

# Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria”

*18 year in support of torture survivors*



## ACTIVITY REPORT 2018

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 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.

At 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, such as the Gender Equality Platform, the National Coalition “Life without violence in family” and the Active Ageing Platform.

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

***Vision:*** A prosperous society in which would be guaranteed the respecting of Human Rights, especially the right to not be tortured, in which every person 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 a comprehensive assistance: medical, psychosocial and legal to victims of torture, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as promoting of a society without torture and violence.

***Beneficiaries:*** RCTV Memoria aims to provide assistance to all victims of torture and ill-treatment, in line with the dispositions of the article 14 of the UN Convention against Torture (UN CAT), as well as with General Comment no. 3 of the CAT. During 2018, our work has been focused on four categories of beneficiaries:

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

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

## ANNUAL REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM 2018

### I. REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

RCTV Memoria provides rehabilitation as to the fullest extent possible, offering medical, psychological, legal and social assistance to victims, in line with the provisions of General Comment No.3 to art 14 of the UN Convention against Torture.

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 developed a model of comprehensive assistance, providing the following services:

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

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE - Beneficiaries' problems and needs are evaluated through interviews and psychological tests, attendance at individual and group therapy sessions and psychological counseling in order to improve their psycho-emotional status. Among the most common psychological effects of torture diagnosed by professionals from our Mental Health department are: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, sleeping difficulties, feelings of fear and insecurity and increased aggressiveness.

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 available opportunities and services, supporting them in finding a job or other occupation and organizing creative clubs and social/cultural events (such as day trips, visits to museums, theatre, etc.).

LEGAL ASSISTANCE - In the 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 as well as before the European Court of Human Rights, referring to the art. 3, and assisting them in building their legal strategy, in cooperation with specialized HR NGOs. RCTV Memoria assists in providing much needed legal counseling, legal analyses of the documentation, preparation of the specific petitions and claims and securing appropriate legal representatives.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION - comprehensive medical documentation of all beneficiaries' cases of torture or degrading, inhuman and ill treatment and cases of gender based violence, which provides a solid foundation 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 370 clients assisted in-house (including 120 newly registered): 264 survivors of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment (119 female and 145 male) and 106 victims of gender based violence (71 female, 3 male and 31 kids).
- ✓ Persons from detention: 5 pregnant women with chronic diseases, 12 toddlers and a man with severe chronic diseases benefitted from free medicines (antibiotics, cough syrups, anti-histamines, vitamins and medicines for digestive pathologies).
- ✓ Out of 264 torture victims assisted, 211 survivors benefitted from comprehensive rehabilitation programs for a period from 6 to 12 months. Among them, 70 (including 52 cases from detention) have been assisted within monitoring programs with periodic follow-ups and 141 have been included in comprehensive rehabilitation programs.

MEDICAL STAFF (General Practitioner, Cardiologist and Psychotherapist) performed a total of 1751 in house visits. They also coordinated 1486 external referrals (for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, and specialized treatment).

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE provided to beneficiaries from all target groups in figures: 326 visits (including 274 counseling, 32-psychotherapy sessions and 20 co-therapy sessions); 349 psychological tests have been performed, which have revealed and documented post-traumatic consequences, including 83 new cases of anxiety and 82 new cases of clinical depression.

OUR SOCIAL ASSISTANT performed 667 in-house visits, 547 comprehensive conversations and completed 120 social surveys and 148 questionnaires for evaluation of the degree of satisfaction.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE was provided to 89 beneficiaries (recent victims of torture-31; victims of sexual and gender based violence - 40 women; victims of political repression - 3 and refugees/asylum seekers - 14).

DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION: During 2018, this was a consistent part of our activity, due to the need to facilitate our beneficiaries' access to justice. By the end of the year, a total number of 51 reports/extracts from medical files were released: 35 for recent cases of torture (including 31 among refugees and asylum seekers) and 16 for cases of sexual and gender based violence. By the end of 2018, another 26 Reports on the assisted cases were in the process of drafting (20 for survivors of torture and 6 for victims of gender-based violence).

## II. ADVOCACY AND PREVENTION OF TORTURE

### SUPPORT TO VICTIMS, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

In addition to rehabilitation, another priority of RCTV Memoria is the prevention of torture and violence, fighting against impunity and promoting victims' rights through direct support, public awareness building and training of professionals. RCTV Memoria remained one of the most active NGOs in the Human Rights field.

#### 2.1. JUNE 26 CAMPAIGN -THE UN INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF TORTURE VICTIMS>

- 1) **Within the June 26 Campaign**, together with Amnesty International Moldova and other NGOs, RCTV Memoria prepared and signed an Appeal, asking Moldovan authorities to respect their international obligations regarding the prevention of torture. It was released within the Press Club "The State response to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment";
- 2) **The Commemorative Action** for victims of torture and awareness raising event "Human chain against torture" was organized in partnership with the Moldovan Ombudsman office.

#### 2.2. OTHER ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

- 1) Launch of the "**Stolperstein**" project in the Republic of Moldova, the Agency for the Inspection and Restoration of Monuments of the Republic of Moldova in partnership with RCTV Memoria, in order to commemorate victims of holocaust;

- 2) Launch of the **“Last Address”** project in the Republic of Moldova, the Agency for the Inspection and Restoration of Monuments of the Republic of Moldova in partnership with RCTV Memoria, in order to commemorate victims of the Communist regime who never returned to their homes;
- 3) On 18 October, together with Amnesty International Moldova and other NGOs, the Press Conference **“Human lives are not objects of negotiation”**, regarding the illegal extradition of 7 Turkish citizens (including asylum seekers), was organized. The event was organized in connection with the official visit to Moldova of the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan;

### **2.3. 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 9th December, RCTV Memoria took part, as member of the National Coalition “Life without Violence in family”, in the Charity Winter Bazaar organized by International Women’ Club.

- 1) The Campaign **“Let’s Say NO to violence”**, organized by the National Inspectorate of Probation, with the aim of raising awareness about the negative impact of violence on families, individuals and communities;
- 2) 2 Campaigns for the prevention of violence against women and girls: **“Protect the family from violence”** and **“16 days of activism against gender based violence - #HearMeToo”**, with the aim of raising women’s awareness on domestic violence in Moldova, legal protection mechanisms and alternative assistance services available for victims;

### **2.4. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES:**

#### **2.4.1. EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS 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 victims’ rights to rehabilitation. Our team promotes European Human Rights values and respect of European Human Rights instruments. We presented the relevant information for both Moldova-EU Dialog sessions of 2018 and participated in the preliminary meetings with the EU, UN and OSCE experts.

#### **2.4.2. TRAINING FOR RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS:**

Informative and training activities for relevant professionals were performed with the involvement of our team, as trainer or as trainee:

- 1) During March-June, 2018: at the request of the head of the Penitentiary no. 16 (a prison hospital), 3 training sessions have been organized for 2 groups of prison staff (30 professionals-doctors, psychologists, social workers, regime officers and others);
- 2) March-June, 2018: 20 trainings on the multidisciplinary approach in documentation of the cases of domestic violence have been organized for 565 members of the multidisciplinary teams from 19 districts of the Republic of Moldova. Trainings have been performed together with colleagues from Promo-LEX and “Casa Marioarei “ within the joint project “Increasing the observance of women’s rights in Moldova through combating gender based violence, implemented with financial support of the EU Delegation in the Moldova ;

3) July-October, 2018: in this period, 153 representatives of various professional groups have been trained in how to address the cases of gender based violence, within 6 training workshops held in Chisinau, Balti, Cahul, and Comrat. Training workshops have been performed together with colleagues from Promo-LEX and “Casa Marioarei” within the joint project “Increasing the observance of women’s rights in Moldova through combating gender based violence, implemented with financial support of the EU Delegation in the Moldova;

In addition to trainings for other professionals, RCTV Memoria’ staff members participated at various international events in order to improve their knowledge and to increase their skills:

- 1) 05-10 November, 2018 a staff member participated in a 5 days study visit, organized by National Coalition “Life without violence in family”, with the financial support of UN Women Moldova. This visit was focused on the multidisciplinary approach and inter-departmental intervention mechanisms and cooperation in prevention and combating gender-based violence and domestic violence;
- 2) 11-13 December, 2018, 3 staff members participated in a 3 days Conference focused on sharing/exchange of the experience in training of various professionals, among the similar rehabilitation centers from Germany, Georgia and Moldova. This transnational exchange platform was organized within the project financed by the German Federal Foreign Office, implemented by Baff/Germany in partnership with RCTV Memoria (Moldova) and Empathy (Georgia).

Besides 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 2018

| Nr. | Annual incomes by donors  | Project title  | Amount granted (in USD) |
|-----|---|--|-------------------------|
| 1.  | Delegation of European Union in the Republic of Moldova                     | Increasing the observance of women’s rights in Moldova through combating gender based violence   | 49 484,00               |
| 2.  | United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT)                | Rehabilitation of torture victims from Moldova   | 28 000,00               |
| 3.  | Women's Law Center, OAK Foundation  | Medical Assistance and Documentation of Victims of Domestic Violence for Better Access to Justice  | 3 505,00                |
| 4.  | The Special Fund of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture | Joint efforts in the Strengthening the capacities of the National Preventive Mechanism and in the on preventing and combating torture and ill-treatment in Moldova, through training and sharing the experience of RCTV Memoria. | 187,00                  |
| 5.  | IRCT Centre Support Grants  | Rehabilitation of torture victims from Moldova   | 14 153,00               |
| 6.  | Other donors (individuals, local NGOs)                                      |  | 3 429,00                |
|     | <b>Total</b>  |  | <b>98 758,00</b>        |