

Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in the Transnistrian region targeted by the ECtHR

Promo LEX reminds the reader that freedom of speech and assembly, like many other fundamental rights and freedoms, are violated in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, controlled by the de facto Tiraspol administration. Promo-LEX expresses deep concern about the suppression of public expressing of opinions, as well as the limitation of rights to peaceful assemblies in the Transnistrian region.

Promo-LEX urges the Governments of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, as well as the international institutions in charge, to monitor the situation of observance of the right to free expression and assembly. Promo-LEX calls for the release of the people detained by Tiraspol administration just because they tried to organize and participated in a peaceful protest.

Promo-LEX reminds the reader of the protest held on June 2, 2018 in Tiraspol, involving up to 40 people. The majority of the participants in this peaceful assembly were elderly people. On June 3, 2018, local militia representatives detained 15 people that attended the meeting on June 2, 2018. They were escorted to the militia headquarters in Tiraspol. Militia representatives in the region claimed that the reason for their arrest was illegal public assembly. On June 4, 2018, the so-called Transnistrian judges penalized the participants with a fine and applied administrative arrest of up to 15 days (see more details [here](#)).

Given that these violations were not settled at the national

level, a group of people filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights, which recently registered the complaint and is due to examine it in the near future.

However, the organizer of the meeting, Oleg Horjan, who is also the president of an opposition party in the Transnistrian region, is still in detention. The so-called courts of the region sentenced Oleg Horjan to a four-year and six-month imprisonment term for the alleged offense of "violent acts committed against a public person / representative of power". We note that the reason for Oleg Horjan's arrest was the conduct of the public assembly and his subsequent actions to defend the interests of assembly participants, who were illegally held in the custody of the Transnistrian militia.

Currently, Oleg Horjan is detained in the Hlinaia penitentiary in conditions that are qualified as inhuman and degrading, according to the findings of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and special rapporteurs that visited the Transnistrian region. At the same time, his situation risks aggravating due to the conflict between him and the leadership of the so-called Transnistrian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

For more information, please contact: Natalia Munteanu, Promo-LEX Communication Officer; GSM: 069 43 70 40; E-mail: natalia.munteanu@promolex.md