

Torture and ill-treatment in Moldova including Transnistria : Impunity prevails



Paris-Chisinau, 7 October 2013.
The situation for prisoners in Moldova, including in Transnistria, is dire. Conditions of detention are deplorable ; prisoners and their families are constantly subject to racketeering; torture is practised routinely and in a striking impunity.

These are the findings of a FIDH mission to Moldova, presented in a [report](#) launched today in Chisinau, Moldova, with the support of FIDH member organisation, Promo-LEX. FIDH mandated its delegation to visit prisons and to meet both civil society experts and the relevant authorities in Moldova, including the breakaway region of Transnistria.

The 2009 post-electoral violence and arbitrary arrests of protesters brought to light Moldova's serious problems with inhuman and degrading treatment. Cases of ill-treatment and torture have still not been investigated. In the recent years, Moldova took measures to establish a climate of security in police stations, passed a number of laws, ratified international treaties and named an Ombudsman. Despite these efforts, much remains to be done, as shown by the numerous recommendations in the report.

The prison facilities visited in Moldova are rude. Racketeering is rampant and violence against and between

inmates creates a climate of fear. Requests for prison transfers or cell changes are rarely accepted. Guards accused of abusing detainees receive only minimal sentences.

«Torture is common practice in police stations » stated Artak Kirakosyan, FIDH mission delegate. **«The corruption of lawyers, judges and doctors, who provide medical evaluations exacerbates the situation »** added M. Kirakosyan who today presents the report at the roundtable which unites the representatives of the authorities and the civil society in Chisinau.

«All in all, follow up to complaints happen in very few cases. In 2012, only 14 percent of declared torture cases were investigated. » added Pavel Postica from Promo-LEX.

In Transnistria the conditions are even more deplorable. The *de facto* Transnistrian authorities refuse to even acknowledge human rights problems. They function independently, even though the territory, marked by heavy Russian presence, is not recognised by Moldova or the international community. At the same time, access to Moldovan justice is difficult for the inhabitants of Transnistria. However, the European Court of Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Committee have highlighted both Russian and Moldova's responsibility for the respect of human rights in Transnistria.

The *de facto* authorities of Transnistria refuse to acknowledge that torture is taking place in police stations and prisons. Even the Ombudsman told the FIDH mission that there were only very few cases of torture in the territory. He added that given the small size of the territory and the close community ties, any such cases « would not go unheard of ». The collected testimonies proved otherwise.

“We had a good debate with the Moldovan authorities in Chisinau. They understand the challenges and are open to dialogue with civil society”, said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH

honorary President who opened the roundtable in Chisinau. ***“However, they must do much more to ensure that Moldovans have access to justice and that conditions of detentions meet international standards”,*** she added. ***“It is time they recognise responsibility for human rights violations including in Transnistria”.***

Moldova recently accelerated its process of accession to the European Union (EU) and has undertaken many reforms in this direction. Chisinau hosted the 5th EU Eastern Partnership Forum from 4 to 6 October this year. The remaining human rights black spots in the whole of Moldova should be addressed immediately and should be considered a condition for signing the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.

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