

REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR TORTURE VICTIMS "MEMORIA"

22 YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE



ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

Chişinău 2022

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” operates according to the Constitution of Republic of Moldova and enforced legislation.

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

Vision: A prosperous society in which the respect and maintenance 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 civil society, RCTV “Memoria” will be an active and important actor in the reformation, development and prosperity of our society.

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

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

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

Beneficiaries: Comprehensive rehabilitation through medical, social, psychological and legal assistance is offered to all persons regardless of nationality, age, gender, political views, place of residence, and so on, and 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 national and international law.

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

- 1) **Victims of political repression**, who have been arrested, persecuted and subjected to various forms of physical and psychological torture or ill-treatment, from the Soviet era-present day. This group of beneficiaries is also relevant for research and analysis of the medical and psycho-social consequences of various forms of torture, the evolution of these consequences and their impact on different aspects of personal, family, social and political lives of victims. Thus, this information and experience allows the planning of more effective and appropriate assistance to victims of recent torture, like disease

prevention and managing long-term effects of torture, which are correlated with suffered stress and traumas.

- 2) ***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 persecution and terror against students or young people after the anti-communist protests in April 2009, when local NGOs collected data and testimonies of over 600 victims, their lawyers, and/or their families. Survivors of torture require special attention to improve their physical and mental health and to prevent residual consequences of trauma.
- 3) ***Survivors of torture among refugees and asylum seekers in Moldova***. Work with this group allows us to perform analyses of torture as a global phenomenon and its impact on political, religious, cultural, medical, social, and psychological (epidemiology of torture) aspects at regional and global levels. Among the beneficiaries' countries of origin are: Turkey, Syria, Ukraine, Iraq, Palestine, Russia, Georgia, Cuba, Armenia.
- 4) ***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 hindered by lack of appropriate documentation of their cases, and lapses in collecting medical, psychological, social, and legal evidence of various forms of violence.

II. ANNUAL REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM 2022

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 General Comment No. 3 to Article 14 of the UN Convention against Torture. Our rehabilitation programs include trauma evaluation, screening, interventions for healing of acute trauma, ongoing therapy, monitoring 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:

- 1) **Medical services** including: in-house consultations with the General Practitioners and Psychotherapist, as well as additional medical consultations, diagnostic evaluations, and specialized treatment through external referrals, which are paid for by the implemented projects. Within budget limits, beneficiaries are also provided medicine free of charge.
- 2) **Psychological assistance**: post-traumatic problems and needs are evaluated through interviews and psychological tests. In psychological counseling, individual and group therapy sessions are performed to improve their psycho-emotional status and promote trauma healing.
- 3) **Social assistance** provided at RCTV Memoria aims to support beneficiaries in identifying problems and developing problem-solving skills, providing information regarding available opportunities and services, supporting them in finding a job or other occupation, and organizing social/cultural events (i.e., visits to museums, the theatre, etc.).
- 4) **Documentation and certification**. RCTV Memoria is the only non-governmental entity in the Republic of Moldova able to perform appropriate medical documentation and certification under the provisions of the Istanbul Protocol. The RCTV Memoria staff perform comprehensive documentation of all the assisted cases regarding torture, degrading and inhuman treatment, and gender-based violence. This provides a solid foundation for our beneficiaries' claims for redress, as well as for campaigning and ongoing advocacy work.

REHABILITATION IN FIGURES:

During 2022, RCTV Memoria provided services to a total of 3,326 persons: a) 122 victims of torture (VoT), including 24 detainees; b) 84 survivors of gender-based violence; c) 70 refugees and asylum seekers from other countries and d) 3,050 refugees from Ukraine (including 2,650 assisted for 6-12 months and 400+ short term).

Medical staff (General Practitioners and psychotherapists) performed 7,965 visits (2,322 primary + 5,643 ongoing). 955 persons benefited from external referrals for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, specialized treatment, and other necessary services, each paid for by the project in the total amount of \$16 002,00. Additionally, 16,784 medication prescriptions were paid for by the project's total amount of \$85 661,00.

Psychological assistance: Within the reporting period, clients have been assisted through 2,234 total visits (including 1,282 primary visits, 1,272 PFA visits, and 1,072 ongoing), 2018 counseling sessions; 1,244 therapeutic sessions, including 734 individual sessions and 20 family sessions, as well as testimony therapy in 32 cases. In their work, our staff uses the most recognized tools, including the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and the Hopkins Checklist (HCL-25), and 513 projective tests performed for the diagnosis of PTSD, clinical depression, and anxiety.

Social Assistant performed 5,500 visits (2,089 primary and 3,411 ongoing), including 3,491 fulfilled needs evaluations and 890 case evaluations for cash and voucher assistance.

Psycho-social Support: a) excursions for 74 adults and children to Manuc Bey Castle + Bardar Zoo and natural reservation, "The Royal Forest"; b) 38 persons (20 adults and 18 children) benefited from art-therapy (clay therapy; creative workshops "Decorations for the winter holidays"); c) 99 children (44 from the Republic of Moldova and 55 from Ukraine) were assisted through the Campaign "Ready to school", which afforded students necessary school supplies, costing a total of around \$3 925,00.

OTHER SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES:

- 1) **Documentation/Certification:** 16 Evaluation and Findings reports issued: 12 for VoT (refugees from other countries for asylum procedures); 4 for VoGBV. Additional 14 Reports - in the work process by the end of 2022.
- 2) **Multipurpose Cash assistance (MPCA) to victims:** This support was much needed and even essential for some beneficiaries in the context of the Humanitarian crisis when poverty among them increased. Our team made considerable efforts to find donors to respond quickly to victims' needs and facilitate their access to rehabilitation services. Cash assistance was offered to cover the rent of flats and maintenance costs, local transportation, and different medical issues. Despite financial constraints, we continued encouraging clients outside of Chisinau to come and benefit from assistance. As was planned, financial support was offered to clients with low income, including (a) reimbursement of travel costs to 42 persons, in the total amount of \$424,00; (b) multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to UKR refugees to 667 persons, in total amount of about \$31 621,00; (c) voucher assistance (for food, hygienic items, clothes) to 223 persons, in total amount of about \$9 892,00.
- 3) **Other activities:** 534 beneficiaries (including Ukrainian refugees) received clothes, shoes, etc., from donations collected in the created "Social wardrobe", with the support of various private donors and our team members; 473 persons (440, among them 54 VoT, incl 386 refugees from Ukraine + 33 VoGBV) benefited from food and hygienic packages from various donors, mainly from UN WOMEN and OHCHR and 265 women and girls from Ukraine benefited from Dignity kits (donated by UNFPA).

2.2 ADVOCACY, PREVENTION OF TORTURE AND PUBLIC AWARENESS BUILDING

During 2022, our team members organized or were involved in various events to increase the visibility of our activities and donors' contributions to rehabilitation, prevention and advocacy. Though many of these events were provided online, we are proud to list some of the most well-known and those which had the most impact on society. Among these are:

- 1) The "Protect the Family from Violence" social campaign (May 2022);
- 2) The Campaign dedicated to the 26 of June -RCTV Memoria, together with Amnesty International Moldova and other Human Rights defenders, launched a Public Appeal 26 June 2022 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.";

- 3) The Campaign "16 Days without Violence", to prevent violence against women;
- 4) Appeals to authorities for building public awareness about the destructive after-effects of political repression and transgenerational trauma.

2.3. TRAINING FOR RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS:

During 2022, RCTV Memoria members were actively involved with in-house mentoring and Training of Trainers (ToT) for better involvement in organizing the planned events. During the ToT, were developed the methodology of the sessions with the preparation of all the needed materials, exercises, and PPTs, which were used within the:

1) TRAINING PROGRAM IN THE FIELD OF PREVENTING AND COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FAMILY VIOLENCE FOR EMD MEMBERS FROM CAHUL AND UNGHENI DISTRICTS¹:

- a) On 29.03.2022, there was organized mentoring and ToT for six members of RCTV Memoria and other professionals for the development of the Workshop "Who are the aggressors?" held on April 20 and 21, 2022, online for about 70 professionals, members of the territorial Multidisciplinary teams (MDT) + all the staff members of RCTV Memoria).
- b) In period 25.04.22 - 16.05.2022, there was organized mentoring and ToT for 5 RCTV Memoria for the Workshop "Prevention of the phenomenon of domestic violence through the multidisciplinary approach of the roots and subjects," implemented in period 17-27 May 2022;
- c) In the period 15.05.22- 10.06.2022, there was organized mentoring and ToT for Memoria team members and other professionals involved in the workshops "Documentation of the gender-based violence. Working with trauma", for members of the multidisciplinary territorial teams (MDT) from Cahul and Ungheni, who also worked with victims of war from Ukraine. The Workshops were performed on 15.06.2022 in Cahul city and 29.06.2022 in Ungheni city.

2) TRAINING PROGRAM "PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY FOR PENITENTIARY' SYSTEM EMPLOYEES".

On 22.10.2022, the first mentoring and ToT session for four RCTV Memoria members and two external professionals was organized and involved in the development of a Training Module for prisons staff, within the Action Plan of the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) from Moldova, on implementation of the UNSCR1325 "Women, Peace and security."

We worked on developing the Concept of the Training Module, methodologies with the planning of the training session, preparing the training materials and methods that will be used, preparation of a set of recommendations for trainers in the field of gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence in the penitentiary system. The workshop for eight NAP professionals (future trainers) was organized on 28.10.2022 at the Education Center of NAP from Goian.²

¹ Events organized within the project "A stronger response of multidisciplinary teams from Cahul and Ungheni districts to gender-based violence," part of the project "Promotion of gender equality in Cahul and Ungheni districts," financed by the EU Delegation and implemented by UN Women in partnership with UNICEF in the period 2020- 2022.

² Activity was carried out within the project: "For a life with dignity, without discrimination and gender-based violence," implemented by the RCTV Memoria in partnership with the National Penitentiary Administration, in the period 01.10.2021-31.08.2023.

3. FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF RCTV MEMORIA (IN %), 2022

