

Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria”

20 years of support for torture survivors



ACTIVITY REPORT 2019

Chisinau
Republic of Moldova

ABOUT RCTV MEMORIA

The Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria” (RCTV Memoria) is an apolitical and non-profit organization located 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 providing support to victims and vulnerable groups, such as the Platform for Gender Equality, the National Coalition “Life without violence in family” and the Active Ageing Platform.

RCTV Memoria is the only NCO 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 respect of Human Rights will be guaranteed, especially the right not to be tortured, where 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” remain 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 a society without torture and violence.

Beneficiaries: RCTV Memoria aims to provide assistance to all the 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 2019, 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 2019

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

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE - Consultations from 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 to support beneficiaries in identifying the 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 a predominant 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 redressing as well as for campaigning and advocacy work.

RCTV Memoria is the only non-governmental centre in the Republic of Moldova able to provide the 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 291 beneficiaries assisted in-house (including 108 newly registered): 207 (including 76 new) survivors of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment (77 female and 130 male) and 84 victims of gender based violence.
- ✓ Persons from detention: Three pregnant women with chronic diseases, 7 toddlers and a man with severe chronic diseases benefitted from free medicines (antibiotics, cough syrups, anti-histamines, vitamins and medicines for digestive pathologies).

MEDICAL STAFF (General Practitioner and Psychotherapist) performed 1100 in house visits (187 primary for admission and 913 ongoing). They also coordinated 1040 external referrals (for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, and specialized treatment) and prescribed 1259 recipes for medicines.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE performed 395 visits (including 288 counseling, 107 psychotherapy sessions and 17 co-therapy sessions). MEASURING TRAUMA: 235 diagnostic and 19 additional personality tests (for revealing hidden emotions and internal conflicts), with identification and documentation of 74 new cases of PTSD; 73 new cases of clinical depression; 74 new cases of anxiety.

OUR SOCIAL ASSISTANT performed 569 in-house visits, 427 comprehensive conversations, 142 social surveys and 65 questionnaires for evaluation of the level of satisfaction. In addition, 76 beneficiaries (including 49 VoT) received clothes, shoes, etc., from donations. On 05.09.2019, our staff organized an action, "A good deed for you"/International Charity Day - 18 clients received food packages, donated by Radisson Blu LeoGrand hotel/restaurant.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE aimed to support RCTV Memoria' activity (legal documents, contracts, registrations, cooperation) and helping victims to seek justice and to ask for compensation/reparation. The legal aid was provided to 67 beneficiaries (34 victims of torture, including among refugees, asylum seekers, and 33 victims of sexual and GBV), about 91 consultations and 5 petitions were written. ECtHR - one victim was found abroad, helped to restore communication, to come to Moldova for additional documentation, in order to contest the position of authorities.

ONLINE/PHONE/FACEBOOK COUNSELLING have been provided, when our beneficiaries: a) had a full daily work schedule; b) were living abroad for a while; b) were living far away from Chisinau. Our staff provided 543 such counselling sessions (205 - by Psychotherapist, 105 - by Psychologists, 76 - by GP; 135 - by Social assistant; 22 - by Legal adviser).

DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION: During 2019, 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 46 Evaluation and findings reports ("Extracts from medical files") issued: 35 for recent cases of torture (including for refugees and asylum seekers) and 13 for cases of sexual and gender based violence. Other 22 Reports have been in the process by the end of 2019 (16 for victims 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 NCOs in the Human Rights field.

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

Within the Campaign dedicated to June 26, 2019 - The international UN Day of Support of Victims of Torture:

- 1) The Round table “IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE (UN CAT) AND OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL (OP CAT) IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA” was organized;
- 2) All the participants of the Round Table have signed the DECLARATION FROM THE 26 OF JUNE 2019 OF THE ORGANIZERS AND PARTICIPANTS. After the Round Table the Declaration was send to all Governmental and International organizations from Moldova.
- 3) A Flashmob was organized in partnership with Amnesty International Moldova activists and other NGO’s, which warned the public that the authorities are obliged to implement all the recommendations of international departments in the field of preventing and combating torture, including the standard “ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ANY ACT OF TORTURE”.

2.2. OTHER ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

- 1) On April 7, 2019, The PUBLIC ACTION – NO JUSTICE, NO FUTURE - 10 years from the events of April 2009, during this event a Declaration have been submitted.
- 2) On July 17, 2019, RCTV Memoria organized a Conference to launch the Practical Guideline “Documenting Gender Based violence”. The efforts of our team to share our knowledge and experience in dealing with documentation of trauma and rehabilitation of victims have been highly appreciated by participants.

2.3. CAMPAIGN “16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE”

RCTV Memoria is concerned about victims of domestic and sexual violence wellbeing, thus it advocates their right to rehabilitation.

- 1) On May 15, 2019 – RCTV Memoria together with Promo-LEX Association and Association against violence “Casa Marioarei” has launched the National awareness campaigns #Protect the Family From Violence;
- 2) On November 28, 2019 – RCTV Memoria, together with organizations from National Coalition “Life without violence in families” has signed and launched a public Appeal on the Ratification of the Istanbul Convention (in order to force the authorities of RM to sign the Istanbul Convention).

2.4. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

2.4.1. EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS.

RCTV Memoria is one of the most active HR NCOs 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 2019 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) August – December 2019: 11 events within the Training Program: “Prevention of torture and other inhuman and / or degrading treatment” have been organized for various professional from 5 state institutions;

- 2) July - September 2019: 5 training sessions on the multidisciplinary approach in documentation, effective intervention of social assistants in the cases of domestic violence have been organized for 100 members of multidisciplinary teams from Falesti District. 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 Moldova ;
- 3) On 03 October 2019: Workshop "Adult education. Organizing the trainings for various professionals in the field of prevention of torture and other inhuman and/or degrading treatments".
- 4) On 04 October 2019: Workshop "Victim-centered and trauma-centered approaches in working with persons being in the state custody, who have suffered torture or other extreme trauma" (for NPM members and staff of Memoria).

During the trainings and other events organized in 2019, RCTV Memoria promoted two very important approaches: 1) victims-oriented and 2) trauma-oriented, since both of them are important in daily work of various professionals.

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) 28-30 October 2019 a staff member participated at the Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

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 2019

No	Annual incomes by donors	Amount granted (in USD)
1.	United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victim of Torture (UN-VFVT)	30 000,00
2.	The Special Fund of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture	24 813,00
3.	US Embassy in Moldova	24 400, 00
4.	Delegation of European Union in the Republic of Moldova	22 501,00
5.	Amnesty International Relief Fund	14 000,00
6.	Associations against Domestic Violence "Casa Marioarei", OAK Foundation	2 143, 00
7.	Other donors (private sources/individuals)	967,00
	Total	118 824,00