

17 year in support of torture survivors



# Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria”

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2017

Chisinau  
Republic of Moldova

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 Centers 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.

**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 2017, 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 390 clients assisted in-house: 282 victims of torture (145 female and 137 male) and 108 victims of sexual and gender based violence (89 female, and 19 kids, secondary victims).
- ✓ About 750 detainees benefitted from better psycho-social services within the project implemented in 7 prisons (115 women and 22 kids 0-3 years old who are in detention with their mothers; 123 juveniles and 502 men). The pregnant women (5), mothers (24) and babies (22) benefitted from medicines, food, sanitary packs, and humanitarian aid.

- ✓ Out of 282 torture victims assisted, 214 survivors benefited from comprehensive rehabilitation programs for a period from 6 to 12 months. Among them, 85 have been assisted within monitoring programs with periodic follow-ups and 129 have been included in complex rehabilitation programs. Also, 68 beneficiaries were assisted for shorter periods (up 6 months). Including 19 for rehabilitation and 49 for monitoring and periodic treatment (including 48 cases from detention)
- ✓ Better results are registered in the longer periods of assistance. In the cases assisted between 6 and 12 months, the improvement rate was 93% (120 cases from 129).

MEDICAL STAFF (General Practitioners and Psychotherapist) performed per total to all the assisted beneficiaries to all target groups: 2158 in house visits. They coordinated also 1863 external referrals (for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, and specialized treatment).

TWO PSYCHOLOGISTS (one FT, 100% and one PT, 50%, who worked only for 2 months) performed 435 visits (177 counseling and, 250 psychotherapy sessions, 6 co-therapy sessions).

- ✓ Informative sessions have been organized (in 2 groups), of the following topics: 'Stress management'; 'Conflict management'; 'Assertive communication'.
- ✓ 261 psychological tests have been performed, which have revealed and documented post-traumatic consequences, including 33 cases of anxiety and 37 cases of clinical depression.
- ✓ During 2017, 51 working visits have been performed in 7 penitentiaries. Our psychologist performed about 10 sessions within a program of occupational and socialization activities, including elements of art-therapy.

SOCIAL ASSISTANT performed: 818 in-house visits, 473 comprehensive conversations and fulfilled 96 social surveys, 214 questionnaires for evaluation of satisfaction degree.

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 61 beneficiaries (Recent victims of torture and Victims of sexual and gender based violence - 51 women; Victims of political repressions - 10).

DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION: 21 Extracts form medical files (Medical records) have been released, including 19 for cases of sexual and gender based violence; 2 for recent cases of torture.

## 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 2017, RCTV Memoria successfully finished the project "Joint efforts for better access to psycho-social and medical services in Moldovan prisons", implemented in period 15.10.2015-30.04.2017 in 7 prisons, with the financial support of MFA of Netherlands, through Embassy from Bucharets, Romania.

1) In continuation,

Within period 01.05.2017-31.12.2017 the project "**Better psycho-social services for persons from detention and respecting of their rights**", implemented by RCTV Memoria in partnership with Penitentiary Department, in period 15.03.2017-31.12.2017, with the financial support of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Republic of Moldova.

The overall goal of the action was *to improve psychosocial services in four prisons in Republic of Moldova*. In order to achieve it 7 psycho-social programs were created and / or developed:

**Occupational Therapy Program "IA - The Symbol of National Tradition"** (P7, for women) It was developed to include other activities, tablecloths, cushions and other handicrafts, embroidered or crocheted.

**Club "Skilled hands" (P11)** was created in order to learn and to involve women and minors in different activities, such as: embroidery, crochet, drawing, painting, pyrography, modeling, origami, etc.

**Club "Wood Magic" (P13)** was created in order to learn and to involve minors in various activities, such as: drawing, painting by pyrography, modeling, origami, etc.

**Club "La șezătoare" (P13)** was designed to give detainees the opportunity to discover new talents in a useful and enjoyable way. During the sessions, women learn to embroider, knit, sew and cut. There was bought a sewing machine and raw materials for this program.

Project "**Polivalent Hall - place for relaxation, training and psychological rehabilitation**" (P13): The aim of this project is to improve the psychological climate by creating a space for relaxation and psychosocial activities. One room has been adapted for psychosocial activities with the support (purchase of construction materials) and the involvement of prisoners for manual labor.

**The "Handcraft" employment therapy program (P16):** It aims to improve the psycho-emotional state of detainees by making clothes, knitting, crochet, embroidery, sewing, etc. Together with the person in charge of the program, some educational materials, including handicraft models, have been prepared. The necessary materials and a sewing machine within the project budget were purchased

**"Mother school"** was implemented in P7 and P16). In both prisons were assisted about 20 women (including four pregnant) and 21 children (0-3 years). Mothers were informed how to take care of their health and children. The need for drugs (antibiotics, cough syrups, anti-histamines, for digestive diseases, etc.), baby food were purchased from rehabilitation project funded by the UN Voluntary Fund (UNVFVT) and offered free of charge. For children in detention was also purchased: Evaporated milk, juices, baby food, care products, hygiene products and household 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 other NGOs.

Under the slogan launched by IRCT - “Support life after torture”, the focus of 2017 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) Public Event (24<sup>th</sup> June), was organized together with Amnesty International Moldova and other NGOs at “Valea Morilor” park, in Chisinau, with involvement of about 60 persons. The projection in the open air, of the movie “Capcana”, has been organized in order to attract the attention of the general public about the state's obligation to support torture victims. The movie is about the terror from 7 of April 2009, when hundreds persons have been arrested and tortured in police custody and at least 4 cases of death have been registered in that night.
- 2) A public appeal was also launched to the Moldovan authorities, asking to: a) Create an efficient mechanism for rehabilitation of victims of torture or ill-treatment; b) Implementation of organic laws and regulations fighting impunity in cases of torture, as well as assistance, compensation of victims of torture; c) Create an independent and efficient entity of effective investigation of all cases of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and domestic violence.
- 3) Round table (26<sup>th</sup> June), with the theme: “Torture over the generations. Deportations from Bessarabia” RCTV Memoria organized a round table. At the event was discussed about the phenomenon of torture, as well as about the trans-generation transmission of trauma. The event took place at the Municipal Library “B.H. Hasdeu”, in Chisinau and it hosted over 70 participants, including victims of political repressions from periods: 1941 – 1956, 1956 - 1992. The phenomenon of torture in the Republic of Moldova is dangerous not only because it leads to a continuous increase in the number of victims. Relevant treatments, aggression, inter-human violence, impunity and injustice have a role to destabilize society as a whole.

## **2.3. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES**

### **2.3.1. Shadow report to CAT for 62<sup>nd</sup> session**

In 2017, RCTV Memoria submitted a shadow report to CAT for 62<sup>nd</sup> session together with Promo-LEX, OMCT and IRCT and raised the most actual issues regarding torture, detention conditions and access to medical services. A team member participated at pre-session meetings, advocating for right to rehabilitation, appropriate detention conditions, access to justice and to medical care in prisons, effective investigation of torture combating impunity. Some of them have been mentioned by the experts during the session in Geneva and later have been included in the list of recommendations received by Moldova. One of the concluding observations (22/b) refers to accepting by Moldovan Courts the Reports released by independent institutions, like RCTV Memoria: "Ensure that the courts in the State party accept the reports of independent forensic examinations and autopsies as evidence in criminal and civil cases"; RCTV Memoria is the only alternative institution in Republic of Moldova able to provide survivors of torture and other form of violence, with appropriate medical certification in accordance to Istanbul Protocol.

The same issues were presented for Moldova-EU Dialog on Human Rights, keeping on rehabilitation on this agenda in both sessions

Two of our team members participated at the 16th annual meeting of the European Network "Towards global health: Refugees and victims of torture in Europe today", which took place on 12-14 November 2017, in Bucharest, Romania, with a presentation "Prevention of long-term sequels of torture: Helpful interventions".

In order to successfully carry out its' activity in 2017 RCTV Memoria signed a new cooperation agreement with the National Inspectorate of Probation, in order to promote our work, to facilitate victims' identification and rehabilitation. as well as

### **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. 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 10 events have been organized, with the involvement of medical and psycho-social staff from all (17) Moldovan penitentiaries:

- 1) May 17, 2017: "Capacity Building for employees from psychosocial services from prison" (10 participants);
- 2) June 8, 2017: "SWOT Analysis of Penitentiary Psychosocial Service and Capacity Building". Event organized jointly with the DPI Training Center to conduct the SWOT analysis of the institution, (21 Participants);
- 3) September 15, 2017: "Capacity building through exchange and study visit to P16" (21 participants); In addition,
- 4) 21-22 February 2017. Training course: "Organizational Ethics in the penitentiary system"; 25 participants (heads of security service; deputy directors of penitentiaries).
- 5) 23-24 March 2017. Training course: "Conflict management within the penitentiary system", 25 participants (heads of Human resources; Instructive center, directors and deputy directors of penitentiaries).
- 6) 28.04.2017 Training course: "Torture. The role of medical professionals from penitentiary system in the Identifying and documentation of cases" (25 participants).
- 7) May 22th, 2017: "The role of medical services in the penitentiary system in the identification and medical documentation of torture" - Workshop I (22 participants);
- 8) June 12th, 2017: "Torture. The role of psychosocial staff in the penitentiary system in identifying and documenting cases ". Training (27 participants);
- 9) December 7th, 2017: "The role of psychologists and social workers in the penitentiary system in identifying and documenting cases of torture, inhuman or other forms of violence" (36 Participants);
- 10) December, 19th and 22th, 2017 "The role of medical and other prison services in identifying, documenting and reporting cases of torture, inhuman or other forms of violence". Workshop in 2 separate groups (50 participants in total);

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 2017

Annual income by donors	EURO
United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT)	26 558,00
IRCT Centers Support Grant/ OAK Foundation	1,230,00
Embassy of the Federal Republic	40,000,00
MFA of Netherlands, HR Program, Embassy of Netherlands in Bucharest	22,094,00
IRCT, DFI Project sub grant UPR	1,428,00
Delegation of European Union in the Republic of Moldova	46,292,00
Women's Law Center, OAK Foundation	2,869,00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>140,471,00</b>