

A new case of abusive deprivation of liberty on the left bank

Alexandru Coliban, aged 22, was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in jail in Transnistria. Alexandru is accused of distributing defamatory campaign posters against Evgheni Sevciuk in last year's presidential campaign. The young man is originally from Kamenka, but lived for long time in Chisinau. Diana Raileanu talked with Pavel Postica, a lawyer with Promo-LEX, an organization specialized in defending the rights of detainees in the Transnistrian region:

Pavel Postica: Alexandru Coliban was presented with two counts of charges by the so-called Transnistrian law enforcement. The first is the so-called crime of libel in that he, with the help of other persons, created and distributed campaign materials and posters of defamatory content against supposed president Evgheni Sevciuk. This was the first charge. The second refers to the exactly same actions, alleging by doing so, he prevented people on the left bank of the Nistru River from freely exercising their electoral rights.

Radio Free Europe: Are you suggesting that behind these accusations lies the Transnistrian regime's intolerance towards people who may have different opinions than them, and that the regime would want to provoke Chisinau?

Pavel Postica: In my opinion, we can speak of both. Indeed there is hatred towards anything that comes from the right bank of Nistru. The organizer of the campaign operation was a citizen of Ukraine who was hired by interested actors in the Russian Federation and was convicted in February 2012 to 3 years in jail. However, soon after that – a month later at most – at the insistence of those interested actors in the

Russian Federation (there were allegations on some forums that I would not dismiss as groundless that say it was Sergey Naryshkin), the Ukrainian was released. In contrast, six months later, a citizen of Moldova was found and deprived of freedom. Indeed it is a political decision of supposed president Sevciuk. In the case there is a specific request of his representative demanding expressly that Alexandru Coliban be sentenced to 3.6 years in prison, while the organizer of the entire campaign received a 3-year sentence.

Radio Free Europe: Mr. Postica, how often can Alexandru's relatives visit him?

Pavel Postica: "So far, from June until now, the relatives were able to see him five times, for short, 10 to 15 minute meetings, were able to have one long-term meeting. They said he is in poor health, his mother, with tears in her eyes, said that her son requires medical attention, and that the only possibility is to pass to him certain medications, but the only treatment the penitentiary made available to him was a thermometer for measurements and nothing more.

Radio Free Europe: Mr. Postica, you will take the case to the ECtHR. Why would Moldova and Russian Federation be guilty in this case?

Pavel Postica: "We claim that both the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova would be guilty of violating the rights of Alexandru Coliban for the following reasons. In the case of Moldova, it is its territory and Moldova should take every measure it can to free this person and to hold accountable those who have illegally deprived him of liberty, which the legal authorities certainly do not do. As for the Russian Federation, though its military, economic, and political support to the Tiraspol administration, it is able to take action to release Alexandru. If they do not push for the release of the young Moldovan, we believe that they are

co-participants to the violation of Alexandru Coliban's rights.

source: europalibera.org