

16 year in support of torture survivors



Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims "Memoria"

ACTIVITY REPORT 2016

Chisinau
Republic of Moldova

ABOUT RCTV MEMORIA

The Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims "Memoria" (RCTV Memoria) is an apolitical and non-profit organization based in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova. RCTV Memoria was officially registered by the Ministry of Justice on 7.12.99, and has become an active member of the International Network led by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) and of the European Network of Rehabilitation Centres for Survivors of Torture.

On the national level, RCTV Memoria is an active member of Human Rights platforms and entities focused on and offering support to victims and vulnerable groups: Gender Equality Platform, National Coalition "Life without violence" and Active Ageing Platform.

RCTV Memoria is the only NGO dedicated to the rehabilitation of victims of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment in Moldova and has built also a solid expertise in the documentation of cases, advocacy and prevention.

RCTV Memoria provides comprehensive rehabilitation which consists of medical, psychological, legal and social assistance. Our team already supported many cases in Courts, including the issuance of 408 Reports (Extracts from medical files) with statements and conclusions to be used in juridical procedures and for claiming compensation. So far, 18 beneficiaries benefitted from compensation through the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights.

Vision: A prosperous society, in which the respect for human rights is guaranteed, especially the right not to be tortured, and in which every person is able to benefit from quality services, including medical services; a society in which people feel like useful members of the society and can contribute to the social progress. As a representative of civil society, RCTV "Memoria" will play an active and important role in the implementation of this vision.

Mission: RCTV Memoria is dedicated to providing comprehensive rehabilitation assistance to all survivors of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, through medical, psychosocial and legal support, ultimately working towards the eradication of torture in the Republic of Moldova.

Beneficiaries: RCTV Memoria aims to provide assistance to all victims of torture, in line with dispositions of article 14 of the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT), as well as with the General Comment no. 3 of CAT. During 2016, our work has been focused on four cluster groups of beneficiaries:

- Torture victims among survivors of political repressions;
- Recent victims of torture in Republic of Moldova (including Transnistrian region);
- Torture victims among refugees and asylum-seekers;
- Victims of domestic and sexual violence.

We also assist family members classifying them as second degree victims.

ANNUAL REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

I. REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

RCTV Memoria provides rehabilitation as fully as possible, offering medical, psychological, legal and social assistance to victims, in line with the provisions of the General Comment Nr.3 to the art 14 of UN Convention against Torture.

Rehabilitation program included: evaluation of trauma, screening, interventions for healing in acute trauma, ongoing therapy, monitoring of health status and medical documentation of cases.

To restore victims' dignity and to help them to rebuild their lives, RCTV Memoria developed a comprehensive model of assistance, providing the following services:

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE - consultations with a general practitioner, therapist and a cardiologist and additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations and specialized treatment, performed as external referrals, paid from implemented projects. Within the budget limits, beneficiaries are provided with medication free of charge.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE - Beneficiaries' problems and needs have been assessed through interviews and psychological tests, and then they are provided with psychological counseling in order to improve their psycho-emotional status by attending individual and group therapeutic sessions. Among the most often psychological effects of torture diagnosed by professionals from our Mental Health department is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, sleeping problems, feelings of fear and insecurity, increase of aggressiveness and other symptoms.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE - The social assistance provided by RCTV Memoria aims at supporting beneficiaries in identifying problems and developing problem-solving skills, providing them with information regarding existent available opportunities and services, support in finding a job or other occupation and organizing creative clubs, social/cultural events (such as day trips, visits to museums, theatre, etc.)

LEGAL AID - In a context of prevailing impunity and ineffective investigation of allegations of torture, our legal assistance intends to support beneficiaries and their lawyers in bringing their cases before national courts and also the European Court of Human Rights, referring to art. 3, and assisting them in building their legal strategy, in cooperation with specialized HR NGOs in this field. RCTV Memoria has assisted in providing much needed legal counseling, legal analysis of documentation, preparation of specific petitions and claims and securing appropriate legal representatives.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION - a comprehensive medical documentation of all beneficiaries' cases of torture or degrading, inhuman and cruel treatment or punishment and cases of gender based violence, which provides a solid ground for our beneficiaries' claims for redress as well as for campaigning and advocacy work.

RCTV Memoria is the only non-governmental centre in the Republic of Moldova capable of providing survivors of torture with appropriate medical documentation and certification in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Protocol.

REHABILITATION IN FIGURES

- ✓ A total number of 367 clients assisted in-house: 281 victims of torture (122 female and 159 male) and 86 victims of sexual and gender based violence (66 female, and 20 kids, secondary victims).
- ✓ 253 detainees benefitted from better psycho-social services within the project implemented in 7 prisons (62 women and 21 kids 0-3 years old who are in detention with their mothers; 66 juveniles and 105 men). The pregnant women (4), mothers (20) and babies (21) benefitted from medicines, food, sanitary packs, and humanitarian aid.
- ✓ Out of 281 torture victims assisted, 135 survivors benefited from comprehensive rehabilitation programs for a period from 6 to 12 months and 146 were assisted for short periods (up to 6 months) and after that kept under monitoring of their health status, through periodic visits, phone calls and conversations.
- ✓ Better results are registered in the longer periods of assistance. In the cases assisted between 6 and 12 months, the improvement rate was 86,7% (117 cases from 135).

MEDICAL STAFF (General Practitioners and Psychotherapist) performed per total to all the assisted beneficiaries to all target groups: 3025 in house visits (151 primary and 2874 current visits. They coordinated also 2028 external referrals (for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, and specialized treatment).

TWO PSYCHOLOGISTS (FT, 100% and PT, 50%, worked for 6 months) performed 605 visits (322 counseling and, 283 psychotherapy sessions, 9 co-therapy sessions).

- ✓ 6 informative sessions have been organized (in 2 groups), of the following topics: 'Stress management'; 'Conflict management'; 'Assertive communication'.
- ✓ 265 psychological tests have been performed, which have revealed and documented post-traumatic consequences, including 45 cases of anxiety and 66 cases of clinical depression.
- ✓ During 2016, 62 working visits have been performed in 7 penitentiaries. Our psychologist performed 15 sessions within a program of occupational and socialization activities, including elements of art-therapy.

SOCIAL ASSISTANT performed: 820 in-house visits, 742 comprehensive conversations and fulfilled 78 social surveys, 350 questionnaires for evaluation of satisfaction degree. 18 beneficiaries benefited from the services of the "Infostudio" social barbershop.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE aimed to support Memoria activity and to help victims so solve their legal issues, to seek justice and to ask for compensation and reparation. Legal assistance was provided to 74 beneficiaries (Recent victims of torture - 31 men, 7 women; Victims of sexual and gender based violence - 27 women; Victims of political repressions - 3 men and 3 women; Victims among refugees - 3 women).

DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION: 31 Extracts form medical files (Medical records) have been released, including 22 for cases of sexual and gender based violence; 8 for recent cases of torture and 1 for a cases from April 2009, for Governmental Commission to receive compensation.

II. PREVENTION OF TORTURE

SUPPORT, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Another important activity of RCTV Memoria is focused on preventing of torture and violence, by improving existing services in the settings where the risk of torture is high (detention facilities), by drafting recommendations to relevant laws and policies, by public awareness building and by conducting of the advocacy work.

2.1. IMPROVEMENT OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL SERVICES FOR DETAINEES:

During 2016, RCTV Memoria continued the implementation of the project *“Joint efforts for better access to psycho-social and medical services in Moldovan prisons”*, financially supported by the MFA of Netherlands.

The overall goal of the action is *“a better functioning of the penitentiary system from Moldova through improved re-integration programs and comprehensive psycho-social services to detainees.”* In order to achieve it, 13 psycho-social programs were organized in 7 prisons:

- 1) **The Occupational Therapy Program “Art and light”** was created in the prison Nr 3 (P3) for helping inmates to create carved and multicolor candles to be offered to families or to be sold through various exhibitions. This program could help them to develop their artistic potential as well as to be initiated in the development of the income generating activities.
- 2) **“Art of plaster modeling”** (P4, for men). The needed equipment and raw materials have been purchased within the project budget. This program helped the inmates to learn about the characteristics of the plaster and the interior design, using the details made with various shapes. They made also some souvenirs. This could be useful for a future activity, hobby or even a job in construction, after releasing from detention.
- 3) **The Occupational Therapy Program “IA - The Symbol of Folklore Tradition”** (P7, for women). The participants learned to select the models, to tailor, to embroider and to join the elements of the blouse. The works have been exposed at the Exhibition with the handcrafts of the Project’ beneficiaries (30.03.17) and at the opening of the first National competition “MaistrIA”.
- 4) **The Club “Photographic Art”** (P10, for juveniles). The beneficiaries learned how to use a camera, how to edit photos and how to present their work, in order to develop a hobby or even to obtain a profession after they will be released.
- 5) **The Club “The Art will save the World”** (P10): This program helps inmates to develop their artistic abilities through art. They sing, dance and enact theatrical plays which are shown in front of their relatives, friends and guests, during various events and festivals.
- 6) **The Club “Skilled hands”** (P10) was created in order to teach and to involve juveniles in various activities like: drawing, graphics, painting, modeling, origami, etc. Their works are being displayed during festivals and exhibitions.
- 7) **The Club “The magic wood”** (P10) teaches how to create interesting paintings using the pyrographs – special devises which have been purchased. The created art ob-

- jects are used to decorate the prison premises and the own cells; they serve as presents for detainees' relatives and are shown in various exhibitions.
- 8) **The Club "Handicraft sitting"** (P13) has been designed to give inmates the opportunity to discover new talents as well as constitutes a useful and enjoyable activity. During the meetings the detained women could develop and/or learn the art of embroidery, knitting and tailoring. A sewing machine and the needed supplies have been purchased for this program.
 - 9) **The Workshop "The Art of Wood"** (P13) was developed with purchasing of the needed instruments, machines, and raw material. It was possible to train new disciples and to decorate the prison church with the created icons. The program will be developed continuously, to teach the detainees the new designs, technologies for making some souvenirs and useful households goods
 - 10) **The Occupational Therapy Program "Handcraft"** (P15): It is meant to teach inmates to draw on wood with pyrographs and how to make some souvenirs or toys. Participants came up with the idea to make wooden cubes where the letters will be written for preschoolers to learn the alphabet.
 - 11) **The project "Multipurpose Hall - The Place for Relaxation, training and psychological rehabilitation"** (P16): The scope of this project is to improve the psychological climate by creating a space for relaxation and psycho-social activities. A former prison cell was renovated and adapted for psycho-social activities with project support (materials) and with involvement of some detainees, for manual labor.
 - 12) **The Occupational Therapy Program "Handcraft"** (P16): It aims at improving psycho-emotional state of the detainees by making objects from the worn clothes, knitting, crocheting, embroidery, sewing, etc. Together with the person responsible of the program, we prepared some educational materials which consist of models of objects to be crafted. The needed materials and a second-hand sewing machine have been purchased within the project budget.
 - 13) **The Concepts "Mothers' School"** (P7 and P16). In both prisons have been assisted 22 women with 24 kids (0-3 years old), including during the pregnancy period (5). The mothers have been informed how to take care of their health and their kids in the best way possible. Medical cards have been offered to document the kids' health status. The needed medicine (antibiotics, syrups for caught, anti-histamines, for digestive pathologies, etc.) have been purchased and provided for free. The needed baby food, baby care, hygienic goods and household things have been purchased for mothers from detention within the project budget.

2.2. 26 JUNE – UN INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF TORTURE VICTIMS

The National Campaign 26th June 2016 has been organized with the involvement of other local partners working in the field of human rights – Amnesty International Moldova, Promo-LEX and the Centre for Independent Journalism.

Under the slogan launched by IRCT - "Support life after torture", the focus of 2016 campaign was celebrating the courage and resilience of torture survivors in living with dignity after torture and trauma, while also calling on state authorities to comply with its international responsibilities and provide rehabilitation assistance to

torture victims and their families. According to the Action Plan developed jointly with our partners, within the period 20 - 26 of June, the following activities were implemented:

- 1) **Press Club for media representatives (24th June)**, was organized together the Centre for Independent Journalism, with participation of representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Amnesty International Moldova, Promo-LEX, UNHCR Moldova. This was an opportunity to raise awareness on the overall situation of torture in the Republic of Moldova, on the rights of survivors to rehabilitation and also to share the recommendations submitted by RCTV Memoria and Promo-LEX in their joint report to the 2nd UPR hearing (2016).
- 2) **Charity Yard Sale (26th June)**. This was simultaneously a fundraising and an awareness-raising initiative. It included the open-air exhibition of artwork created by our beneficiaries, and the unveiling of the painting "From Horror to Healing" by Cesar Perales.
- 3) **"From Horror to Healing": supporting victims of torture through art (13th - 26th June)**. Cesar Perales, an EVS volunteer from Spain kindly agreed to create a painting dedicated to our campaign and to the slogan "Support life after torture". The painting is composed by 16 elements, each symbolizing one year of RCTV Memoria's work.
- 4) **Open House initiative**: Those interested had the opportunity to visit our office space and interact with our staff members, in order to better understand the implementation of RCTV Memoria's comprehensive rehabilitation model, the daily work at RCTV Memoria, the reality of torture in the Republic of Moldova, stories of survivors, among other issues, and to access resources available in our library.
- 5) **Screening of film "The Look of Silence" (26th June)**. Thanks to the partnership between IRCT and Platform for Films, RCTV Memoria screened the film "The Look of Silence" (2014), directed by Joshua Oppenheimer, as part of its Open House initiative, which raises complex questions regarding how to deal with trauma and the past at different levels and their intersections (country, community, family, individual); the role of truth-telling and acknowledgement for trauma healing; relations between victims and perpetrators.
- 6) **Appeal in support of victims and UNVFVT**. RCTV Memoria launched an appeal, signed by 14 civil society organizations working in the Republic of Moldova, calling on authorities and diplomatic representations based in the country to increase their efforts to effectively respect and implement the right of torture survivors' to rehabilitation under article 14 of the UN Convention against Torture; urging authorities to ensure the creation of an independent national prevention mechanism on torture and victims' access to justice; to guarantee the creation of a national mechanism responsible for overseeing the implementation of the UN Convention against Torture in Republic of Moldova and to contribute to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

2.3. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

2.3.1. Report submission to the Universal Periodic Review

In 2016, RCTV Memoria was involved in reporting to the Universal Periodic Review of Moldova. In the submitted report have been covered 3 issues: 1) impunity for torture; 2) right to rehabilitation for victims of torture and 3) detention conditions and medical assistance, especially for women.

On a local level, our staff participated actively at 5 public events, to advocate for the issues covered in the submitted report. The public events have been organized by the Ombudsmen Office, United Nations Development Programme, Ministry of Justice and Embassy of Sweden in Moldova. In this way, the Briefing note highlighting the identified issues and recommendations regarding torture and the detention conditions, have been given to the representatives of the embassies in Moldova.

Within 3th to 7th October, 2 representatives of RCTV Memoria participated at meetings with representatives of Permanent Missions to Geneva of the Finland, Czech Republic, the United States of America, Austria, Germany, Canada, Romania, Netherlands, Norway and Ireland. Also, the right to rehabilitation and detainees' access to medical services and bad conditions of detentions were raised during meetings of representatives of United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health Office and Special Rapporteur on Torture Office.

By the end, five of our recommendations have been directly included in the final list given to Moldovan authorities, among the total number of 12 recommendations related to torture and detention conditions.

2.3.2. European institution and instruments.

RCTV Memoria is one of the most active HR NGOs from Moldova within the Moldova-EU Dialog on Human Rights, regarding issues of torture and promoting the victims' rights to rehabilitation. Our team promotes the European values on HR and respect of the European instruments on HR.

2.4. CAMPAIGN "16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE"

RCTV Memoria is concerned about victims' of domestic and sexual violence wellbeing, thus advocating for their right to rehabilitation. On 3th December, RCTV Memoria took part, as member of the NGO Coalition against Violence, in the Charity Winter Bazaar organized by International Women' Club.

On 22th and 29th November, RCTV Memoria was represented by its psychologists at 2 sessions on combating domestic violence, in the villages of Cricova and Cimişlia. The meetings were organized by the Ombudsman's office in Moldova. The participants were informed about the circle of violence, consequences of the domestic violence for the society, people, and children; about posttraumatic stress syndrome and Stockholm syndrome; about the institutions that offer women victims the support needed and about the importance of local multidisciplinary teams working in support of victims of domestic violence.

On 9th December, our centre together with Promo-LEX Association and Association against Domestic Violence - Casa Marioarei” organized a public event in the central park in order to inform citizens about the phenomenon of domestic violence. As a result more than 400 people received information about the services available for victims of domestic violence together with a warm tea and some good words from our professionals – psychologists, social assistants and lawyers.

2.5. TRAINING FOR RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS

Informative and training activities for prison staff have been implemented after a need assessment, performed together with the Penitentiary Department. The topics have been selected to fit with the needs of prison staff. During the reported period the following 6 events have been organized, with involvement of employees from all (17) Moldovan penitentiaries, including administrative staff:

- 1) Workshop: “A sustainable partnership role in improving psychosocial services for people in detention”, 20/05/16, 30 participants.
- 2) Training: “Conflict Management”; 15/08/2016, 28 participants.
- 3) Training: “Nonviolent Communication”. 15/08/2016, 28 participants.
- 4) Training: “Techniques to develop emotional intelligence”; 15/09/2016, 20 participants.
- 5) Training: “Stress reduction and relaxation techniques”, 15/09/2016, 20 participants.
- 6) Seminar: “What torture is?”, 31/10/2016, 23 participants.

Beyond the dedication and efforts of our team, all the performed activities have been possible due to the financial support of our donors, to whom our team and beneficiaries are very grateful.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2016

Annual income by donors	USD (\$)
United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT)	25,500
IRCT Centers Support Grant/ OAK Foundation	12,838
IRCT, La Luz	2230
MFA of Netherlands, HR Program, Embassy of Netherlands in Bucharest	48,938
IRCT, DFI Project	2,275
Delegation of European Union in the Republic of Moldova	10,767
TOTAL INCOME	102,548