context of parliamentary elections monitoring</p> | <p>In the run-up to the parliamentary elections of 24 February 2019, several politicians and public authorities showed discontent with the alternative election monitoring reports developed by Promo-LEX Association. Among other things, the Promo-LEX Monitoring mission reports highlight the practice of some political parties to use administrative resources, absence of financial reports for all expenditures incurred during the electoral campaign or offering of gifts during the electoral period.</p> <p>On 10 January 2019, Iurie CIOCAN, the member and the former Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), stated that the monitoring reports prepared by Promo-LEX represent interference in the electoral process and may influence the voters' opinion. On the same day Maxim LEBEDINSCHI, member of the CEC, adviser to the President of the Republic of Moldova and the member of the PSRM made almost identical statements in a television broadcast at TV21 station. On 14 January 2019, the members of Promo-LEX observation mission met with the CEC representatives. In a subsequent press release, the CEC announced that the parties had discussed the activities carried out in the framework of the observation mission and the methodology applied to the monitoring process of the elections of 24 February 2019 in a spirit of respect, ensuring the independence of the observation mission. The CEC reiterated the</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>importance of efforts to monitor the elections organized and conducted in the Republic of Moldova and the role played by the civil society.</p> <p>On 11 January 2019, Ilan SHOR, the leader of SHOR Political Party, declared, among others, that the members of Promo-LEX Association are liars and villains (<i>лжецы и негодяи</i>), and the organization is a dubious one (<i>нечистая</i>), which acts in the interests of several political parties. Ilan SHOR stated that he will soon sue Promo-LEX for defamation, and they will be obliged to stand by their words (<i>они будут отвечать за свои слова</i>), being in fact some windbags (<i>пустословы</i>). Until 31 December 2019, Promo-LEX Association did not receive any lawsuit from SHOR party or its leader.</p> <p>On 22 January 2019, members of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (CALC) issued a statement in support of Promo-LEX Association. The Coalition rejected repeated defamatory attacks on Promo-LEX Association, reiterating that Promo-LEX has the necessary skills to monitor the election, as evidenced during several monitored electoral campaigns.</p> <p>On 24 February 2019, the day of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova, the CEC prohibited to Promo-LEX Association to make public statements, although during all parliamentary elections held before it was allowed to Promo-LEX Association to provide information on the run-up of the elections regularly during the election day.</p> <p>On 12 August 2019, the telegraph.md portal published an article entitled “Politician from opposition: PromoLEX has the task of stopping criticism against the current government” The article quotes Vasile CALMAȚUI, an electoral competitor in the parliamentary elections of 24 February 2019, who declared that Promo-LEX is a politicized organization that aims to stop criticism against the leaders of the governing coalition. Mr. Calmațui stated he was disturbed by the fact that he was mentioned in a report regarding hate speech monitoring that was periodically prepared by Promo-LEX team. The article published by telegraph.md reflected exclusively the author's opinion, without presenting the position of Promo-LEX.</p> <p>On 24 December 2019, Chisinau district Court declared inadmissible a lawsuit filed by the National Liberal Party (NLP) against Promo-LEX. The rectification and retraction of the content of an alternative report was prepared by Promo-LEX Association in the context of local elections held in June 2018.</p> |
| <p>06 February 2019</p> <p>Attack by the President of the country Igor DODON, who suggested that the NGOs are involved in the</p> | <p>On 6 February 2019, the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor DODON, in a TV broadcast on NTV Moldova channel, suggested the possibility of influencing the election results by Western forces, through civil society organizations. President Dodon stated, among others: <i>“Look at the network of NGOs we have here, they are funded directly from abroad. Russia does not have such organizations. NGOs are participants in the electoral process, they give assessments to politicians, they monitor, with a certain</i></p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>elections, supporting a certain geopolitical vector</i></p> | <p><i>inclination in a certain direction</i>". The President of the country did not mention which actions of the NGOs would not be appropriate in the electoral process and which NGOs in his opinion were involved in those actions.</p> |
| <p><i>February 2019</i></p> <p><i>Attacks against the civic movement OccupyGuguță</i></p> | <p><u>On 14 February 2019, the activists of the civic movement OccupyGuguță,</u> an informal group of civic activists, tried to organize a protest at the Mayor's office in Orhei. During the protest some members of the movement tried to fly a banner with the inscription "Илан Шор Наш Любимый Вор" on the Mayor's office in Orhei (translation: "Ilan Shor is our beloved thief") (Ilan Shor is the mayor of Orhei). Soon, they were <u>detained by police</u> and interrogated for more than two hours, including for the purpose of suppressing the protest. Police representatives seized the banner with the inscription about Ilan SHOR. The police officers failed to explain the reasons for retaining the banner for the materials of the administrative proceedings, nor did he hand over an act or any confirmation of its enclosure to the materials of the misdemeanour proceedings. The representatives of the OccupyGuguță movement filed a complaint asking the police officer to cancel the sanction and terminate the misdemeanour process.</p> <p>On 23 February 2019, OccupyGuguță activists were again detained by <u>police officers</u> on Chișinău-Leușeni highway, while travelling to a protest to Nisporeni district, where an event organized by the Democratic Party was taking place. According to the police, the members of OccupyGuguță did not have ownership documents for 12 drums in their possession at the time they went to the protest. OccupyGuguță members use the drums for the songs they sing in a form of the protest, as they are essential tools for the actions they organize. Police also indicated that the drums could have been stolen. Three police crews went to the detention site. OccupyGuguță activists were detained for more than 30 minutes. After some heated discussions, the police allowed the activists to continue their itinerary.</p> <p>The attacks against OccupyGuguță civic movement are not new. In August 2018, the police <u>dismantled</u> the tent of OccupyGuguta in the Central Park in Chisinau, under the pretext of preparing and securing the park area in connection with the organization of the Independence Day (marked annually on the 27th August).</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Suppression of some peaceful protest activities represents an unjustified violation of the freedom of assembly and freedom of association. The measures taken by the police can have a chilling effect not only on the participants in these actions, but also on the general public, so that the latter will self-censor or be less active in future demonstrations or open political debates. As for the manner of protest, in particular as concerns the banner with the inscription "Илан Шор Наш Любимый Вор" (translation: Ilan Shor is our beloved thief), in the <u>case of Mătășaru v. Moldova (No. 69714/16)</u>, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), reiterated, inter alia, the principle that freedom of expression is protected not only in the</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>case of “information” or “ideas” that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive, but also in case of those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any section of the population. Therefore, the actions of the police in both cases unjustifiably limited the fundamental freedoms of some representatives of the CSO. One of the many negative consequences of these actions is the constraint imposed on the CSOs and civic activists to self-censor or be less active.</p> |
| <p>From 22 to 25 March 2019</p> <p>Attacks against Amnesty International Moldova</p> | <p>On 22 March 2019, blogger Anatolie CHIRILOV published an article entitled <i>“BEM NGOs apply double standards. Plângău and Munteanu - yes, Sârbu - NO”</i>. The article referred to the altercation between a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova Sergiu SÎRBU and the civic activist Pavel GRIGORCIUC. The author condemned the absence of reaction from the representatives of the CSOs, especially Amnesty International Moldova (AIM), which would not have disapproved the aggressive actions against Mr. Sirbu. The author indirectly referred to a press release in which AIM previously expressed its concern after several electoral competitors reported on police inaction in situations of harassment and aggression from alleged sympathizers of political opponents. Throughout the entire article, the author uses defamatory wording against NGOs, with various pejorative expressions <i>“NGOs [...] tethered long ago by [politicians changed with corruption] Filat and Platon to the BEM [Bank] feeder, NOW they serve faithfully to those from PAScuDA [opposition political block]”, or “Prostitution-like practices of Moldovan NGOs already have become a norm in Moldova”</i>. The article published by Mr. Chirilov reflected exclusively the author's opinion, without presenting the position of the persons referred to in the article.</p> <p>In the following days, this article was replicated almost entirely by portals and media platforms that published materials favourable to the Democratic Party of Moldova. The heading of these articles were slightly modified or republished with new headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - www.24h.md: <i>“The case of the MP Sergiu Sîrbu confirms the political partisanship of the NGOs that claim to be independent”</i> - www.evenimentul.md: <i>“Aggressiveness of ACUM supporters and silence of some NGOs confirm their political partisanship”</i> - www.moldova24.info and www.telegraph.md: <i>“The NGOs that were fed from the billion apply double standards again - Plângău and Munteanu - yes, Sârbu - No”</i> <p>Similar headings were also published on the pages www.actual.md, www.hotnews.md, today.md. By the time of drafting of this document some of these portals have ceased to exist or the articles can no longer be accessed.</p> <p>Note: The publication of identical news, with only slight modification of the heading, denotes the concerted nature of the publication. The purpose of the publication seems to be to influence the public opinion by negative</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>presentation of the activity of the CSO/representatives of a CSO. Taken as a whole the publication aims rather at discrediting the image of the civil society organisations than at informing the readers. All articles published by the media reflected exclusively the author's opinion, without presenting the position of the persons concerned.</p> |
| <p>29 March 2019</p> <p>Report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe</p> | <p>The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe published a report on the situation of human rights defenders in the member states of the Council of Europe. The report states that authorities in the Republic of Moldova have become more reluctant to involve CSOs in drafting legislation, which undermines the trust of civil society in central and local authorities (para. 34).</p> |
| <p>April 2019</p> <p>Campaign to denigrate Soros Foundation-Moldova and the representatives of several NGOs</p> | <p>On 4 April 2019, the blogger Anatolie CHIRILOV published an article entitled "Here is how much Maia Sandu spent for the services of Arcadie Barbăroşie and Oazu Nantoi". The author accused some representatives of the CSOs of the country, as well as the leader of an opposition party, Maia SANDU, that during 2014-2016, they would have mismanaged large amounts of money granted within a project implemented by Soros Foundation-Moldova in partnership with the Ministry of Education. According to the author, with a part of this money, Maia SANDU would have financed her supporters from the civil society. The author of the article used labels such as "<i>NGOs fed by Maia Sandu</i>" and "<i>grant-eaters</i>" in order to influence the public opinion by presenting the activity of non-profit organizations in a negative way. The article contains only the opinion of the author, without presenting the position of the persons concerned.</p> <p>In the following days, with slight modification of the heading, the article was replicated and published by web pages of several media institutions that published laudatory materials in favour of the DPM party: www.telegraph.md, www.canal2.md, voceabasarabiei.md, as well as www.bloknot-moldova.md.</p> <p>On 8 April 2019, Publika TV station, affiliated to the DPM, within the framework of TV show "Principles" («Принципы»), anchored by Andrei ANDRIEVSCHII, discussed the same topic with studio guests Valeriu RENIȚĂ, Vitalie CATANĂ, Ruslan ȘEVCHENCO and Roman MIHĂIEȘ. Guests and the anchor used the same labels: "<i>Pocket NGOs</i>", "<i>NGOs fed by Maia Sandu</i>", "<i>grant-eaters</i>", which influence public opinion by presenting the activity of non-profit organizations in a negative way. One of the guests also stated that the concerned NGOs do only politics, and over 90% of all grants funds ever awarded in the Republic of Moldova were stolen or mismanaged. The guests of the TV broadcast stated that the funds of the SFM and other donors were used by Maia SANDU to create her party. Within the framework of the broadcast the opinion of any NGOs about the opinions expressed therein was not requested.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Taken together, these articles and the broadcast aimed to denigrate the image of the CSOs.</p> <p><u>On April 5, 2019, Soros Foundation-Moldova</u> issued a press release providing details on the projects implemented in the field of education, including those referred to in the defamatory article by Mr. Chirilov. The SFM pointed out what activities have been carried out in the field of education within the period of 2014-2016 with the use of project resources, providing links to the activity reports. The SFM mentioned that the project resources were used to carry out activities in the following three areas - supporting the activity of the Working Groups on Curriculum Reform, civil society participation in public consultations to voice the position of education beneficiaries on education reform in Moldova and providing IT equipment and modern educational software to the constituency schools in each district, selected in an open competition. The SFM stated, among other things, that it has supported and will continue to support projects concerning education during the entire period of its activity in the Republic of Moldova.</p> <p><u>On 11 April 2019, the portal Stopfals.md</u> analysed the article written by the blogger Chirilov in terms of the presence of elements of fake and media manipulation. Following the request for opinions from all parties concerned, the Stopfals portal concluded that the accusations of the blogger Chirilov run counter with the arguments of those targeted in the so-called investigation.</p> |
| <p><i>February - June 2019</i></p> <p><i>Campaign on denigration of Promo-LEX Association by media sources in Transnistrian region</i></p> | <p>During 2019, the news portal www.np-inform.com from Transnistrian region published several defamatory articles (Article 1, Article 2, Article 3, Article 4) concerning Promo-LEX Association and human rights monitoring activities in Transnistrian region. Regardless of the subjects covered, the publication called Promo-LEX “grant-eaters”, “consumer of European grants”, and its activity on human rights monitoring was qualified as being marked by flagrant ignorance and political illiteracy. In an article from this series, the publication accused the members of Promo-LEX Association of espionage. Some of these articles were taken over by the media portals from Chisinau bloknot-moldova.md and vedomosti.md.</p> <p>Each time the articles presented either false information about the activity of Promo-LEX Association or presented it in a biased way. The articles published by Transnistrian media, taken over by some media portals from Chisinau, reflected exclusively the author's opinion, without presenting the position of the association. Taken as a whole the publication aims rather at discrediting the image of Promo-LEX Association than at informing the readers.</p> <p>Defamation and persecution of Promo-LEX Association began as far as in 2015, when the so-called security service from Tiraspol issued a statement announcing the launch of a criminal investigation against members of Promo-LEX Association and the application of “special investigation</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>measures” towards them. Since then, Promo-LEX human rights defenders no longer have free access to Transnistrian region and cannot provide assistance to the victims of human rights violations in the region.</p> |
| <p>July – August 2019</p> <p><i>Defamatory campaign against the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) and its Executive Director, Vladislav GRIBINCEA</i></p> | <p>15 July 2019 - Bogdan ȚÎRDEA, MP, member of the PSRM party, published an article in his personal blog entitled “Absurd! Plahotniuc's people want to release justice from his control”. Mr. Țîrdea mentioned that Vladislav GRIBINCEA, the Executive Director of the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM), intends to run for the position of the Prosecutor General, accusing him of affiliations with Mr. Plahotniuc. By that day, the contest for the position of the Prosecutor General had not yet been announced.</p> <p>16 July 2019 - The information portal Noi.md, which is affiliated to the PSRM, published an article entitled “Plahotniuc's people are in a hurry to release justice from his control”, in which it took over the article written by Mr. Țîrdea as of 15 July 2019. The portal did not request for Mr. Gribincea's opinion.</p> <p>23 July 2019 - on Facebook page of Curaj.TV it was published an anonymous letter, insinuating that Mr. Gribincea was selected a member of the Commission for the selection of candidates for the position of judge at the Constitutional Court by the Government on the basis of some family relations and that he would have interests in promoting certain candidates. On the same day, Curaj.TV published Mr. Gribincea's reply to these accusations. According to Mr. Gribincea, his candidacy to the Governmental Commission was proposed by the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, and that he declared his conflict of interest regarding two people in the contest and that the accusations are not true and are aimed at denigration.</p> <p>24-25 July 2019 - The media portals Telegraph.md, Timpul.md and Publika.md published articles entitled “Nepotism in the Commission for the selection of Constitution Court judges on the side of Sandu Government” or with similar headings, in which they published the anonymous letter published by Curaj.TV on 23 July 2019, but without publishing Mr. Gribincea's reply published by Curaj.TV and without requesting his opinion on this subject.</p> <p>25 July 2019 - The media portal Timpul.md published an article entitled “One of the PPDA promoters launches VIOLENT ATTACKS against civil society «dear grant-eaters from civil society!»”. The article reproduced a post from the social network Facebook in which its author referred to his dissatisfaction in the field of justice reform, accusing civil society of reforming the judiciary for years without results. The editorial board of Timpul.md added a note in which it mentioned that the target of criticism of that post would have been the LRCM and its executive director, Vladislav GRIBINCEA. Timpul.md mentioned that the LRCM was one of the main NGOs that produced dozens of reports on the judiciary reform, that the LRCM was one of the key players in promoting the reform of the Prosecutor's Office,</p> |

and the leader of this NGO is a member of the governmental Commission for the selection of judges to the Constitutional Court. In addition, the editorial board of Timpul.md published a suggestive picture from the [Forum "Justice Reform and Fighting Corruption"](#) organized on 23 July 2019 by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in partnership with the LRCM. The picture shows Mr. Gribincea together with the Minister of Justice, the Prime Minister and the US Ambassador to Moldova. The editorial board of Timpul.md did not contact the LRCM or Mr. Gribincea to request their opinion.

9 August 2019 - Eugen LUCHIANIUC, blogger, published an article entitled "[Meet Vladislav Gribincea, the author of the "Law on the Prosecutor's Service" which Maia Sandu is now fighting](#)". The author mentioned, among other things, that Mr. Gribincea, whom he calls "the father of the Law on the Prosecutor's Office", together with Maia SANDU, Prime Minister at that time, have chosen the judges of the Constitutional Court. He noted that Ms. Sandu had stated that the Law on the Prosecutor's Service was not good. The author mentioned that the NGOs and the LRCM should return "*millions of Euro*" spent "*on them within the last 10 years so that this reform becomes possible*". Luchianiuc did not request the opinion of Mr. Gribincea or the LRCM, and even did not mention which activities of the NGOs and in particular of the LRCM he was referring to. On the same day, the article was taken over by the **media portal [Telegraph.md](#)**, which also did not request the opinion of Mr. Gribincea or the LRCM and did not refer to any specific activities of the NGOs or the LRCM.

10 August 2019 - The website [scheme.md](#) published an article entitled "[US millions siphoned off in Moldova on the judiciary. Gribincea case](#)". The article contains misinterpreted and defamatory information about Vladislav GRIBINCEA, the Executive Director of the LRCM. The information referred to his and the LRCM activity in the field of judiciary reform. The website was created a few days before, on 30 July 2019, and its author is unknown. Scheme.md did not request the opinion of Mr. Gribincea or the LRCM.

11 August 2019 - The media portal [BasarabiaLiterara.md](#) substantially took over the article published on 10 August on the website [scheme.md](#), without requesting the opinion of Mr. Gribincea or the LRCM. The heading of the article itself is slanderous and denigrating - "[Explosive: US millions siphoned off in Moldova on the judiciary. How has judiciary reform become a profitable business for civil society](#)".

11 August 2019 - Vladislav GRIBINCEA, the Executive Director of the LRCM, published a [post](#) on Facebook, in which he mentioned that the articles published about him in recent days are denigrating and full of speculation, and the web pages on which they were published are mostly without author and suspicious. Mr. Gribincea mentioned that, from the summer of 2014 until 2016 (about 30 months), he was the leader of the working group on the reform of the prosecutor's office. He added that he was not paid for this activity and the LRCM did not obtain any grants for this activity.

12 August 2019 - The media portal Telegraph.md published an article about Vladislav GRIBINCEA inspired almost entirely by the article from the anonymous web page Scheme.md as of 10 August. The article was entitled "[SCHEME.md: Vladislav Gribincea, the person who made the law on the prosecutor's Service and other suspicious projects out of American money](#)". This time either the opinion of Mr. Gribincea or the LRCM was not requested, as well as the reply of Mr. Gribincea published on 11 August 2019 was not presented.

12 August 2019 - The website scheme.md published a new defamatory article concerning Mr. Gribincea with the heading "[Gribincea worked for free with Democratic Party. Reply worth \\$ 187,822](#)". The article questioned, among other things, Mr Gribincea's statement published the day before that he had not been remunerated for his activity in the working group on the reform of the prosecutor's office. The author of the article mentioned that the LRCM developed a Study on optimisation of the structure of the prosecution service and on the workload of prosecutors from the Republic of Moldova within the project "[LRCM contribution to the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy: Pillars I and II](#)", financially supported by the US Embassy. However, the author of the article failed to demonstrate the link between the activity related to the elaboration of the study, which ended in the first half of 2014, and Mr Gribincea's participation in the working group on prosecution reform, which took place from the second half of 2014 through 2016, which is 2.5 years after the completion of the project supported by the US Embassy.

12 August 2019 - Eugen LUCHIANIUC, blogger, published an article about Vladislav GRIBINCEA inspired by the article from the anonymous website Scheme.md published on the same day. The article was entitled "[The child of the 'judiciary reform' in Moldova worth millions](#)". This time again, Mr. Luchianiuc failed to request the opinion of Mr. Gribincea or the LRCM.

16 August 2019 - The Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) published a [statement](#) expressing its deep concern about the campaign on denigration of the LRCM activity and its Executive Director Vladislav GRIBINCEA. The LRCM mentioned that some materials with false or biased information about the activity of the LRCM or Mr. Gribincea appeared on the Internet. The organization noted that the materials had no author and appeared on the newly created web pages, the owner of which was unknown, or were posted by people who had previously acted by political orders. The organization mentioned that it had not been contacted by the authors to provide clarifications either before or after the publication of the materials. The sponsored distribution of denigrating information on social networks once again demonstrated the concerted nature of actions and the intention to manipulate and misinform.

Note: these attacks on Vladislav GRIBINCEA and the LRCM took place during the organization of the contest for the appointment of two judges to the

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Constitutional Court (CCM) by the Government. On 2 July 2019, the Government published the announcement regarding the organization of the contest, and on 7 July 2019, the Government approved the nominal membership of the Contest Commission. Mr. Gribincea, the Executive Director of the LRCM, was a member of the contest commission appointed by the Platform of Eastern Partnership of Civil Society. The Contest Commission admitted to the contest 13 candidates out of 23 candidates who submitted their files. On 8 August 2019, the Contest Commission proposed to the Government for examination a list of four candidates for the appointment to the position of judges to the CCM, and namely Liuba ȘOVA, Eduard SERBENCO, Vladimir GROȘU and Nicolae ROȘCA. The Commission has published evaluation sheets and interviews with candidates. On 15 August 2019, the Government appointed two of the candidates proposed by the Contest Commission, and namely Mrs. Șova and Mr. Roșca, to the position of judges of the CCM. The attacks against Mr. Gribincea decreased considerably after that day.</p> |
| <p>23 July 2019</p> <p><i>CSOs are accused of influencing judges</i></p> | <p>On 23 July 2019, a group of 31 judge from Chisinau Court presented a public statement at the meeting of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM). The judges acknowledged the public perception of corruption in the judiciary, including due to certain court rulings issued under pressure. The signatory judges strongly stated that the changes and reforms initiated in the system are necessary to combat this perception and that they are ready to contribute to the implementation of such an action. Also on 24 July 2019, another judge made a separate public statement requesting the resignation of all SCM members and especially of Mr. Victor MICU, former chairperson of the SCM, following the description of a particular case that led to her self-suspension from office.</p> <p>Using the images from the SCM meeting in which the group of judges made these statements, Publika TV station, affiliated to the DPM, made a report entitled “Magistrates claim pressure and interference in the judicial process by politicians, but also by civil society”. However, the news content or video report does not mention who would be the representatives of civil society or what are the CSOs that would have exerted influence over the judges. There is also no reference in the written statements of judges to any pressure exerted by CSOs.</p> |
| <p>24 July 2019</p> <p><i>11 mayors from Dondușeni declare that they were limited in collaboration with CSOs by the DPM government</i></p> | <p>On 24 July 2019, 11 mayors from Dondușeni district signed a joint declaration. They announced that they are leaving the Democratic Party of Moldova and are open to collaboration with any political force in the country. In this statement, these 11 mayors denounced the fact that they were limited in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, especially with the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM), by the former government. The signatories were reluctant to say what kind of limitations in collaboration they experienced.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>09 August 2019</p> <p>Attack by a Supreme Court Judge on CSOs and LRCM in particular</p> | <p>During the public consultation of the draft Government Action Plan organized by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Anatolie ȚURCANU, judge at the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) and former member of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), attacked the CSOs working in the field of justice and, in particular, the LRCM. He mentioned, among other things, that the reform of the SCJ proposed by the Ministry of Justice that implied reducing the number of judges was a reckoning of the civil society, that the CSOs “<i>everlastingly launder money</i>”, make draft laws that they implement, “<i>brandish the sword over the head</i>”, “<i>the LRCM has messed up with the reform of the judicial map</i>”. Mr. Țurcanu stated that the LRCM must be liquidated.</p> |
| <p>October 2019</p> <p>Denigration campaign against the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) II</p> | <p>On 1 October 2019, several media institutions that published materials in favour of the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM) - Hotnews.md, Abcnews.md, Democracy.md - published an article with identical content „<i>Current struggle between the SCM and the judicial staff is supported by a non-governmental organization</i>”. The article contains several attacks and biased insinuations against the LRCM. According to the article, the LRCM would like to maintain the current membership of the SCM in order to justify the financial funds allocated by external donors to promote justice reforms. The article also mentioned that the LRCM would have received money from external donors which it used for purposes other than promoting judiciary reforms, and a part of money managed by the LRCM would have been directed to the financial support of the election campaign by the PAS party, but also for actions of manipulation and control of the SCM. No evidence to that effect was provided in the article.</p> <p>Shortly after the publication of the original article, Publika TV station made a report on this subject.</p> <p>Note: The articles present serious accusations and false information concerning the activity of LRCM. Since 2013 until present the LRCM has been monitoring the activity of the SCM and the courts and reporting on it. The monitoring and reporting activity is not linked and does not depend in any way on the membership of the SCM or on the attitude and preferences of certain members of this institution. The effort of the LRCM to monitor the activity of the SCM aims to identify recommendations for improving the efficiency and transparency of the SCM. The LRCM presents financial and activity reports to donors. All the information regarding the objectives of the LRCM, activities carried out and budgets of the projects are publicly available on the web page of the Association.</p> |
| <p>14 November 2019</p> <p>Restrictions for the CSOs in the Activity Program of the CHICU Government</p> | <p>In its Program of Activity CHICU Government mentioned a single activity concerning civil society, and namely “<i>Strengthening the watch-dog role of civil society organizations and not admitting their involvement in political activities</i>”.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>On 6 December 2019, the member organizations of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum adopted a public statement expressing their concern about the Program of Activity of the Government of the Republic of Moldova sworn in November 2019 and headed by Ion CHICU. The signatory organizations noted that restrictions included in the Government Program on non-admission of CSOs involvement in political activities contradicts international standards and denies the CSOs' right to be engaged in public policy activities and participate in debates on the topics of public interest. Like any person or entity, the CSOs have the right to freedom of expression on all matters of public importance, including existing or proposed legislation, as well as state policy and actions. The public discourse on shrinking the space for the activity of the CSOs contradicts the principles of democracy and the rule of law, as well as the commitments assumed under the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union. The agreement encourages the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including CSOs, in elaboration of policies and reforms in the Republic of Moldova. The Eastern Partnership also recognizes civil society as a partner in the relations of Member States with the European Union. The organizations mentioned that the program does not include objectives regarding transparency in the decision making process, strengthening a favourable climate for the activity and development of the civil society in the Republic of Moldova and the involvement of civil society organizations in the elaboration of public policy documents. The organizations expressed concern that the parties that supported the Activity Program of the CHICU Government failed to include such actions as the adoption of the law on non-profit organizations, which long ago was supposed to be adopted by the Parliament in the final reading.</p> <p>The Government Action Plan for 2020-2023 approved on 11 December 2019 no longer included the objective of limiting the political activities of the CSOs.</p> |
| <p><i>Transnistrian region:</i></p> <p><i>Restrictions imposed on the CSOs receiving funding from abroad for "political activities"</i></p> | <p>The legal framework on non-profit organizations in Transnistria</p> <p>On 18 May 2018, amendments to a legislative package introducing restrictive regulations for the CSOs, which receive funding from abroad and are engaged in public policy promotion activities entered into force in Transnistria. The legislative package amended the Law on Non-commercial Organizations, the Criminal Code, the Civil Code and the Law on State Registration of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs. According to the new provisions, the Law on Non-commercial Organizations in Transnistrian Region includes a ban on carrying out "political activities" for non-commercial organizations that receive funding from abroad. According to the law, a non-profit organization is recognized to be involved in "political activities" carried out on the territory of the "PMR", if it carries out activities in the following areas: state governance, constitutional order, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as ensuring law, order, security of the state and the public, national defence and foreign policy. The law stipulates that the forms of carrying out "political activities" include participation and</p> |

conduct of meetings, protests, demonstrations; organizing and holding public debates, discussions, speeches; monitoring of elections, activities of political parties; public appeals to the authorities of the so-called Transnistrian Republic; dissemination of opinions concerning the decisions taken by public authorities and their policies, including through the use of modern information technologies, etc. (art. 2 paragraph (7) of the Law on Non-commercial Organizations in Transnistrian Region). Therefore, local non-profit organizations that receive funds from abroad will not be able to carry out a series of activities, including those related to the promotion and protection of human rights, election monitoring, good governance, etc.

The legal framework also provides for drastic sanctions for non-compliance with the provisions concerning "political activities" for both non-profit organizations and natural persons. The Prosecutor General of the so-called Transnistrian Republic will file a summons to the non-profit organization carrying out such activities, which has a period of one month to comply with the provisions of the law. The organization can challenge this summons in the "courts" of the "PMR". For non-compliance with the summons, the non-commercial organization risks the suspension of their activity and even liquidation (art. 3 and 4 of the Law on Non-commercial Organizations in Transnistrian Region). The "Criminal Code" of Transnistria also provides for sanctions for the natural persons involved in "political activities". According to the amendments to the [Criminal Code](#) as of 2018, the founders of non-profit organizations risk criminal liability in the form of a fine in the amount of about USD 170 to about USD 730 in 2020 or up to 2 years of imprisonment (art. 237 para. (2) of the "Criminal Code"). Persons who participate in "political activities" carried out by non-profit organizations (e.g. participants in the organization's events), as well as those who disseminate information about these activities (e.g. sharing information on social networks), risk a criminal fine in the amount from about USD 110 to about USD 335 or up to 1 year of imprisonment (art. 237 para. (3) of the "Criminal Code"). The amounts of criminal fines depend on the size of the average monthly salary in the "PMR", which in the first half of 2019 amounted to [about USD 275](#). Each year, the average monthly salary and, therefore, the amounts of fines [will increase by about 7%](#) as compared to the previous year.

In addition, non-profit organizations from Transnistria are required to submit [reports on their sources of funding](#) to the authorities. The reports are submitted annually to the registration body and twice a year to the tax bodies. These institutions monitor the use of sources and whether they comply with the charter of organisation and legislation. The report must contain details of the sources of funding, the purpose of their allocation and how they were used.

[According to Promo-LEX](#), in the context in which the administration of Tiraspol does not provide funds for local non-profit organizations and the non-governmental sector in the region is also appreciated as rudimentary by the international community, these regulations represent an additional obstacle to the development of the not-for-profit sector on the left bank of

the Dniester river. The adopted amendments do nothing but formalize the control and pressure of Tiraspol regime on civil society, which will ultimately lead to absolute control over it.

The case of Apriori Law Information Centre (Tiraspol)

[Apriori Centre](#), a non-profit organization in the Transnistrian region whose mission is to promote human rights in the region, was the first organization to which the mechanism provided by the Law on Non-commercial Organizations in Transnistrian Region was applied. On 1 November 2018, the local Prosecutor's office inspected Apriori Centre. On 19 December 2018, the Prosecutor's Office issued a summons accusing the NGO of violating the Law on Non-profit Organizations by the fact that during the period of 2016-2017 they received foreign funds and that in the second half of 2018 they carried out "political activities". In particular, the Prosecutor's Office from Tiraspol accused Apriori Centre of [organizing](#), in June 2018, an exhibition called "The press under the pressure of three atmospheres: Smirnov, Shevchuk, Krasnoselski", where in the course of discussions the intentions of Transnistrian administration to close several on-line portals were criticized. Another accusation was related to the lecture "The mixed electoral system and its prospects for Transnistria", in which an expert proposed that MPs should be banned from doing business during their public office and stated that "*an oligarchic model of governing is established in Transnistria*".

As a result of this control, Apriori Centre was summoned by the Prosecutor's Office to "*eliminate the violation of the law without delay*" and to take measures to prevent such violations in the future by refraining from being engaged in political activities in Transnistrian region. Apriori Centre was obliged to inform the Prosecutor's Office in writing on the measures undertaken in this regard.

Apriori Centre challenged this summons of the Prosecutor's Office in Transnistrian "courts". On 14 February 2019, the appeal of Apriori Centre was dismissed. In April 2019, the appeal was also dismissed by the "Supreme Court of Tiraspol". According to the [statements by the representatives of the Centre](#) the guarantees of a fair trial were not ensured when the case was examined.

In June 2019, Apriori Centre also filed a complaint to the "Constitutional Court of Tiraspol" in which it challenged the provisions of the Law on Non-profit Organizations in Transnistrian Region that concern the political activities of non-profit organizations because they would contravene the "Constitution of the PMR". On 26 September 2019, the "Constitutional Court of Tiraspol" [dismissed](#) the complaint of the Centre. In autumn of 2019, Apriori Centre filed a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights.

According to the legal framework of Transnistria, the Prosecutor's Office may request the suspension of the Centre's activities, which may

subsequently be liquidated for non-compliance with the law. At the end of 2019, Apriori Centre was not liquidated and its activity was not suspended.

Position of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders as concerns the situation in Transnistria

In the [report as of 15 January 2019](#) on his visit to Moldova within the period of 25-29 June 2018, Michel FORST, [UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders](#), stated that in Transnistrian region the legislation on non-governmental organizations raises serious concerns for human rights defenders. Mr. Forst referred in particular to the introduction of a restriction on the activity defined as “political”, which is not in line with the international standards.

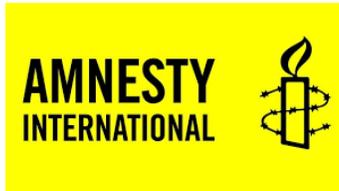
The Special Rapporteur noted that the CSOs and human rights defenders do not enjoy a safe and active environment in Transnistrian region. Mr. Forst received reports that human rights defenders were unable to work freely in the region and were subjected to various forms of intimidation, threats (including with regard to relatives), harassment, arbitrary detention and retaliation. They are also under the strict control of the security services and law enforcement bodies.

The Special Rapporteur recommended to the decision-makers from Transnistrian region to ensure that domestic law complies with the international standards on democracy, the rule of law and human rights, to ensure a safe and active environment for human rights defenders, journalists and lawyers, and establish a genuine, significant and regular dialogue with the CSOs.

SIGNATORY ORGANISATIONS:



The Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) is a think tank with vast experience in analysing the activity and reforming the justice sector, promoting human rights and reforms for an enabling environment to civil society organizations. More information is available at: www.crjm.org.



Amnesty International Moldova is a part of global human rights protection movement Amnesty International. The activity of the organization is based on the decisions voted by its members at the General Assembly. AIM participates in global and local campaigns, and currently carries out the activity on Education for human rights in schools as well as for law professionals. More information is available at: www.amnesty.md.



P.A. WatchDog.MD community is a young think-tank from the Republic of Moldova. The community brings together experts in various areas of major importance, qualified to develop and evaluate sectoral public policies. The objectives of the organization are to enhance the role of civil society in public policy making and to inform the general public and interested institutions on the real situation in the Republic of Moldova in important areas such as economy, public finance, democracy, electoral processes, human rights. More information is available at: www.watchdog.md.



Transparency International-Moldova (TI-Moldova) was registered as a national branch office of the world anti-corruption organization Transparency International on 14 June 2000. The mission of TI-Moldova is to promote transparency, integrity and accountability as the main ways of preventing corruption and improving the quality of governance. More information is available at: www.transparency.md.



Institute for Development and Social Initiatives „Viitorul” (IDIS) is an independent think tank, carrying out research and advocacy. IDIS successfully combines social, political and economic research with recognised advocacy components. It conducts field research in the domain of political science and economic analysis, governance and law, maintaining a range of social networks on social policy analysis, decentralization, EU and Russia policies, frozen conflicts and trade. More information is available at: www.viitorul.org.



The Institute for Public Policy (IPP) is a non-political and non-profit organization. Its purpose is to contribute to the development of the Republic of Moldova in the spirit of an open, participatory and pluralistic society, committed to democratic values. More information is available at: www.ipp.md.



The Centre for Independent Journalism (CJI) is one of the first non-governmental media organizations in the Republic of Moldova. Founded in 1994, the organization has the mission to contribute to the consolidation of a free and viable press through assistance to independent media and journalists through trainings in journalism and public relations, by media campaigns, advocacy, research and media education. More information is available at: www.media-azi.md.

Promo - LEX

Promovarea democrației și a drepturilor omului



Promo-LEX Association is a non-governmental organization aimed at promoting democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including in the Transnistrian region, by promoting and defending human rights, monitoring democratic processes and strengthening the civil society. More information is available at: www.promolex.md.

The Association of Independent Press (API) is one of the most important media organizations in the Republic of Moldova that promotes and helps independent media and non-political journalists. API promotes the principles of free press and contributes to the development of open society in the Republic of Moldova. More information is available at: www.api.md.



The Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER) is a public association whose main purpose is the general promotion of good governance through consultancy and political reform in public administration. More information is available at: www.ager.md.



Soros Foundation - Moldova (FSM) was established in 1992 by philanthropist George Soros. Soros Foundation-Moldova is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political organization that aims to promote the values of an open society in the Republic of Moldova. The Foundation supports various initiatives of natural persons and legal entities in the following areas, but not limited to: justice and human rights, good governance, the media and public health. More information is available at: <http://soros.md>.



The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE) is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit action center for research and analysis that aims to accelerate the European integration process of the Republic of Moldova by monitoring and promoting public policies aimed to contribute to the implementation of systemic reforms, increase of participatory democracy and strengthening of the role of citizens in decision-making processes at national and local level. More information is available at: www.ipre.md.



The Centre for Investigative Journalism is a non-governmental organization established in 2003. The main activity of the Centre is aimed at improving the quality of investigative journalism in the Republic of Moldova, strengthening the capacity of investigative journalists, promoting the best methods and techniques for investigative journalism, as well as conducting public awareness campaigns. More information is available at: www.investigatii.md.



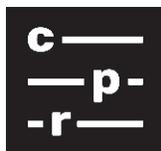
The East European Foundation was registered at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova on 3 November 2009 and is the successor of the Eurasia Foundation (FE) in Moldova. The new organization continues the work of the Eurasia Foundation, which since 1994 has contributed to the promotion of democracy, human rights, market economy and has supported the development of civil society, the media and the transparency of the public administration activity in the country. The mission of the Eastern European Foundation is to empower the citizens of the Republic of Moldova with capabilities and means to ensure sustainable development through education and technical assistance programs that promote democracy, good governance and economic prosperity. More information is available at: www.eef.md.



Centre "Partnership for Development" was created in 1998. The National Women's Studies and Information Center "Partnership for Development" (CPD) is a public institution that aims to contribute to the promotion of an integrative approach to gender issues, women's rights and equal opportunities for men and women. CPD advocates for the implementation of the concept of gender equality in all areas of life, for the promotion of public policies in the domain, addressing the issues of women's role in society and their empowerment, for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and it is also a documentation, information and training centre for the NGOs active in this domain and initiative groups. More information is available at: www.progen.md.



The Association for Participatory Democracy „ADEPT“ is an independent centre for analysis and consultancy regarding the decisional, political, electoral and socio-economic processes in the Republic of Moldova and in the region. The mission of ADEPT is to promote democratic values and to support the active participation of citizens in public life. More information is available at: <http://www.e-democracy.md/adept/>.



CPR Moldova – „Reforms should be seen in real life, not on paper or television“. More information is available at: www.cpr.md.



Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria” is a unique centre in Moldova that offers comprehensive information and support to victims of torture, victims of domestic violence and sexual violence as well as to refugees and asylum seekers. We help people who experienced violence at any point in their lives. Our qualified assistance is provided by a multidisciplinary team of professionals: psychologists, doctors, social assistants and legal advisers. More information is available at: www.memoria.md.



The Foreign Policy Association of Moldova (APE) is Moldova’s leading foreign policy think-tank, committed to supporting Moldova’s Europeanization, integration into the European Union and a viable settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. It was established in fall 2003 by a group of well-known experts, public personalities and former senior officials and diplomats reunited by their commitment to contribute their expertise and experience to a comprehensive analysis of Moldova’s foreign policy options and formulation of an efficient foreign policy. More information can be found at: www.ape.md.



The Center for Corruption Analysis and Prevention (CAPC) is a public association, registered with the Ministry of Justice on 19 April 2000. The main purpose of CAPC is to help reduce the level of corruption in the country to a level that would not affect the rights and freedoms of citizens. More information can be found at: <http://www.capc.md>.



The Women's Law Center is a non-governmental organization founded in 2009 by a group of women lawyers from the Republic of Moldova. The organization's mission is to help promote gender equality and prevent and combat gender-based violence against women by raising public awareness, strengthening the capacity of specialists, providing holistic services to assist and protect women victims of violence, monitoring the implementation of legislation and aligning it with international standards in the field of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. More information can be found at: www.cdf.md.

The list of signatory organizations remains open