

The Right of Assembly, severely violated by the Transnistrian militia in Corjova

On March 2, 2013, a group of residents of the Corjova village of the raion of Dubasari, a locality managed by Moldovan constitutional authorities, held a solemn gathering to commemorate the victims killed in the 1992 armed conflict on the Nistru river. The peaceful meeting was disrupted by the local militia from the town of Dubasari and representatives of local security structures (KGB). They blocked the roads leading into the village, restricting access to the village of vehicles with Moldovan legal license plates. They also surrounded the meeting place where participants were to lay flowers and make public speeches. They also threatened the organizers with sanctions if those were to fly the Moldovan flag or sing the national anthem.

Although two peacekeepers from the Russian Federation were present at the gathering, they did not intervene, and limited to "monitoring" the situation. The incident was settled by the constitutional police, who were maintaining public order during the meeting.

The village of Corjova was one of the most affected localities during the 1992 war on the Nistru river. Locals have always sought to keep the village under the control of Moldovan constitutional authorities. The village is situated on the left bank of the river, which remains largely under the control of illegal structures. For this locality, as some locals put it, the war has not ended. Thus, Corjova is at the epicenter of serious and continuous violations of fundamental

human rights. The Transnistrian militia always cause impediments in holding elections in the village and intervene to block public events.

Another gathering was held, on the same date and time, in the town of Dubasari, to commemorate those fallen in Moldovan-Russian war of 1992. But there the meeting went on without incidents. The local militsia did not intervene or create any obstacles.

Promo-LEX Position

European standards require authorities (in this case, the de facto administration) to apply the law in a nondiscriminatory manner. Thus, we see that, in the case of the peaceful assembly in the village of Corjova, participants were discriminated compared with those who attended the meeting of Dubăsari.

The actions of the militsia resulted in preventing the Corjova meeting participants from exercising their right to assembly and free expression. Both constitutional and international norms prohibit any undue intrusion and abuse of the authorities in the exercise of fundamental freedoms of citizens, especially the freedom of expression and assembly.

Recently, the supreme soviet (local legislature) in Tiraspol rejected a draft law on the organization of public meetings, which would have provided more freedoms and opportunities to organize peaceful rallies and protests than there are now. The bill was rejected on the grounds that "the current law is relatively good".

Considering all these aspects, Promo-LEX found that local administration of the Transnistrian region continues to maintain mechanisms of restraining and hindering the right of assembly in the region. At the same time, we believe that, through a direct and aggressive intimidation of participants at peaceful assemblies in Corjova, Dubasari, the separatist

regime aims to send a clear message of threat to all the inhabitants of the region.

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