

CIVIL SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION

Nr.1

40th Session [January – February, 2022] of the UPR Working Group
of the United Nations Human Rights Council
3rd cycle of Universal Periodic Review

After second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, Moldova agreed to ensure the implementation of recommendations regarding human rights in the Transnistrian region.

EMERGING ISSUES

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the press

On March 20, 2020, right from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-2026 “Strategy for Combating Extremism in the Transnistrian region” was approved. Victims of this program were primarily inconvenient politicians, journalists and local civic activists.

The persons who criticize the representatives of the *de facto* administration are sanctioned for committing the following crimes: “Public insult of the President”; “Public insult to public persons”. Additionally, the local criminal code of the Transnistrian region establishes penalties of 3 to 5 years for “denying the positive role of the peacekeeping mission”. During this period, 2 cases were identified, when people criticized the need to deploy the Russian army (not the peacekeeping mission) in the Transnistrian region.

Several cases have been documented when media representatives were intimidated, persecuted in the Transnistrian region or in the Security Zone for trying to document situations of public interest.

Starting with May 2020, journalists Andrei Captarenco and Viorica Tataru are filming the documentary series “Beyond the Nistru” for the TV station TV8. During 2020-2021, their activity was thwarted by the representatives of the Russian peacekeeping mission. In both cases, the Moldovan police refused to start a criminal case.



Freedom of assembly

In the Transnistrian region, public assemblies are allowed based on prior notification of local authorities. However, a practice has emerged, in which no public assembly takes place without the authorization / agreement of the local administration. On 2 June 2018, a group of people held a public assembly and criticized representatives of the Transnistrian administration for the poor social conditions existing in the Transnistrian region.

June 3, 2018

Militia arrested about **40 people** that attended the assembly on 2 June 2018. In 2020, during a pandemic, at least two public assemblies were identified that resulted in sanctions.

Activity environment of NGOs



April 17, 2015

The Transnistrian KGB issued a statement announcing the launch of a criminal investigation against members of the Promo-LEX Association and the application of “special investigative measures” to them.

Since 2015, free access to the Transnistrian region has been banned for the members of the Promo-LEX Association.



May 19, 2018

The new regulations on non-profit organizations entered into force in the Transnistrian region. According to new regulations, local non-profit organizations that receive funding from abroad will not be able to carry out a series of activities, including those related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The first organization to which the mechanism of “civil society cleansing” has been applied is the “Apriori Information and Legacy Center”.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Invite the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, to visit the Republic of Moldova in order to assess the civil society environment in the Transnistrian region.



Ensure that an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into all reported cases of reprisals against human rights defenders, activists, and journalists are carried out, with a view toward publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards.



Encourage the Government of the Republic of Moldova to take concrete steps to explicitly recognize the legitimacy of the work done by Human Rights Defenders and to implement the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders at the national level.

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“This advocacy factsheet was prepared by Association “Promo-LEX” on the basis of its joint NGOs Submission. Please access the NGO Submission at the following link: www.promolex.md.”