

# REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR TORTURE VICTIMS “MEMORIA”

## 21 YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE



## ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

Chişinău 2021

## I. ABOUT RCTV MEMORIA

The Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria” (RCTV Memoria) is an apolitical and non-profit organization, located in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. RCTV Memoria was officially registered at the Ministry of Justice on December 7, 1999, 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.

RCTV “Memoria” is performing its activity according to the Constitution of Republic of Moldova and to the Legislation in force.

At the national level, RCTV Memoria is an active member of various Human Rights entities, focused on promoting the rights and providing support to victims and vulnerable groups, such as: the Platform for Gender Equality, the National Coalition “Life without violence”, the Active Ageing Platform and Working Groups. RCTV Memoria is the only NGO from the Republic of Moldova, dedicated to the comprehensive rehabilitation of victims of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, or ill-treatment. It has built also a solid expertise in the documentation of cases, advocacy and prevention.

**Vision:** A prosperous society in which the respecting of Human Rights is guaranteed, especially the right to not be tortured, in which every person, especially victims of crimes, will benefit from the qualitative services, including medical assistance, will feel like a useful member of the society and will contribute to the social progress. As a representative of the civil society, RCTV “Memoria” will be an active and important actor in the reforming, development and prosperity of our society.

**Mission:** Rehabilitation through comprehensive assistance: medical, psychological, social and legal to victims of torture, of the gender-based violence, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as promoting of a society without torture and violence.

### **RCTV Memoria values underlie all that we do. We are committed to:**

- the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, in accordance with international law;
- democracy, transparency, accountability and the rule of law;
- freedom from torture and from other forms of violence;
- the right to health as a fundamental right of every person;
- the Principles of Medical Ethics recognized internationally, in particular those related to the role of the health professionals in preventing of torture and other forms of violence;
- cultural diversity and mutual respect, high professionalism, dedication to target groups and offering qualitative and efficient services;
- high individual and group responsibility, morality, team spirits, efficient partnerships and mutual support in the implementation of activities;

**Beneficiaries:** The comprehensive rehabilitation through medical, social, psychological and legal assistance, is offered to all persons regardless their nationality, age, gender, political views, place of residence, and so on, who are considered victims of torture, according to article 1 of the UN Convention against Torture (UN CAT) or victims or other forms of violence, according to the national and international Law.

The needed assistance and services are provided to the following target groups:

- ***Victims of political repressions***, who have been arrested, persecuted and subjected to various forms of physical and psychological torture or ill-treatment, during Soviet times, and more recently. This group of beneficiaries is relevant also for research and analysis of the medical and psycho-social consequences of various forms of torture, their evolution and the impact on different aspects of their personal, family, social and political life. Thus, this information and experience allows the planning of more effective and appropriate assistance to victims of recent torture, in terms of prevention of diseases and of long-term effects of torture, correlated with suffered stress and traumas.
- ***Recent victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment***, including persons from detention. This group also includes people who suffered during the brutal intervention, persecution and terror against students or young people after the anti-communist protests from April 2009, when local NGOs collected data and testimonies of over 600 victims and their families or lawyers. Survivors of torture need special attention for improving their state of health and for preventing the belated consequences of trauma.
- ***Survivors of torture among refugees and asylum seekers in Moldova***. This group allows us to perform the analysis of the torture phenomenon and its impact at regional and global levels, through different aspects: political, religious, cultural, medical, social and psychological (epidemiology of torture). Among the countries of origin of these beneficiaries, are: Turkey, Syria, Ukraine, Iraq, Palestine, Russia, Georgia, Cuba, Armenia.
- ***Victims of gender-based violence, including victims of sexual and domestic violence***. The overall situation in Moldova regarding violence against women is alarming. The number of victims has increased considerably in the last years, especially in the pandemic period, and their access to Justice is still difficult because of lack of appropriate documentation of their cases, for collecting medical, psychological, social, legal and other evidences of various forms of violence.

Depending on the availability of resources, if necessary, this comprehensive assistance is provided to secondary victims, such as close relatives of the survivors of torture and other forms of violence.

## II. ANNUAL REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM 2021

### 2.1. REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

RCTV Memoria provides rehabilitation to the fullest extent possible, offering medical, psychological, legal and social assistance to victims, in line with the provisions of the General Comment No.3 to the art 14 of the UN Convention against Torture. Our Rehabilitation programs include evaluation of trauma, screening, interventions for healing of acute trauma, ongoing therapy, monitoring of beneficiaries' health status and medical documentation of cases. To restore victims' dignity and to help them rebuild their lives, RCTV Memoria has developed a model of comprehensive assistance, providing the following services:

- Medical services included:** in-house consultations of the General Practitioners and Psychotherapist, as well as additional medical consultations, diagnostic evaluations and specialized treatment, performed as external referrals, which are paid from the implemented projects. Within the budget limits, beneficiaries are provided medicine, free of charge.
- Psychological assistance:** post-traumatic problems and needs are evaluated through interviews and psychological tests., Psychological counseling, individual and group therapy sessions are performed, in order to improve their psycho-emotional status and trauma healing.
- Social assistance** provided at RCTV Memoria, aims to support beneficiaries in identifying problems and developing problem-solving skills, providing them with information regarding available opportunities and

services, supporting them in finding a job or other occupation, and organizing social/cultural events (visits to museums, the theatre, etc.).

**d) Legal assistance.** In the context of predominant impunity and ineffective investigation of allegations of torture, our legal assistance works toward supporting beneficiaries and their lawyers in bringing their cases before national courts as well as before the European Court of Human Rights, in accordance with article 3, and assisting them in building their legal strategy, in cooperation with specialized HR NGOs. The legal counseling, legal analyses of the documentation, preparation of the specific petitions and claims, and securing appropriate legal representatives, was among provided services.

**e) Documentation and certification.** The RCTV Memoria' staff performed a comprehensive documentation of all the assisted cases of torture or degrading, and inhuman treatment, and of gender-based violence. This provides a solid foundation for our beneficiaries' claims for redress, as well as for campaigning and ongoing advocacy work. RCTV Memoria is the only non-governmental entity in the Republic of Moldova, able to perform appropriate medical documentation and certification, in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Protocol.

#### **REHABILITATION IN FIGURES:**

During 2021, RCTV Memoria provided services to a total number of 325 persons. Among them: a) 235 victims of torture (VoT), including 75 new cases; b) 216 primary, and 19 secondary victims; c) 90 survivors of gender-based violence, including 26 new beneficiaries, 81 primary and 9 secondary victims.

**Medical staff** (General Practitioner and Psychotherapist): performed 2397 visits. They also coordinated 423 external referrals for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, specialized treatment and other needed services. More than 2120 prescriptions for provided medicine were registered.

**Psychological assistance:** Within the reporting period, 129 clients have been assisted within 650 visits; 592 counselling; 354 individual sessions. In their work, our staff uses among others, the most recognized tools: Harvard Trauma Questionnaire among others, Hopkins Check list (HCL-25).

**Social Assistant** performed 1522 visits (370 in-office and 1152 online, including: Social surveys/Needs evaluation – 208 fulfilled; Counseling – 1313. 5 women benefited from vocational trainings from and later organized by the Employment Bureau and later obtained employment; 8 persons benefited from free haircuts; 14 persons (adults and children) benefited from free theatre tickets.

**Legal assistance** aimed to support RCTV Memoria activity (drafts of internal policies, of cooperation agreements, contracts; preparing the package of documents for changes of the Statute, according to the Law on NCOs/2020 and further registration, etc.) and helping victims to seek justice and to ask for compensation/reparation. The legal aid to 46 beneficiaries, through 90 consultations (including 46 online/phone).

#### **OTHER SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES:**

**a) Documentation/Certification:** 49 Evaluation and Findings reports issued: 45 for VoT; 4 for VoGBV. Another 19 reports were in the process to be completed by the end of 2021;

**b) Cash assistance to victims:** This support was much needed and even essential for some of the beneficiaries, in the context of COVID crisis, when poverty among them increased. Our team made huge efforts to find donors in order to respond quickly to victims' needs and to facilitate their access to rehabilitation services. The financial support was offered to cover the costs for rent of flats and maintenance, and for local transportation. In spite of financial constraints, we continued to encourage victims from outside of Chisinau to come and benefit from assistance. As it was planned, the financial support was offered to clients with low income for: a) travel costs (21 persons - about 3957 MDL or \$223) in the pandemic crisis: b) rent & utilities for seven women, victims of GBV (with 2-3 children) – 12000 MDL or \$677.

### **c) Anti-COVID-19 emergency measures and other necessary support**

The following actions and activities were performed within the reporting period:

- February - May 2021: 23 beneficiaries of RCTV Memoria (including 13 VoT and 7 VoGBV) received food and hygienic parcels, in addition to anti-COVID measures, generously offered by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in partnership with UN Women Moldova, from the project "The most vulnerable people have improved their living standards and have access to basic necessities in accordance with international human rights standards and Vision 2030," with the financial support of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA);
- On June 16, 2021: RCTV Memoria launched a [Fundraising Campaign "Be the Hero of Daniil](#), with the purpose to collect the amount of money required (23 000.00 MDL) to purchase the Coagulometer, which was critical for a little boy, a refugee from Ukraine (2015), with severe cardiac pathology;
- June 2021: [11 beneficiaries and 4 Victims of GBV](#) benefitted from food packages, provided through the money collected by several employees of the German Embassy in Moldova;
- September 2021: [School supplies and backpacks](#) were provided to 12 children, (six from the "Red Line," France through National Coalition "Life without violence" and six from Caritas Moldova).
- In October 2021, at the request of RCTV Memoria, the "Pentecostal worship" (Cultul Pentecostal) donated about 500 kg of used clothes (mostly warm clothing for winter). In 2021, we maintained continuously our "Social wardrobe", with the generous support of various private donors and our team members. In total, 89 beneficiaries received clothes, shoes, toys, and other needed items from donations.
- December 2021: Active participation of three persons (VoGBV) in the Christmas Yard Sale organized by the NC "Life without violence". Our beneficiaries had the opportunity to sell their own paintings and hand-made objects, created through Art-therapy, in order to encourage economic empowerment.

## **2.2 ADVOCACY, PREVENTION OF TORTURE AND PUBLIC AWARENESS BUILDING**

During 2021, our team members organized, or participated at various events, for increasing the visibility of our activity and highlighting donors' contributions; for prevention and advocacy. Even though many of them were provided online, we are proud to list some of the most well-known and those that had the most impact on society. Among these are: a) The social Campaign, "Protect the Family from Violence" (15.05.-02.06.21); b) the Campaign dedicated to 26 of June; c) the Campaign "16 Days without Violence"; and c) Appeals to authorities for building public awareness about the destructive after-effects of political repressions and cases of transgenerational trauma. We finished the collection of testimonies, documentation of cases of survivors from GULAG and launched the Photo Book "The children of Bessarabia in Gulag," in RO/RU (June 2021), with support of the US Embassy in Moldova.

### **2.2.1. CAMPAIGNS**

#### **1) JUNE 26, 2021, THE UN INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE, WE ORGANIZED:**

- On June 26, 2021 –RCTV Memoria, together with Amnesty International Moldova and other Human Rights defenders, launched a [Public Appeal](#) notifying the public that the authorities are obliged to implement all the recommendations of international departments to prevent and combat torture, including the standard "ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ANY ACT OF TORTURE." The Appeal was launched and sent to the National authorities.

- On June 27, 2021 – [The Video Appeal](#) was published on RCTV Memoria’s Facebook page and in the national mass media channels. The video appeal had an impact of reaching 1141 people, with over 450 views.

## 2) “16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE”

RCTV Memoria is concerned about the well-being of victims of gender-based violence including domestic and sexual violence, thus it advocates for their right to rehabilitation. Between November 25, and December 10, 2021, RCTV Memoria, in partnership with AO Promo - LEX, implemented the International Campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" The campaign was organized in order to raise public awareness on the phenomenon of gender-based violence in Cahul and Ungheni districts

- On November 25, 2021, the photographic exhibition of multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) members from 13 localities of Cahul and Ungheni districts was launched. The purpose of the exhibition was to increase the visibility of multidisciplinary teams at the local level. The agenda included the work experience of the multidisciplinary teams from the targeted localities: challenges and lessons learned, the presentation of two media products - Vox Populi in Cahul and Ungheni district on the phenomenon of violence and multidisciplinary teams.
- Two video products - Vox Populi were created regarding the phenomenon of violence, what do people at local level do if they witness cases of domestic violence and if they have heard of the activity of multidisciplinary teams. The products were presented during the event launching the photographic exhibition of MDT members from the 13 localities of [Cahul](#) and [Ungheni](#) districts. Subsequently, they were published on the RCTV Memoria’ Facebook page and shared on social media groups. The total impact was 1 k 766 persons and 3 k 950 views.

### 2.2.2. OTHER ACTIVITIES

#### 3) TRAINING FOR RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS:

In addition to the trainings for other professionals, in order to improve their knowledge and to increase their own skills, three team members from RCTV Memoria were involved as trainers, in developing of the Program, while other colleagues were involved as participants and for logistic support. The Program included four workshops for 18 participants each (our staff members plus HR activists from the [Platform for Gender Equality](#) - PEG).

- On September 17, 2021, RCTV Memoria organized the first workshop “What do we do with the Psycho-emotional burnout syndrome (SAPE in Ro). The coping models and strategies,” which was focused on the concept of resilience, mindfulness techniques, personal development, psychoeducation, etc.
- October 1-2, 2021, we organized the 2nd and 3rd workshops, which were focused on development of enhanced skills in resilience and reducing the risks of burnout syndrome.

#### 4) PUBLIC EVENTS AND ADVOCACY

Within 2021, our team has been involved within, or organized various public or informative events, for advocacy, prevention, training and promotion of victims’ rights. Among them, can be listed the most relevant events:

- On April 7, 2021 – RCTV Memoria, together with Amnesty International Moldova and organizations human rights defenders, has signed and launched a [Public Appeal](#);
- In the context of the [launching event of the Album-book](#), "The Children of Bessarabia in GULAG. Herbarium of Memories" and about the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the book "[Shattered Destinies.](#)" On 11.06.2021 – In

the context of 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first wave of deportation from Bessarabia- [Live Streaming form the Launching Event](#) of the [Album-book "The children of Bessarabia in GULAG. "Herbarium of memories,"](#) organized in the context of marking the 80th anniversary of the first wave of deportations from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (June 13, 1941);

- On May 15, 2021 - RCTV Memoria published a video collage on their Facebook page with pictures of 45 people who joined the [Flash mob](#). The video collage had an impact of 1,4 thousand people, with over 449 views.
- On July 12th we launched a report about the role of multidisciplinary teams in preventing and combating the phenomenon of violence at a local level. The video had an impact of reaching 6,6 thousand people and 3,6 thousand views.
- Over the period of June 2-8, several videos were published that were made by the multidisciplinary teams from 13 localities of Ungheni district: Ungheni, Pîrlița, Mănoilești, Măcărești, Zagarancea, Rădenii Vechi and Cahul districts: Zîrnești, Andrușul de Jos, Slobozia Mare, Larga Nouă, Văleni, Colibași, Cahul. The video included messages regarding the role of the multidisciplinary teams at local levels in the process of documenting and assisting the cases of violence and the importance of the persons at local level in preventing and combating the violence by reporting the cases to the multidisciplinary team's members. The total impact of the videos was 8 k 378 and 3 k 948 views.
- Between October 19-21, 2021, one team member of RCTV Memoria participated at the [First International Conference in the field of Prevention and combating GBV](#). The first edition of the International Conference on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Girls and Women and Domestic Violence will bring to the general public topics covering the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention: prevention, protection, prosecution and criminalization, and coordinated policies. The team member from RCTV Memoria was one of the speakers on the third day of the Conference.

### 3. FINANCIAL RESOURCES (IN USD), 2021

<b>Income by donors, for 2021</b>	<b>USD</b>	<b>MLD</b>
UN Women, Moldova Project 2020-2022	97.173,00	1.718.015,00
UNVFVT, Emergency Grant P.332-E (2020-2021)	3.732,00	65.976,00
United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT), Geneva (annual project 2021)	30.000,00	530.400,00
Finland Embassy of Finland in Bucharest (Project 2021-2023)	15.890,00	280.931,00
IRCT, Copenhagen (2020-2021)	13.288,00	234.931,00
US Embassy in RM (Project 2019 -2021)	6.127,00	108.320,00
Local NGOs, private donations	16.135,00	285.258,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>182.343,00</b>	<b>3.223.831,00</b>