

Disputed Entities in Eastern Europe: Human Rights Sacrificed

Chisinau, 19 November 2014 – Today, FIDH member organisation Promo-LEX presented the FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) Report: “Assessing Human Rights protection in Eastern European Conflict and disputed entities” on the occasion of a discussion panel held in Chisinau on “**Human rights in conflict zones. Case of Moldova**”.

The status of disputed entities in Eastern Europe is the source of serious human rights violations, and the victims have no access to justice, denounces FIDH in its report. There are five such territories, since the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. In order to remedy the legal vacuum, and in view of the danger of the situation spreading, FIDH calls on the international community to settle these conflicts without delay, taking the protection of human rights as the basis for such settlements.

“It is intolerable that 3.3 million people who live in disputed entities in Eastern Europe should find themselves without access to justice for the numerous human rights violations they are subjected to”, declared Karim Lahidji, FIDH President. *“The de facto authorities, the States supporting them, but also the de jure authorities and the international community must take action to protect them”,* he added.

Crimea has joined Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh on the list of disputed entities in Eastern Europe. Crimea was illegally annexed by Russia, but the other four are self-proclaimed republics that are not recognised by the international community.

With its partners in the region, including Promo-LEX, FIDH has looked into these situations, and denounces in its report the serious human rights violations the inhabitants are subjected to, and which spring directly from their disputed status. FIDH lists the multiple violations, perpetrated under the control of the entities, of the right to freedom of movement, the right of citizenship, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to property, and the right to health and education. There are also restrictions on the freedom of expression and association. The report also mentions numerous cases of arbitrary detention and acts of torture and ill-treatment by the police, and draws attention to the deplorable conditions in the places of detention.

Furthermore, FIDH stigmatises the fact that the victims have no recourse against such violations. The judicial system in the entities concerned is deficient, dependant or corrupt, and the international human rights mechanisms are unavailable. As the entities are not recognised by the whole of the international community, they cannot ratify the international human rights conventions.

"Regardless of whether they are legitimate or not, whether they are recognized or not, the persons and administrations that control a territory where people live must ensure compliance with basic human rights and freedoms on that territory. Obviously, in these circumstances, the said administrations ARE RESPONSIBLE for the human rights situation in the region they control", said Ion Manole, Executive Director of the Promo-LEX Association. ***"We welcome the growing interest of FIDH for the situation of human rights in conflict areas, and hope very much that their authority and experience will determine a change of approach towards these grey areas among international institutions and organizations established to monitor, promote and protect human rights",*** added Ion Manole.

International organisations such as the Organisation for

Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Union have turned away from these situations, considering that as the conflicts and their settlement processes were “frozen”, there was no urgency. In so doing they have relaxed their pressure in favour of human rights in such territories, and open the way for other territorial disputes.

“If the international community fails to take action on these situations, human rights violations will continue, conflicts can break out and there is a real risk of other territorial disputes like Crimea or South Ossetia erupting in Eastern Europe, but also in Central Asia”, declared Tolesan Ismailova, FIDH Vice President.

The international organisations must contribute actively to the conflict settlement process, starting with the protection of human rights and support to civil society and human rights defenders, through suitable political action, in collaboration with the *de jure* and *de facto* authorities. By putting the emphasis on the protection of human rights as the cornerstone of the settlement of conflicts, the international community can defuse these time bombs: the disputed entities.

The Report [here](#).

The event was organized by Promo-LEX Association in partnership with FIDH and Civil Rights Defenders, with the financial support from the Kingdom of the Netherlands through the MATRA-KAP Program and National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

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