

Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria”

21 years of support for torture survivors



2020



ACTIVITY REPORT 2020

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.

RCTV “Memoria” is performing its activity according to the Constitution of Republic of Moldova and to the Legislation in force. The actual premises for rehabilitation are rented from the State Chancellery and are certified (authorized) by the Center for Preventive Medicine, until 2023. The rehabilitation services are provided according to operating Sanitary Authorization. Once the accreditation criteria will be adopted for similar centers in Moldova, RCTV Memoria will apply for evaluation and certification to the National Council of accreditation.

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 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 the respecting of Human Rights is guaranteed, especially the right not to 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 a comprehensive assistance: medical, psychosocial and legal to victims of torture, 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:

- 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 fundamental rights of every person;
- 5) the Principles of Medical Ethics recognized internationally, in particular those related to the role of health professionals in preventing torture other forms of violence;
- 6) cultural diversity and mutual respect, high professionalism, dedication to target groups and offering of qualitative and efficient services;
- 7) high individual and group responsibility, morality, team spirits, efficient partnerships and mutual support in the implementation of activities.

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

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

1. **Victims of political repressions**, who have been arrested, persecuted and subjected to various forms of physical and psychological torture or ill-treatment during Soviet time and even nowadays. This group of beneficiaries is relevant also for researches and analysis of the medical and psychological consequences of various forms of torture, their evolution and 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 late after-effects of torture, correlated with suffered stress and traumas.
2. **Recent victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment**, including citizens from the transnistrian region, where torture is still widely used in detention facilities and in Army. This group includes also people who suffered during 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, their families or lawyers. Survivors of torture needs special attention for improving their state of health and for preventing the belated consequences of trauma.

3. ***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: Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Turkey, Armenia, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Russia, etc.
4. ***Victims of gender-based violence, including victims of sexual and domestic violence.*** The overall situation in Moldova regarding this issue is alarming. The number of victims increased considerably in the last years and their access to Justice is still difficult because of lack of appropriate documentation of their cases, for collecting medical, psychological, social, legal and material evidences of various forms of violence.

In dependence of the available resources, if necessary, the comprehensive assistance is provided to secondary victims - close relatives of the assisted survivors of torture and other forms of violence.

ANNUAL REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM 2020

I. REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

RCTV Memoria provides rehabilitation at 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.

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

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE - Beneficiaries' problems and needs are evaluated throughout interviews and psychological tests, attendance at individual and group therapy sessions and psychological counseling in order to improve their psycho-emotional status. 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 for all beneficiaries that were part of 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 394 (321+73 detainees) beneficiaries assisted in-house (including 118 newly registered): 216 (195+21) (including 101 new) survivors of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment (118 females and 98 male) and 105 victims of gender based violence.
- ✓ 73 Persons from detention, including: 10 women with (10) kids and other 73 detainees, including 18 detainees with COVID-19)

MEDICAL STAFF (General Practitioner and Psychotherapist) performed 1937 visits (150 primary for admission and 1787 ongoing, 428 in-office and 1509 online consultations). They also coordinated 139 external referrals (for additional medical consultations, diagnostic investigations, specialized treatment, etc.,) and prescription of medicines.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE performed 679 visits (including 76 primary + 603 ongoing, 84 in office + 595 online); 623 counseling; 76 individual; 10 Group; 23 co-therapy sessions. **PSYCHOSOCIAL PROGRAMS** for: 61 in-house assisted beneficiaries, and 10 women with kids from detention (received supplies, kits for art-therapy; materials for developing hobby and various skills (in sports, crafts, drawing, painting, etc.). **A.&B. MEASURING TRAUMA**: 165 diagnostic tests performed, with identification and documentation of 76 cases of PTSD; with 75 cases of clinical depression; 76 cases of anxiety.

OUR SOCIAL ASSISTANT performed 870 visits (162 in office + 708 online, including: Social surveys/Needs evaluation – 93 fulfilled; Counseling – 639; Evaluation Questionnaire of the needs and problems faced by RCTV Memoria' beneficiaries in the context of the pandemic crisis caused by COVID-19– 145 fulfilled; (b) to VoT: 376 visits; 46 in/o + 330 online; Social surveys – 46; Counseling – 185; Evaluation Questionnaire– 52; 123 beneficiaries (including 31 VoT) received clothes, shoes, etc., from donations collected in the “Social wardrobe”, created with support of various private donors and our team members.

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 54 beneficiaries (23 victims of torture, including among refugees, asylum seekers, + 31 victims of sexual and gender based violence), through 94 consultations (including 36 online/phone) and 3 written petitions. Support to case M. at ECtHR, won in January 2021. Thanks to RCTV Memoria' support, a couple from Turkey, at risk to be extradited, obtained the refugee status and the possibility to rise their two children (one born in MD) in safety, instead of being all imprisoned in Turkey.

FINANCIAL This support was much needed and even essential for some of beneficiaries, in the context of COVID crisis, when the poverty among them increased. Our team made efforts to find the 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 (13 persons; total amount of 70.90 USD). The reimbursements for local travel for VoT, were made mainly from grant received from UNVFVT. The financial support to victims of GBV (women with children), in order to cover partially costs for rent and housing, was offered from the Emergency grant received from the National Coalition “Life without violence”, within the response to COVID-19 crisis. In this way, we helped beneficiaries from the most vulnerable families, as well as among refugees and asylum

seekers or who were temporary unemployed, without any monthly incomes. The selection of the cases was made with involvement of all staff members, on the assessment made by social assistant. Because of pandemic crisis and worsening of the overall situation of assisted beneficiaries, some of them have been helped as following: 1) In period April – June 2020, within the project "Providing services and support to victims of domestic violence during the COVID19 pandemic", financed by National Coalition "Life without domestic violence", we provided: 2) financial support for the payment of rent and utilities for 14 women (most with 2 or 3 children each) of total amount 85 500,00 MDL (4 978,54 USD); 3) payment for mobile telephony services (recharge of phone cards) for 10 beneficiaries of total amount 1 500,00 MDL (87.34 USD), in order to secure a good communication and to provide services to them; 4) In period August – December 2020 within the project "Medical care and documentation of victims of domestic violence for better access to justice" financed by National Coalition "Life without domestic violence", we provided financial support for the payment of rent and utilities for 2 women (with 2 children) of total amount 8 000,00 MDL (465.83 USD).

DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION: During 2020, 30 Evaluation and findings reports issued: 1) 26 for Victims of torture; 2) 4 for Victims of gender based violence; 3) other 18 Reports - in work by the end of 2020 (15 Victims of torture + 3 Victims of gender based violence).

II. ADVOCACY AND PREVENTION OF TORTURE

SUPPORT TO VICTIMS, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

In addition to the rehabilitation, another priority of RCTV Memoria is the public awareness by building and training of professionals. During 2020, RCTV Memorias' team members organized or have been involved in various events for prevention of torture and violence, fighting against impunity and promoting victims' rights through direct support and advocacy mainly performed online. Among them, can be listed: 2.1. Campaign dedicated to 26 of June; 2.2. Appeals to authorities; 2.3. Campaign "16 days without violence"; 2.4. Press Club "Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in Moldova. RCTV Memoria remains 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, 2020 – The international UN Day of Support of Victims of Torture:

- 1) Between June 24-27, 2020 - the [online campaign "#SupportLifeAfterTorture"](#) was performed in partnership with Amnesty International Moldova activists and other Human Rights NGOs. Based on the pandemic context caused by COVID 19 and the restrictions imposed, an online event was created on the RCTV Memoria' Facebook page. Subsequently, a video collage was created (with pictures of civic activists in the field of Human Rights and volunteers with the printed slogan #SupportLifeAfterTorture). The created event had an impact of 1073 people, and 50 people responded that they will participate at the event;

On June 26, 2020, the [Public Appeal](#), which warned 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. The appeal was signed by ten organizations and the Platform of Gender Equality (composed of 33 organizations); The appeal was signed by: Amnesty International Moldova, RCTV Memoria, Promo – LEX, Legal Resources Center of Moldova, Human Rights Embassy, Positive Initiative Association, the Platform for Gender Equality and it was shared to the national mass-media and social networks by all the participative organizations.

- 2) On June 29, 2020 - was published on the RCTV Memoria' FB page Video Collage with pictures of 30 people who joined the [Flashmob. Video collage](#) had an impact of over 500 people, with over 140 views.

2.2. OTHER ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

- 1) On April 7, 2020 – RCTV Memoria, together with Amnesty International Moldova and organizations human rights defenders, has launched a [Public Appeal](#). The NGOs urged authorities finally to shed the light in the case of the April 2009 protests and to take steps to ensure that the abuses of that time do not happen again.

- 2) On April 08, 2020 – In the context of the lockdown caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 RCTV Memoria, together with 20 organizations from National Coalition “Life without domestic violence” came with [15 recommendations](#) on what to do and where to go if you are a victim of domestic violence.
- 3) On June 03, 2020 – RCTV Memoria together with Human Rights NGO from RM have launched the [PUBLIC APPEAL on the immediate adoption of the Law regarding the Non-Commercial Organizations](#) in the second reading, without changes that would hinder the activity of NGOs
- 4) On June 20, 2020 - RCTV Memoria, as member of the National Coalition “Life without domestic violence” and the Platform for Gender Equality submitted and launched the [Statement on attitudes and behaviors that normalize violence](#).
- 5) On August 13, 2020 – In the context of the abuses and use of force by authorities, after the presidential elections from Belarus, RCTV Memoria along with the organization from National Platform of the Civil Partnership Forum of the Eastern Partnership have launched the [“Statement regarding the Presidential Elections of August 9, 2020 and Political Situation in Belarus”](#).

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 November 25, 2020 – In the context of UN International Day for the Elimination of violence against Women, and a RCTV Memoria’ representative was involved in the [Launching of the International Campaign "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence"](#) in RM Video (“Uniti împotriva violentei”).
- 2) RCTV Memoria, together with organizations from National Coalition “Life without domestic violence” 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. TRAINING FOR RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS:

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

FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2020

Nr.	Annual incomes by donors	Amount granted (in USD):
1	U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section	11 258, 00
2	Amnesty International	14 500, 00
3	U.N.D.P. Moldova (UN Women)	12 105, 00
4	National Coalition "Life without violence in the family" by "Artemida"	7 539, 00
5	Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights	4 000,00
6	German Federal Foreign Office	60 389,00
7	Embassy of France in the Republic of Moldova	1 148,00
8	IRCT Centre Support Grants	1 193, 00
9	United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT)	30 000,00
11	United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT) Emergency Fund	10 512,00
12	IREX Europe	4 066, 00
13	Other donors (individuals, local NGOs)	1 796,00
	Total	158 506,00