

Human rights activists and relatives demand freedom for policemen arrested in Tiraspol

2009-07-17/17:02 Human rights activists and relatives of three Moldovan policemen gathered Friday outside the Russian Embassy in Chisinau to protest the arrest of the officers by the uniformed services of the breakaway region of Transnistria.

Officers Vladimir Dragulea, Ion Rybca and Dumitru Vieru were arrested in Tiraspol on July 14 for a period of three days, and were initially due to be released on Friday, but their arrest was prolonged for another two months.

The policemen were seized on charges of illegal arrest and abduction as they went to Tiraspol on a mission to capture a suspect, explained Eugeniu Rybca, the brother of one of the officers.

“We contacted the constitutional authorities and we were told that the activities of the Interiors Ministry had been coordinated with the Transnistrian police, and there is evidence in this regard”, said Rybca. “We demand the immediate and unconditioned release of the three Moldovan citizens, who are detained in disrespect for their rights”, added Rybca, who is also a lawyer.

“The separatist authorities attempt to impose themselves by arresting not only civilians but also functionaries from Moldova in a bid to show that they are the only ones which have authority in the region and can do whatever they please. We think this is a blatant violation of the European Convention (on Human Rights) and in particular of the right to freedom and safety of a person”, said Alexandru Postica of the

human rights watchdog "Promo-Lex".

The arrested officers are held in separate cells. Most likely they will be represented in court by lawyers from Transnistria.

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