

GENDERDOC

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REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF LGBT+ RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA YEAR 2023

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This report reflects the situation regarding the respect of LGBT+ rights and the political and social influence on LGBT+ individuals, as well as homophobia, and transphobia in society, but also positive changes for LGBT+ people in the Republic of Moldova.

According to the study "[Prejudices and Marginalization in Moldova in 2022](#)" conducted by the Equality Council and published in January 2023, a significant part of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova show a low level of acceptance and tolerance. The level of acceptance for seven minority groups is extremely low. In the case of LGBT+ individuals, the level of social distance (level of acceptance) is 5.7 (if the level of acceptance is greater than 2, then the person would not accept being a neighbour, friend, or family member with a representative of the minority group).

The data indicates that the majority of the population (79%) would not accept being neighbours with LGBT+ individuals, and 60% would not accept them as work colleagues. According to the study for groups with the most pronounced degree of social distancing (LGBT+ individuals, people living with HIV/AIDS, and people who have been incarcerated), the level of marginalization increased in 2022. This exacerbation may be a consequence of the crises that have occurred in recent years: the pandemic crisis that had a visible impact on social relations, followed by the economic crisis that widened the socio-economic gap between certain groups. Additionally, the regional security crisis, on one hand, increased states of anxiety and frustration and non-acceptance of "the others" (largely due to pressure on the social protection system), and on the other hand, created favourable premises for social solidarity in the effort to support refugees.

In February, the "[Study on Human Rights and Acceptance of Diversity](#)" conducted by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation was made public. The purpose of the study was to assess respondents' perceptions of LGBT+ people, with a sample of 845 respondents aged 25-45 years, residents of the city of Chişinău.

Based on the answers to the question about respondents' attitudes towards LGBT+ people, interviewees were grouped into 3 categories: supporters of LGBT+ individuals, neutrals, and opponents:

- Respondents who stated they have a "very or somewhat positive" attitude were placed in the "supporters" category - 13% of the total number of respondents
- Those who responded that their attitude is "neither positive nor negative" were included in "neutrals" - 49% of the total number of respondents;
- Individuals who mentioned having a "very/somewhat negative" attitude were categorized as "opponents" - 38% of the total number of respondents.

Every second respondent who stated having a negative opinion about LGBT+ individuals considers that members of the LGBT+ community should have the same rights - 49%. A

percentage of 25% is recorded among interviewees who believe that LGBT+ individuals should not have the same rights.

Similar to previous years, the majority of respondents believe that discrimination against LGBT+ individuals is very or somewhat widespread - 75%, +3 percentage points compared to 2022.

To measure the level of acceptance of minority groups in Chişinău, the Bogardus social distance scale was used. The purpose of the scale is to identify the level of acceptance by establishing relationships with people belonging to minority groups. The highest degree of acceptance has an index of 0 and denotes that the respondent would accept a person from a minority group to become a member of their family. On the other hand, the lowest degree of acceptance is represented by an index of 6 and signifies that the respondent would agree that members of a group be excluded from the country. Among all the minority groups presented, the group least accepted by respondents is LGBT+ individuals, the social distance index towards this group being in Chişinău - 1.5 (between friend and neighbour) which is a very good result, compared with the 5.7 index made across the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova (between visitor and exclusion from the country).

21% of interviewees stated that they have in their circle of friends or acquaintances an LGBT+ person. 56% of respondents who have a positive opinion about LGBT+ individuals stated that they have friends and acquaintances who are members of the LGBT+ community.

53% of respondents consider it acceptable for two men to embrace in public, and 37% - to kiss each other friendly on the cheek. Compared to 2022, no improvements were recorded in terms of the public manifestation of affection between men.

65% of respondents have a very or rather negative opinion about the March organized in support of LGBT+ individuals.

The notoriety of the GENDERDOC-M organization increased by 8 percentage points in 2023 (27%) compared to 2021. Respondents who declared a positive opinion about LGBT+ individuals are more aware of GENDERDOC-M - 49%.

At the beginning of 2023, the [Evaluation Report of the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2022](#) was published. The evaluation report of the implementation of the NHAP was developed through an inclusive process, with the participation of representatives of the State Chancellery, Ministries and central and local public authorities, national institutions for human rights, civil society, representatives of vulnerable groups and development partners, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the degree of implementation of the NHAP, as well as the factors that have contributed to or hindered its implementation.

According to the report, "despite numerous international recommendations and proposals from civil society, actions regarding the respect of the rights of LGBT+ individuals were not included in the NHAP, although the situation at the planning level was analyzed, in conclusion, it is noted that, in fact, activities were not implemented through this document, thus, it did not contribute to the improvement of the situation of this group of beneficiaries (...) despite the LNOB (Leave No One Behind) principle, actions regarding the rights of LGBT+ individuals were almost not included in the NHAP, which must be taken into account in the next human rights policy document".

The Grand Chamber of the European Court expressed itself on 17.01.2023 and asked the member states of the Council of Europe to adopt legislation that allows same-sex couples to officially register their relationship in the state of residence.

The Court interpreted Article 8 of the Convention leaving a wide margin of appreciation to the Member States in deciding whether to allow or not the registration of same-sex relationships (marriage or cohabitation) stating that there is no consensus on this subject among the Member States of the Council of Europe (1980s). In the next decade, the Court reinterpreted Article 8 of

the Convention saying that Member States have a positive obligation to offer a legal way of recognizing same-sex relationships and to provide them with legal protection, and at least since 2015, the Court constantly affirms that Article 8 of the Convention imposes an obligation on Member States to ensure legal recognition and protection of same-sex couples by establishing a "specific legal framework" (see cases *Oliari and others v. Italy* and *Orlandi and others v. Italy*). To date, Article 8 of the Convention has not been interpreted by the Court as imposing a positive obligation on the parties to make marriage available to same-sex couples.

This jurisprudence of the Court regarding Article 8 of the Convention, which results in the positive obligation of the parties to offer recognition and legal protection to same-sex couples, was in line with the tangible and continuous evolution of the Member States, the internal legislation of the parties and international law. The Court reiterated that the Convention is a living instrument that must be interpreted in light of current conditions and prevailing ideas in today's democratic states. The failure of the Court to maintain a dynamic and evolutionary approach would risk making it an obstacle in the way of reform or improvement - the words of the Court.

With the registration of the relationship, the same-sex couple will obtain protection for: the right to leave an inheritance/will, the right to consent to medical services (blood transfusion, interventions that cannot be postponed, blood donation, etc.) for the partner, division of property, acquisition of goods, education and upbringing of common children, custody rights over children in case of death of the partner when he/she is mother/father, the right to decide on matters related to funeral and inheritance of property and others.

Following the ECHR decision, statements were made by the former President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon.

On January 19, Igor Dodon posted a [video](#) on his Facebook page with his interview accompanied by the following text:

"I commented on yesterday's ECHR decision, according to which all states that have signed the European Convention on Human Rights, including Moldova, are required to adopt a legal form of recognition of same-sex families and to create a legal framework that would protect the personal lives of such couples.

I mentioned that this will strongly impact the values of our people. Moldova is an Orthodox country. Moreover, our Constitution clearly stipulates what a marriage is, as well as the fact that it can be between a man and a woman.

I am categorically against these approaches by external structures. We have our own country, our own values, our own Constitution. We will do everything possible to ensure that these so-called values, foreign to us, are in no way implemented in Moldova."

On January 23, Igor Dodon wrote another Facebook [post](#) with the following content:

"In 2020, before the elections, citizens were warned about what Maia Sandu could do if she became President of the Republic of Moldova.

Many people then mocked or were hysterical about these predictions, but I propose to review those messages from the flyer today, two years later. And find for yourselves how many points are already in the process of being realized, starting from the destruction of the economy, Russophobia, the Transnistrian crisis, marriage rights for homosexuals in the LGBT community, the intention to sell lands to foreigners, the intention to abandon neutrality and join NATO.

For us, it was evident even then what anti-state political agenda Maia Sandu had to fulfill and we see that she is faithfully following the plan of her patrons from abroad. It is a pity for the country and the people, who will continue to suffer because of a leadership that pushes Moldova into total poverty and disappearance."

On May 22, the European Court of Human Rights required Romania to recognize and legally protect gay families, after dismissing the Government's appeal in the case of *Buhuceanu and others vs. the Romanian state*. The ECHR had previously established that Romania violated Article 8 of the Convention which protects the right to private and family life.

The obligation of Romania to protect and recognize families formed by same-sex persons was reconfirmed by the College of Judges of the Grand Chamber.

The lack of a partnership law for same-sex couples in the Republic of Moldova, which would ensure equal rights with heterosexual couples, creates barriers and discrimination issues.

More and more same-sex couples with different citizenship, in which one is a citizen of the Republic of Moldova, decide to move to Moldova. In the case of heterosexual couples, the husband or wife of a citizen of the Republic of Moldova can request a residence permit based on the marriage certificate. For same-sex couples, the residence permit is unavailable.

Following the ECHR decisions regarding same-sex couples, six LGBT couples in Moldova filed applications for marriage registration at the Public Services Agency and, after receiving a refusal, sued the Agency, referring to the obligation placed on the states of the Council of Europe by these decisions.

On January 24, the president of the "Noi" party, Renato Usatîi, made a [statement](#) regarding these litigations:

"I will gift the grooms a house in Italy. The only condition is that the marriage ceremony and the official registration of the marriage take place in their new place of residence and that they help with the long-term relocation to Italy of all others who wish to enter into such marriages. We have many houses available!"

Later, he [referenced](#) the houses he intends to buy for LGBT couples. These are the houses that the Italian authorities are selling for 1€ in sparsely populated villages.

On January 30, an [article](#) regarding the ECHR decision of January 17, 2023, was published on the website of the Orthodox Church of Moldova, mitropolia.md:

"We find ourselves in a worrying situation for our Christian-Orthodox people. It concerns the attempt to impose upon us an outrageous decision for our Orthodox conscience, namely that of the ECHR, from January 17 of this year, which requires member states of the Council of Europe and signatories of the European Convention to recognize and legally protect LGBT couples. For the Republic of Moldova, this means, obligatorily, the legal recognition of same-sex couples.

As expected, representatives of the tiny homosexual minority in our Country have taken advantage of this opportunity to circulate threats of going to court if the national authorities do not officially register their couples. Our address is not to the members of this minority, whose intimacy we respect, expressing our disinterest in their private lives, but to the authorities of our Country: do not forget that the vote for the leadership of the Country was given to you by a majority and not a minority, and this majority of citizens, even if not educated at Western universities, still knows, thank God, how to choose 'the tares from the wheat'.

The ECHR decision stipulates that 'States signatory to the European Convention have a positive obligation to ensure, without discrimination, the legal recognition of LGBT couples, regardless of the opinion of a segment of society'. We would like to remind you that Christian-Orthodox citizens do not represent a segment of society, but an overwhelming majority. Thus, even the slightest attempt to legally register a gay couple in our Country will be met with a corresponding reaction, as such decisions contravene the eminently Orthodox and historical conscience of the people. The Orthodox Church of Moldova calls on the faithful to take a stand, obviously, strictly within the limits permitted by the current legislation of the Republic of Moldova, so that such legalization and promotion of sin do not take place.

We believe that now is the time for each of us, including the country's lawmakers, to ask and answer honestly: On whose side am I? That of a people who for centuries fought and earned the right to exist under the sign of the Holy Cross, or on the side of those who want to bring us into Europe by legalizing outrageous sins?

Esteemed representatives of the power, you are not eternal on the throne of governance, and it depends on you how you will remain inscribed in history: as dignified people who respect the history, tradition, culture, and faith of the people who trusted you, or as traitors who promote 'values' foreign to this nation, for the sake of transitory benefits and recognitions.

To leave no room for interpretations, we reiterate that the Orthodox Church of Moldova has not opposed and does not oppose the European aspirations of our Country, but wishes for this integration to take place with respect for the true Christian and historical values of Europe, a Europe in which the Gospel of Christ is put back at the head of the table, and people know their origin as the image and likeness of God.

May the Truth prevail in the minds of each of us. We pray to the Lord to grant us all wisdom and reconciliation."

On February 2, Alexandr Nesterovschi, a deputy from the Communist and Socialist Bloc, proposed including in the agenda of the Parliament's plenary session a [bill](#) that bans "LGBTI propaganda" in schools. The parliamentary majority rejected this initiative.

The bill includes:

"Article 902. Homosexual Propaganda

(1) The promotion and demonstration in educational institutions of non-traditional sexual relations or references is punishable by a fine of 100 to 300 conventional units and the deprivation of the right to hold a certain position or the right to carry out a certain activity for a term of 1 to 4 years.

(2) Disseminating among minors information capable of making them want to change their sex is punishable by a fine of 100 to 400 conventional units and the deprivation of the right to hold a certain position for a term of 2 to 5 years.

Article 400, paragraph (1) after the phrase "art. 911 par. (13)-(18) and (20)," is "completed with the words "art.902"."

Nesterovschi said that during discussions in the committees, deputies from PAS mentioned that this subject does not deserve to be addressed, as there is no such threat in our country.

"However, in this short period of time, outrageous cases have appeared. Therefore, I suggest you not to gloss over this topic and to vote for the project. We all need a healthy society, educated on the traditions and values of our ancestors."

On July 14, the Mayor of Chişinău, Ion Ceban, [announced](#) a meeting with members of the Billy Graham Evangelical Association.

"The delegation from the United States will organize, this weekend, a large-scale event in Chişinău where thousands of people from all over the world will participate. (...) I have been invited to the event, which will be organized in Chişinău, where many Moldovans will participate, including those settled in the USA."

"The Celebration of Hope" was an event organized by the "Billy Graham" Evangelistic Association, led by Will Graham, in partnership with Christian evangelical churches in the Republic of Moldova. This association is known to the public, especially for its homophobic propaganda practices.

The main speaker of the "Celebration of Hope" at the Arena Chişinău, was Will Graham, the grandson of the famous evangelist Billy Graham. He preached that homosexuality is "abominable" and "a sinister form of perversion." At the same time, the "Billy Graham Rule" maintains that a woman cannot contribute to the welfare of the church and provides for distancing between a woman and a man who are not married.

After Billy Graham's death, the leadership of the association was taken over by his son, Franklin Graham, and grandson, William (Will) Graham, who persist in advancing homophobic discourse. The preachers claim that "Satan is behind LGBT rights and activism." They also praise Russian leaders who "stand firm against the growing homosexual agenda."

Franklin Graham previously criticized queer activists for "*trying to shove down America's throat the lie that homosexuality is okay*," and also declared about same-sex marriage that "*it was orchestrated by Satan*." He advocates for the abusive practice of conversion therapy, writes Thepinknews.

On July 25, 2023, the government agent Dumitru Obadă sent the government's Written Submissions in response to the requests for just satisfaction referring to the case Application no. 40235/15 Genderdoc-M v. the Republic of Moldova, related to the violation of the freedom of assembly filed in 2013. The government's position contains the following quotes:

*"...It is necessary to mention that any social disagreement with the values promoted by that association cannot equate with incitement to hate speech or public persecution against it. Moreover, the Government notes that members of the LGBT community have their own TV shows on public television channels, where they talk about the particularities of the LGBT community, their relationships, and lives, etc. At the same time, the pride march is organized annually in Chişinău and, on each occasion, various representatives of international organizations, NGOs, embassies, and ordinary citizens participate in these demonstrations. Furthermore, the last march held on June 18, 2023, in Chişinău was also followed by several public officials. **The Government considers that the arguments of the complainant association only underline constant self-victimization and distort the real nature of the general attitude towards the LGBT community in the Republic of Moldova...***

*...The reference made by the complainant association to the case Genderdoc-M and M.D. (no. 23914/15, 14 December 2021) as evidence that once a person is identified as gay, they become an open target for violence and crime, is **obviously manipulative**. The Government notes that this represented only an isolated situation and does not reflect any systemic issue at the internal level...*

*...As mentioned above, the Government emphasizes that **the rights and freedoms of the LGBT community are respected at the internal level**. In any case, a possible general disagreement with the LGBT conception by part of society cannot be reasonably treated as an automatic violation of the Convention....*

*...The Government reiterates that changing the route of the demonstration supported by the complainant association **does not constitute an act of discrimination against homosexual persons**, considering that they were not directly prohibited from carrying out the requested demonstration, but were only ordered to change the route, for exclusively security reasons....*

...The complainant association requested compensation of 12,000 EUR for moral damages, for the alleged violation of its right to peacefully enjoy the freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

The Government observes that the amount requested by the complainant as compensation for moral damages, in this case, is unjustified, lacking any basis in the relevant jurisprudence of the Court, excessive, and in clear discrepancy with the equitable assessment usually granted by the Court in such cases, assuming that there was any violation of the Convention. In addition, the complainant association failed to argue how it, as an association representing members of the LGBT community, directly suffered the moral damages requested. Instead, it relied on the need to protect the fundamental freedoms of its members.

*Therefore, the Government invites the Court not to award any compensation, as, from the Government's point of view, **there was no violation of the rights of the complainant association according to the Convention**, while the complainant association failed to argue the existence of a link between the requested amount and the alleged violation of its individual rights in this case.*

Alternatively, given the obviously biased and manipulative statements submitted by the complainant association, the Government considers that the mere finding of a violation would serve in itself as sufficient just satisfaction for the complainant association."

In 2023, Angelica Frolov, an openly lesbian LGBT activist and the program coordinator of the GENDERDOC-M Information Center, received the [United Nations General Human Rights Award](#) "for outstanding achievement in the field of human rights at the national or local level."

In 2023, the Platform of Queer Organizations and Individuals in the Republic of Moldova extended its collaboration. The Platform includes four formal organizations: GENDERDOC-M Information Center, the media platform Bang Bang, Queer Voices, Laolaltă, two initiative groups, and several activists. On December 16-17, the Platform held a two-day meeting where it planned a joint collaboration strategy for 2024. The vision, mission, and values of the Platform were also written.

Bang Bang was launched on August 15, 2022, with the mission of bringing queer reality to the online space inclusively and transparently. In 2023, the media platform was read by over 49,000 users, becoming a key element in the Moldovan media landscape. However, its popularity also attracted a wave of homophobic comments and hate incitement.

Facing discriminatory comments, Bang Bang adopted an active stance against hate speech. Comments that incite hate are deleted, and homophobic or stigmatizing ones are addressed through constructive dialogue. Since its inception, the platform has recorded a significant change in the behaviour of its readers. Initially, the fight against homophobic comments was assumed by the editorial members, but now, readers themselves intervene and combat such comments, a sign that the level of acceptance and understanding in society is increasing.

Bang Bang also serves as a support space for LGBTQ+ community members in Moldova. Through the platform, queer individuals can share their experiences, and the Bang Bang team tries to offer them the necessary help. A focus group organized in Bălți revealed a difficult reality for the community there, facing a high degree of non-acceptance. Comments like "*It's dangerous to be open*" or "*The city (Bălți) is not ready for such exposure*" illustrate the difficulties faced by queer individuals in this region.

In 2023, a Bang Bang employee was assaulted at an event where the platform was a partner. The aggression came from a participant and security personnel. This incident highlights the vulnerable nature of LGBTQ+ individuals in Moldova and the need to address security and acceptance issues.

From October 4 to 29, the 6th edition of the FESTIS International Theater Festival, themed Think Freely, was held. The opening show of the festival, "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" by John Cameron Mitchell, is a show about a Queer person, a production of the "STELA POPESCU" Theater in Bucharest, Romania. The show has the following description: "*Hedwig and the Angry Inch* tells the story of an existence contorted between the search for stage success and finding fulfillment in a tumultuous and nonconformist existence. The incredible trials that Hedwig goes through, but especially the assumption and sensitivity with which they are revealed to the audience to the tunes of rock, have woven around the play a cult aura for lovers of the musical genre. Hedwig is not a manifesto for a certain type of sexuality but a theatrical experience with a deeply human message that calls for openness and empathy towards the suffering that, in fact, every human being feels."

The media in the Republic of Moldova was monitored by the GENDERDOC-M Information center, and all materials addressing LGBT+ issues were collected.

The total number of documented materials is 767, of which 30 are positive, 614 are neutral (84 % neutral and positive), and 123 (69 in Russian and 54 in Romanian) are negative. The percentage of negative materials is 16%. A total of 317 articles in Russian were documented, of which 22% are negative. There are 419 materials in Romanian, of which 13% are negative. In percentage terms, the Russian media remains more homophobic and transphobic.

A high percentage of negative materials were on the topic of the Moldova Pride march and the electoral campaign.

HATE SPEECH, INCITEMENT TO HATE, AND DISCRIMINATION

On April 21, 2022, [Law no. LP111/2022](#) for amending certain normative acts regarding prejudice-motivated crimes and speech was passed. The Law includes Article 134(21) - Prejudice motives with the protected criteria “sexual orientation and gender identity,” whether the act is committed against a person possessing such protected characteristics, against their property or associated with them, or against a person who provides support to individuals possessing such characteristics or is associated with them, this association being real or perceived as real.

The Law also contains Article 346. Incitement to violent actions on the grounds of prejudice.

However, often cases of hate speech are not sanctioned.

The GENDERDOC-M Information Center has filed several complaints and lawsuits against hate speech towards LGBT persons.

On January 23, 2023, some websites published a [text](#) claiming that in Moldovan schools “the notions of ‘mother’ and ‘father’ will be phased out, to be replaced with ‘parent 1, parent 2’, which is related to the promotion of LGBT.” This information was taken from the Telegram channel of Bogdan Țirdea, a deputy from the Communist and Socialist Bloc. It concerns a request regarding the purchase of tickets for children's summer camps, a request that was drafted in one of the high schools in Chișinău. Representatives of the institution said that the claims are false.

The information was published on Facebook, on the page of the publication Kp.md. The [article](#) lacks the source of this information and draws the following conclusion (translated): “Interesting terminology in an Orthodox country. Why not? The Church is silent, as is society. Well, if we are living in good times, why should we revolt?”. The article states that the form is related to the adoption of the Istanbul Convention, after the ratification of which in “schools and high schools in Moldova began to phase out the notions of ‘mother’ and ‘father’, thus promoting the LGBT agenda”. The text does not specify how the author came to such a conclusion.

The same information was distributed by Vladimir Odnostalco, another socialist deputy.

According to the vice-principal of the high school, Irina Baran, who also drafted the form, “the institution does not phase out the notions of ‘mother’ and ‘father’, nor is there any promotion of LBGT. The respective option in the form was dictated by the intention not to discredit single-parent families.”

On February 16, Vasile Bolea, a deputy of the Socialist Party, delivered a [speech](#) at the Parliament's podium regarding the establishment of the new government:

“Do not legalize Sodomy and non-traditional relationships by ratifying the Istanbul Convention. After liquidating schools, they have shut down about 20 higher education and research institutions. They have closed 6 television stations that were delivering an alternative message, spitting on political pluralism. They have brought our country to the brink of bankruptcy and made us slaves to foreign interests.”

On March 8, Ion Chicu, former Minister of Finance of the Republic of Moldova, made a [post](#) on his Facebook page:

“I wanted to see with what thoughts and warm words the President would mark today's holiday. My curiosity was generated by the LGBT march, supported by PAS, today. Although it's evening, on the official page of the presidential institution - nothing about March 8th.

I don't know, maybe Maia was at today's LGBT march with Spânu and by that, she said pretty much everything - read between the lines, as it were... Perhaps, she doesn't find it necessary

to come with greetings - she's not in an election campaign to mimic affection and respect for ladies, I don't know.

Most likely, however, Maia Sandu is preparing a new public statement regarding the events in Georgia and doesn't have time. The text of the declaration is written, but Maia can't decide how to call the events there - a Coup d'état or a Revolution..."

Later, on May 30, Chicu [posted](#) on his page a photograph from a lineup in one of the schools in Moldova, where a fabric in the colours of the rainbow was hung next to another fabric in yellow and blue. The post included the following text:

"About "Patriot"-ism... The last bell in a gymnasium from the country of "crazy times." Which of Maia's supporters believes that this means "Europe"? Where is the Country's Tricolor, Sandu, Topală? Why have you replaced it with your own, shameless scoundrels?"

The post provoked many comments of hatred and incitement to violence and discrimination.

On March 10, the website kp.md published an [article](#) titled "Surprise on Tinder: A Russian woman met a man from Moldova online, married him, and after six months discovered that he is actually a woman with a 'rubber attribute'" (translated from Russian). This article narrates a story of deception, emphasizing the accused's identity and using a mocking tone towards transgender identity, even though it is irrelevant to the alleged crime. Moreover, the article focuses on the gender identity of the person rather than the crime itself, offering details about the intimate life that are also irrelevant. The article's title also highlights the person's gender identity, not the committed crime.

The Information Center GENDERDOC-M filed a complaint to the Press Council and received the following [response](#):

"Reviewing the complaint filed by Ms. Angela Frolov, program coordinator of Lobby and Advocacy at the Information Center GENDERDOC-M(...) examining the editorial response to the Press Council's notification, signed by Mr. Serghei Ciurikov, chief editor of the publication (...) which states (following are quotes from the editorial response translated from Russian): "The article talks about an event of public interest, including in Moldova, and warns readers about avoiding the repetition of such cases. It was impossible to bypass the sex change in addressing the topic, considering that the sex change was carried out, according to the swindler, as a means to avoid criminal responsibility. There are no statements in the article indicating a special (negative) attitude towards the swindler/swindler, conditioned by the sex change. It is possible that the article contains a certain degree of humour in the description of events, but this is not prohibited by law and did not generate requests for a reply to the publication." The editorial office rejects the accusations in the complaint that unjustifiably intimate life details of the person were offered, arguing through the provisions of Law No.64/2010 regarding freedom of expression that "no one can be held responsible for making public information about the private and family life of the person if the public interest in knowing them exceeds the interest of the person concerned in not spreading the information". The editorial office claims that the complainant is wrong when stating that "the deceived woman knew from the beginning of the relationship that the person in question is a transgender person", in reality, she found this out only after half a year of the relationship. Also, the editorial office points out that the complainant did not specify what exactly is the harm caused to the entire transgender community, which statements should be excluded or refuted and why in this case should be limited the freedom of distributing information, analyzing the article (...) published by the portal Kp.md on March 10, 2023, author - Lidia Tkaci...

...The Press Council of the Republic of Moldova adopts the following decision:

The Press Council finds that the title of the article (...) is tendentiously formulated and violates the provisions of art. 2.11 of the Journalist's Deontological Code of the Republic of Moldova (The journalist puts titles that correspond to the content of the journalistic material and

avoids those that mislead the public), because the title emphasizes the gender identity of one of the protagonists, while the journalistic material itself reflects a fraud offense.

The Press Council recommends the employees of the portal Kp.md to avoid placing titles that emphasize sensational details and do not reflect the information in the text. Also, the Press Council recommends the editorial office to avoid discriminatory approaches in the media coverage of topics related to vulnerable groups”.

On March 24th, a priest from the Metropolis of Bessarabia named Ion Marian wrote a message to Angelica Frolov, the coordinator of the Lobby and Advocacy program. The message read: "Shame on you! You understand everything as gay and report the entire universe to your sin as if it has narrowed your mind, soul, perception... You become obtuse!"

On April 13, 2023, Orthodox priest Vitalie Şincari was invited to the online show of the Sputnik channel on the topic "Easter as the celebration of celebrations, how it should be celebrated in Moldova".

During the show, Şincari made a series of homophobic, transphobic, racist, and sexist statements (translated from Russian):

"minute 6.04 Vitali Şincari: "Tolerance is the worst nonsense, it's when an LGBT march is organized with flags of countries that are now favourable to us, and everything seems tolerant there. But as a real, living person, who understands love, I'm not ready to share my love with just anyone. I have my wife, I love her, and I won't let anyone else love her without me. I won't allow anyone access to the most sacred parts of my life, my children, my truth, I won't allow it, I will fight for it."

minute 19.37 Vitali Şincari: "Liberalism isn't about human rights, it's the wish for satanic sins, which will be justified by all human rights. Human rights will be adapted as a foundation for sin, degradation, and bestiality. This will be proclaimed as the natural right of a person. Isn't it a natural right for a man to live with another man or a woman with another woman? And this is presented as the highest form of human liberation. The LGBT agenda becomes dominant in that world."

minute 27.41 Vitali Şincari: "I've had girls, now I want boys. I've had boys, now I want children. I've had children, now I want the whole world to be, how to say, I don't know, violated, possessed, that's what I want! What is this whole LGBT agenda about? I want to have sex in such a way that the whole world is fucked by me, I can't find more cultured words. And this is told to us, as being a free person."

minute 28.45 Andrei Petrik: "And to confirm this, Father Vitali, today in the Moldovan media, many reports have passed that, if before in Chisinau an LGBT march was held, now an entire festival will be organized for several days, ending with this march. But I will still express my subjective opinion, somehow, in a good sense, the patriarchal structure of life in Moldova, in the Moldovan people, prevents these foreign values imposed by the Western collective and the global cabal from being imposed as they hoped."

minute 31.40 Vitali Şincari: "The most important thing is that liberalism, unlike Christianity, fosters hatred. I saw this in the example of the most liberal, for example, Black Lives Matter. They didn't reach Washington because, as the saying goes, the stores were in their way, too many stores."

minute 34.34 Vitali Şincari: "For example, in the equality law, the main theme of homosexuals, they will definitely include gypsies there. And now you can't call them gypsies, you have to call them Roma, so no one feels offended. They will definitely include pregnant women there too, it doesn't matter. That is, the form of this evil is disguised under anything."

minute 35.09 Vitali Şincari: "We have no objections to homosexuals, we object to homosexuality, these are different things... but we object to those who corrupt our children, we object to that world created by us, Christians. Why are we against gay marriage? Because marriage is a religious invention. And if you are so creative, claiming you have your infinite

Zemfiras, or whoever, invent your own idea. Call it whatever you want, but they must call it exactly marriage, to pressure us and force us to change our marriage in favour of their madness... Men, changing their gender, have participated in women's competitions. But have you ever seen a woman declare herself a man and become a weightlifter? Even here, I realize it's a form of madness. The whole world watches this absurdity, and declares it an infinite value, under this the Olympic movement submits, and this isn't even schizophrenia. The gender calculation, how many gays, and lesbians you must have in film, on the radio station, how many themes you must highlight, this is not just... so, on Friday, everyone should come to see Christ's tomb, here is the man... and it is true, here is the man, not a gender parade, which will go, you understand, with gender flags. And I wonder, if I stick the St. George ribbon on their flag, will they dare to fine me?"

On April 20th, during Gheorghe Gonța's [show](#) 'Puterea a patra', Ion Ceban, the mayor of Chișinău, made the following comments regarding the Pride march: *„The City Hall does not issue such permits, so if the state institutions are not duly notified... as I said last year, the road was blocked which is a violation of the law. Everyone should know this. But my position remains the same. Everyone can do what they want in their own home. But propaganda for children and not only, I don't think it's reasonable”.*

On June 12, 2023, the Mayor of Chișinău made another [statement](#) regarding the LGBT community's Pride March: *„On June 18, we will not approve the application for the homosexual march in the capital. Public transportation will operate as usual on București Street and other streets. If the PAS government wishes, they can organize the parade as they did last year when they spent 4 million lei and streets and transport were blocked without permission. I believe the best place for this, in order not to disturb public transport or other activities in the capital, is the Parliament and Government of the Republic of Moldova. There are also other institutions, without the staff involved in this matter. They will attract maximum attention. I don't think there is much difference in the case of some in Parliament. Everyone can do what they want at home. We don't need propaganda of these demonstrations, behaviours, and attitudes. I am in defence of the right to work, to study, to other aspects of everyday life, just without the propaganda of these pseudo-values among children, and families. And just in case, on the 16th, 17th, and 18th we have many other activities in the capital, different from this one. I reiterate, if you want, you are welcome at the Parliament and the Government”.*

On 15 June, the mayor issued an order to start clearing the Bucharest Street, exactly on the route where the march was scheduled for 17 and 18 June (Saturday and Sunday), with the mention that the march was planned for Sunday. However, thanks to police support, the street was cleared on Sunday morning. To ensure the safety of the participants, the police checked all the piles of cut branches with the help of service dogs.

On June 14, 2023 pediatrician Igor Pletos published a [video](#) on social media in which he made the following statements about homosexual people: *"Let me be clear about my position on all this "dumbass": sexual intercourse itself is for that to make the continuity of the human race, but not for pleasure and lust (...) When I see that a sexual act between two men or two women gives birth to children, then you will show me that, and I will support them. As long as no children are born between two men or two women, I won't support all this "dumbass" (...) And stop with these rights that are free to choose. It has been proven that this is a mental illness. All these people are mentally ill, they should be taken to a psychiatrist. Don't try to justify some nonsense and don't be manipulated. (...) I am a sane man and I know what I am talking about. No normal doctor is going to support all these illnesses going on in society. It's been proven to be a mental illness. All these people are mentally ill, they should be taken to a psychiatrist. Don't try to justify some aberrations and don't be manipulated. Or be manipulated, but don't stop me from talking about*

natural physiology. No normal doctor is going to argue that. I wish you health and sanity first! People who disagree with my not supporting homosexuals and all this stupid propaganda that goes against physiological and natural laws and Christian values, I want you to dislike me and forget about my existence. We have different values. This is my position on dumbass”.

On 19 June Pletosu published another [text](#) on his Facebook page:

"I will continue to bring more arguments that refer to the toxicity of public propaganda of destructive ideas on a social, moral, spiritual, legal, economic, scientific, etc!... I hope that today will be the last time when we mention the irrelevance of public manifestations from lgbt minorities, I would even refer to any kind of minority... Tomorrow we may be told of the existence of another sexual minority, who will claim and declare that they are autosexual, i.e. they like to have sex with machines. and not with cheap cars, but with luxury cars, I want to see the face of the owner of that car, when he comes into the parking lot and a guy has sex with his car... That is why I propose today to make a petition, or something like that, to legally request from the Parliament - Republic of Moldova! Using all the arguments in this article! Let's demand: That - the promotion in the public space of LGBT ideas be banned by law, otherwise we end up with absurdity as I said before, I mention that people, who practice what they promote, have the right to do what they want in their privacy, without displaying in public what is aberrant for us, but normal for them, in this way we will live in peace and peace with all together... ”.

The GENDERDOC-M Information Centre has filed a complaint with the Equality Council over incitement to discrimination speech.

On June 17, members of the „Renaissance party”, deputies in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, held a [press briefing](#) against the organization of the Pride march. Several party members spoke at the briefing.

Unaffiliated deputy Vasile Bolea: *„We condemn these actions. In fact, they are propaganda actions of values that are not inherent to Moldovans, values that threaten the morality of society, the rights of children to be further from those values that lead to perversions.”* The deputy also accused the government of doing everything possible to impose foreign ideas and values on citizens and that a bill banning LGBTIQ+ propaganda among minors was registered in Parliament.

Natalia Parasca, a member of the 'Renaissance' Party: *„As a mother, I am categorically against someone imposing a sexual ideology or orientation on my child. We, traditional families, do not shout at every corner about our intimate life, about what happens behind the closed doors of our homes, and we do not impose our lifestyle on anyone. Why, then, are we forced to witness as LGBT go in marches.”*

The Ombudsman, Cezlav Panico, published a [statement](#) expressing concern about the hate speech and prejudice of some deputies in Parliament towards the LGBTQ+ community in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the intention of the Mayor of Chişinău not to authorize the march of this community on June 18. The Ombudsman believes that *"politicians, as representatives of the people, should unite, not divide society. Persons who are exponents of public interest with European democratic aspirations should present a model of respectful attitude towards human dignity, rights, and freedoms, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or social origin, citizenship, sex, gender, language, religion or religious beliefs, political opinions, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, age, and marital status.”*

Moldova Pride Festival 2023

On June 18, the [Moldova Pride 2023 march](#) took place. The march went through the planned route with about 500 participants and police protection. This year there was much less police presence, and the atmosphere of the march was much more relaxed.

Three deputies of the PAS party in the parliament participated in the march, including Eugenia Cojocari. Ms. Cojocari told the press: *"I support the rights of any entities regardless of religion, sexual orientation, or anything. All people must be equal and I, as a member of the Human Rights and Interethnic Relations Commission, advocate for the rights of any entities.”*

Vitalie Gavrouc, a deputy in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, stated that for him the rights of any minority are human rights: *"For me, it is an honour. I think everyone should be here, in the city with families, children, and grandparents, because these are the rights of everyone. Each of us represents a minority in one context or another. Society needs to become inclusive, to understand each other, if it has questions, to research, to study its neighbour, to be open."*

Artur Mija, Secretary-General of the Government of the Republic of Moldova: *"I personally believe that we need to work on public perception, on how people understand this. Here are people with smiles on their faces, good-natured people, who harm no one, there is nothing wrong in loving. We need to work a little on public opinion, to normalize the understanding of this subject and at the same time, we need to show the young people across the country, who may be discriminated against and harassed, that they are not alone, they are supported, that they are normal and should not be afraid or ashamed to be as they are."*

Before the march started, a group of 4 men approached the gathering place, holding crosses and icons. The police blocked their passage, and they left shortly after.

During the march, there were no incidents. However, this year too, several counter-demonstrations took place. In front of the monument of Stephen the Great and Holy, dozens of parishioners and priests came with icons, crosses, and signs that read *"Traditional Families"; "Stop the spread of homosexuality"; "God created man and woman." They chanted "Shame"; "We are against sin. We are an Orthodox country."*

An aggressive man tried to get past the police cordon but was not allowed. Two young men shouted *"Go back to Europe and have anal sex there"* (translated from Russian), one of them wearing a shirt with the inscription *"Russia."*

Activist Veaceslav Valico organized a counter-demonstration with a few participants who had banners with the following inscriptions: *"We are not against people, we are against propaganda"; "Today LGBT, tomorrow zoophilia, the day after cannibalism"; "LGBT is not normal"*, after which, along with a group of protesters with icons, they went to the U.S. Embassy in Moldova. According to Valko, this was the final point of the procession, because a rainbow flag was hung on the building of the embassy, and *"the U.S. Embassy itself is the central office of the LGBT community in Moldova"*. At the American embassy, protesters stood with posters and ended their action.

On 26 June, the portal point.md published a [news item](#) entitled *"GenderDoc-M organizes "Trans Camp" in Molovata Noua from 8 to 9 July"*, based on a community announcement published on the Facebook page of GENDERDOC-M. Soon, the news was picked up by other portals and Telegram channels. Comments on the news, which were not moderated, included hateful messages such as *"Bring back Stalin; So what... these bastards will be guarded again at the citizens' expense, but 2 days ago; Well... then all this territory will have to be treated with fire, then disinfected with bleach... and the grass won't grow there for the next 10 years; Return the article for sodomy to the Penal Code!; A good place to gather these rainbow people in one place and give them a fire. And from Molovata there are only two escape routes, either ferry or Transnistria. Good move."*

Following the publication, beneficiaries who were to attend the camp expressed concerns: *„I am concerned that Point has exposed us to the public. So I have a question - is it really ok? And, won't there be guards just in case?"; „Now I'm kind of paranoid to go. This shit wasn't in the news last year.";* *„Yeah, but for some reason they posted it for all the homophobes to see. Especially on Russian news stations. So that I can now sit back and wonder how anyone could attack me.";* *„I read the comments, it's scary"*.

Later, the resort manager received messages from customers asking if it was true that a trans camp would be held and if not, where it would be held.

For security reasons, the organisation had to look for a new venue for the camp.

On July 17th, the Șor party organized a [protest](#) against the decision to cancel entrepreneur patents. During the protest, an installation was presented where the photo of the Minister of Economy, Dumitru Alaiba, was placed on an improvised pitchfork, and a rainbow flag, the symbol of the LGBT community, was hung around his neck.

On July 19, 2023 on the social network TikTok was published an [interview](#) with the leader of "Our Party" Renato Usatii and the member of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, MP Bogdan Tirdea.

Renato Usatii: (the text is partially translated from Russian, lexicon preserved) *"Yes, if we are talking about LGBT, here is the question I have to Mr. Tirdea (...) yes, you agree that we should break the bank, I am "protiv golubih" (against gay men), that's how I am built, still Soviet, from school, when two men kiss on the hill looks very ugly, I agree "sto protentov" (one hundred percent). But when two "padruji" (girls) kiss each other that can't be called an ugly sight. And, to close these themes, I propose to legalize padrujis (girls) separately. Doesn't the Socialist Party consider this opportunity so that I am not alone on the clearing?"*

Bogdan Țirdea: *"I don't know, I used to say that I am a lesbian, in the sense that I like women. But what to legalize and what not to legalize, we have to see, let's get to that."*

On November 5, 2023, local elections for mayor took place in several localities in Moldova, including Chisinau. During these elections, several candidates used homophobia in their election campaigns.

On 15 September, the Renaissance party held a [protest](#) in the centre of the capital against European integration. During the protest, a flag was unveiled with half of its design in rainbow colours, symbolising the LGBT community, and the other half in the colours of the European Union flag. The party leader, Alexandr Nesterovskii, tore down this flag.

Adrian Albu, deputy of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) and candidate for mayor of Chisinau, [said](#) that if he wins the elections, he will ban LGBT marches in the capital. He noted on his Telegram channel on September 20 that *"Chisinau is a free zone of homosexual propaganda."*

Albu stressed the desire to *"defend and preserve the family and social, moral and Christian values"*. He vowed to ban any form of „LGBT propaganda” in Chisinau schools and said that LGBT community parades would also be banned, considering them a *"form of aggressive propaganda of relations alien to our traditionally based society"*.

He also said he intended to *"protect the interests of the majority of the population"*, which he said was opposed to *"homosexual propaganda"*. Albu insisted that in a democracy the opinion of the majority must be taken into account and criticised what he saw as the imposition of minority positions on the majority. Albu said he *„would defend the interests of the majority in society, including parents against LGBT propaganda in schools and citizens who oppose the presence of such propaganda on the streets of Chisinau”*.

On October 7, on the Telegram page of socialist MP Bogdan Tirdea, a clip was [posted](#) from the TVC-21 evening talk show on October 6 with guest Maxim Morosan, candidate for mayor of Balti.

The translation of the dialogue from Russian into Romanian is as follows:

Moderator: *„You talk a lot about LGBT and think that LGBT propaganda negatively affects the traditional values and unformed minds of our children. But I have a question: if you become mayor of Balti, how will you communicate with LGBT activists, who are generally supported by the Republican authorities? If, for example, they come and apply to organise a democratic event.”*

Moroșan: *"Of course, I will sign."*

Moderator: "Will you give permission?"

Moroşan: "I will give permission and personally welcome them."

Moderator: "You seem to be joking, but the meeting will not be pleasant."

Moorish: "Well, we're not talking about how, we're talking about the fact that we're going to meet them. So that they come in once, get what they came for, so that they don't show up here again. Look, really, LGBT and all that is happening today is a mess, filth, the breakdown of society. And taking this opportunity, I want to address those who are supporting LGBT today in our government. I wish each and every one of you who see this as normal and are ready to sign up and support the LGBT movement, I wish every one of your children, whether they are boys or girls, to have someone of the same sex in bed with them at night. This is what you have grown up for them. And those who don't have children, it's all clear out there, they have different passports and they're doing this to destroy our integrity, our children, our faith. But we will not allow that."

After the GENDERDOC-M Information Center filed a complaint about candidate Morosan's hate speech, he made another post:

"Today, Friday the 13th, local government administrative rats and representatives of the LGBT community began a massive attack on me as a candidate for mayor of Balti. The attack started in secret, as is usual in their community. And truly, despite the numerous lawsuits, political shows and attacks, I will fight against LGBT, against anarchy, corruption and theft - as will the overwhelming majority of the citizens of this country. The LGBT complaint is an attack on common sense, on millions of our citizens. I think LGBT demonstration marches offend the feelings of believers, Orthodox, Moldovans, Gagauz, Bulgarians, Russians, Ukrainians and everyone living in our country! I have always supported and will always support our traditional values and traditional families, father and mother, masculine and feminine! Today, LGBT, in the person of the lady (or gentleman, I don't know how it's customary there) through her lawyer, Frolova Angelica from GENDEROC-M, filed a complaint with law enforcement authorities for the discrediting of "pederasts and lesbians". I am less than half a year in Moldovan politics and I understand that I am dealing with fascists, who give fines for wearing the Saint George's Day ribbon on May 9, with corrupts and pederasts in the direct sense of the word! Frankly, it's sad!"

The post was commented on by several users who used threats and hate speech towards Angelica Frolov and the LGBT community. The comments were not moderated.

During the campaign for the local elections, the newspaper "Socialists", belonging to the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, distributed an issue in which, on the second page, several of the party's goals for the mayoral candidates were listed. Among these objectives was "Ban gay parades and LGBT propaganda in schools". Alongside this statement, the newspaper included a photo of a rainbow flag marked "banned". The text next to this picture contained bold words: "**The values of the people of Chisinau are our values. This is why we will not allow the implementation of LGBT propaganda in schools and Chisinau because this is unacceptable for the majority of teachers, as well as for parents and families who have children in school. We will promote projects to strengthen family values, Moldovan traditions, social activism and responsibility**".

On October 19, "Our Party" leader Renato Usatii published on his Facebook network a story with the following message: "I have a question for those who are knowledgeable in the field I'm going to talk about, now someone sent me a screen about the PAS party and about the local elections they all advertise online, only that PAS here, has broken through, made a leap (translation from Russian)... Here's the site on which it advertises, and here's the man look what it says here: this is an application for zadneprivodnyaia (rear pulling, pejorative for gay) and PAS advertises here. For those of you in PAS who advertise there, you after lying to a whole country deamu have reached out to those with privodu behind. My pasists, come winter, in winter time zadnii privod (rear wheel drive) is not so functional, better perednii or polnâi (front or integral)."

On October 20, Bogdan Tirdea, a member of Parliament from the Party of Socialists, gave an [interview](#) to TV21 in which he said, "*They sued me and Voronin (the leader of the Communist Party) for what? I was sitting in Parliament and there, the day before the gay parade, a journalist from a pro-power channel approached me and asked me: Why aren't you at the gay parade? I said 'dear, have you really gone mad? What am I supposed to do, put on tights, heels? I'm an MP and I think that everyone can do what they want at home and with whom they want, but don't bring it out in public. And what do you think, I was sued, by this GENDERDOC-M, they are asking for 100 thousand lei from me, because I insulted them or humiliated them or wanted to rape them there, or whatever else they want to attribute to me. But I understand that they can win the judgment because the judge himself... try to give me the case. So in my case, they started persecuting me for not being gay, that's how it comes out. Ah, you're not gay, come here, we fine you, we sue you. What, have you guys gone completely insane? So I don't have the right to say that the family is a man and a woman anymore? That a woman is, shall we say, a female being who gives birth, breastfeeds?'*"

On 16 October Orizont TV hosted a new round of election [debates](#) ahead of the general local elections on 5 November 2023. Invited to the debates were the candidates for the post of mayor of the capital in the order of their registration in the Chisinau Municipal Electoral District No.1: Ion Stefanîță, candidate of the political party "Respect Moldova Movement", Adrian Albu - candidate of the political party "Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova" and Anatol Usatii, candidate of the political party "Party of Development and Consolidation of Moldova".

Adrian Albu talking about young people (minute 33) "*...and let's not be in the situation when in the youth development policy we see the propagation of LGBT tolerance in schools, which we, socialists, will fight against and will not allow LGBT propaganda in schools this point and in the electoral program*". The moderator intervened: "*we are not allowed these messages, it is a point of (...) the regulation*", to which Adrian Albu added: "*it is a point of my campaign*".

On October 24 during the electoral [debates](#) on ProTV between Stefan Uritu, Diana Caraman and Stefan Gligor, (minute 1h16), Diana Caraman confirmed her position: "*I maintain my previous position, I won today the lawsuit against Genderdoc/community, (...) and we will not allow LGBT propaganda in schools, it's a principled position*".

On 30 October, at the election [debates](#) on ProTV "I want to be mayor". Contestants: Adrian Albu (Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova), Victor Chironda (Platform for Dignity and Truth Party), Ruslan Codreanu (Electoral Bloc "Ruslan Codreanu"). Ion Ceban (National Alternative Movement Party) refused to participate in the debates.

Adrian Albu (minute 59) in response to a question from moderator Lorena Bogza about his position on refusing LGBT marches, if he were mayor of all, said: "*I fight and refuse LGBT propaganda in schools, I am tolerant and respect everyone's love, but consider love something private, to be at home and do not want it propagated in schools as a father of 3 children. In Parliament, I intervened, and I asked for Topal to be heard in Parliament. There is a difference between defending rights, yes, but not propagating them. LGBTI values are alien to me and so are marches*". The moderator asked clarifying questions to make her position clear, but she did not sanction his speech as discriminatory, or hate speech, she did not close the microphone, on the contrary, she also opened this topic.

In October there was a [debate](#) on TV8 with Diana Caraman (min 40),

Moderator: "*Mrs Caraman, what will be your position on the LGBT parade organisation in the capital?*"

Caraman: "*Here my position remains unchanged, I belong to those who do not change their principles and ideals, we strictly protect traditional values, to which more than 90% of our inhabitants adhere and want to be protected by the inhabitants of Chisinau*".

On 31 October, in an [interview](#) for the "5 awkward questions" programme on Newsmaker, Vasile Bolea, Member of Parliament, answered the question about the attitude towards the LGBT community (translated from Russian):

"I report negatively. Why? Because such organizations, in my opinion, attack the basic institutions of society, such as the church, such as the traditional family. If someone likes, I don't know, to corrupt themselves with other things, please, you can do that quietly at home. Propaganda of homosexuality and this whole gay thing, I relate to it negatively. If there will be further requests to the city hall to hold such parties in public places, we will address this, I don't want to say fight, but we will apply legal measures in this regard. We have law No. 26 on gatherings and there are certain mechanisms, tools there, whereby the city hall can influence the organisation or non-organisation of a certain event, changing the day, the place, the location where different organisations want to hold their gay parade and, as you say, the tolerance march. And in this respect, the city hall and the local government can use the letter of the law to somehow change all of this. I want to remind you that the right of assembly of these ideas, unclear to me, is not an absolute right. Your rights end where my rights begin".

Cases reported to the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre

Case 1: On 13 February, the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre received a message from the mother of a student from Mihai Eminescu High School in Chisinau, telling us that the high school psychologist Natalia Bulat urges students *"not to tolerate lesbian, gay and bisexual dysfunctions and if they meet them, to send them to her for correction"*. The psychologist also said LGBT people are *"backwards people who need to be taught"*.

After GENDERDOC-M representatives notified the Ministry of Education about the incident and suggested that the ministry organize training for psychologists in schools and colleges, the following response followed:

"In the context of your request regarding the training of school psychologists and headmasters, I have discussed with Mrs Viorica Marț, MEC senior consultant.

We will now give you the Ministry's position.

As you mentioned, last year we had a training for all the 35 Services, which are methodologically in charge of developing the professional competences of psychologists in general education institutions.

Following last year's training, the psychologists organised training activities at the district/municipality level for school psychologists based on their needs.

We have not had any other requests on this subject from the territory.

As a rule, CRAP coordinates all training activities with the MEC."

Case 2: On 8 March, a vlogger known as "mitriucc", with almost 1900 followers, posted a photo from the feminist march on his Instagram network, showing two girls with the rainbow flag. To this post, she added the comment, *"Here's why I'm getting a gun permit soon"*.

Case 3: On April 20, 2023, Sergiu Bejenari a civic activist had a [conversation](#) with a taxi driver named Paun Veaceslav from Yandex taxi service, with registration number EDQ914. During the discussion about the weather conditions and the bad state of the roads in the city the driver said: *"Well, yes, if money is spent on gay marches. About 4 million lei have been spent on those who walk bare-headed on the streets. Can you imagine? Let them stay at home and not walk around with their skulls on the streets"*.

Case 4: On May 15, 2023, the GENDERDOC-M Center received a message from a beneficiary asking if the LGBT march would take place on May 21. Following a discussion with this beneficiary, we discovered that the German language teacher at the Free International

University of Moldova, Aliona Lungu, was spreading false information among students about the 'European Moldova' National Assembly scheduled for 21 May, falsely claiming that this event is in fact a gay march. The purpose of the assembly was stated by the organisers as follows:

"The National Assembly European Moldova will be held on 21 May in the Great National Assembly Square. Let's answer those who ask what Moldovans want. A loud and clear answer. Let our voice, the voice of the many, the voice of our people, be heard. I come with an appeal to everyone - people who work the land, teachers, students, non-governmental organisations, entrepreneurs, doctors, people of culture, private sector employees, and civil servants - together to support our common dream. Let's show that we want peace. We want the European Union to be our home.

We are at an important crossroads. What we do now will affect our lives, our children's lives and the lives of our children. I come with this appeal to all citizens, because at crucial moments big decisions are not taken by politicians alone. Big decisions are made by the people in the Grand National Assembly Square. Now is the time to unite and become part of the European family together".

VIOLENCE AND PREJUDICE-MOTIVATED INCIDENTS

On April 21, 2022, [Law No. LP111/2022](#) was passed, amending certain normative acts concerning crimes and speech motivated by prejudice. The law includes the protected criteria of "sexual orientation and gender identity."

However, there is a significant problem with the implementation of the law and the investigation of these crimes.

In 2023, the GENDERDOC-M Information Center adopted a strategy to bring about the implementation of this law. LGBT individuals who have suffered from prejudice-based crimes were legally and psychologically supported to file complaints with the police and lawsuits.

On the night of March 25, at 2:00 AM, three men, one of them wearing a mask, attacked the headquarters of the GENDERDOC-M Information Center with eggs. Several of these hit the courtyard and the walls of the building, causing material damage. A few eggs also hit the gate. A complaint was filed with the police, along with video recordings from surveillance cameras. The response from the police was that the case is closed, as it was not possible to identify the perpetrators.

Between June 21-25, 2023, the city of Cahul hosted the eighth edition of the Moldox Documentary Film Festival. In 2022, for the first time during the festival, a Queer party was organized, an event that drew the attention of several residents of Cahul, thus associating the festival with the LGBTQ+ community. Near the location of the 2022 Queer party, a few aggressive youths gathered to enter the party. The organizers called the police, and the youths were taken to the police station, but, according to the police, they were not sanctioned, being minors.

In 2023, the festival organizers reported several homophobic and transphobic incidents. On the first day of the festival, the letter L from the festival name installation was damaged. Also, on that day, someone threw an egg from the windows of a student dormitory towards the festival coordinator, Dumitrita Pocičovschi, and one of the guests, Denis Pavlovic.

At the festival house, where after parties take place, four boys came asking for 'the boy who walks in a skirt,' referring to a non-binary person participating in the workshops. After a discussion with a team member, they left.

Two workshop participants, on their way to the hotel after activities, were verbally assaulted by a group of teenagers who followed them, presumably the same people who vandalized the letter, as the incidents occurred on the same night.

A young woman walking in the park with her child in a stroller made an indecent gesture towards two festival participants while they were taking photos next to the Moldox installation.

An apparently minor young man spat in the direction of the festival communicator, Ana Gurdis, while she was displaying a festival poster in front of a grocery store.

Sergiu Renta, the advisor to politician Usatîi, gave a suggestive gift to one of the festival organizers, suggesting that he knows the organizer's sexual orientation.

All these incidents were reported to the police, and no further incidents were reported in the following days. However, some queer participants and guests expressed feeling unsafe in Cahul this year.

Cases reported by beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M

Case 1: On 5 March 2023, around 10pm, S., an 18-year-old transgender girl, was in a courtyard in the city centre with a group of friends. Nearby was another group of young people, including an acquaintance of S.'s.

S. approached to greet the acquaintance, but a boy in the group reacted to her voice by asking "*Are you a boy?*". The girl did not answer and walked away from the group. After a short time, she left the courtyard, quickly realising that the boy and several other young men were following her down the street, continuing to verbally harass her. S. called the police and the youths disappeared. Although S. decided not to press charges, she sought support from GENDERDOC-M the next day, feeling unwell and experiencing an exacerbation of her gender dysphoria. GENDERDOC-M staff offered her support and informed her about her rights and steps to take in such situations in the future.

Case 2: On 27 April, Irina, a transgender woman, was on the trolleybus on route 25. Near the intersection of Socoleni and Iazului streets, she was approached by four teenagers, aged approximately 16-17, who started pulling her hair and insulting her for her long hair, saying: "*Do you like long hair? Are you a girl? You're showing off male dignity. Huilo, suka, pidaras, gavniuc* (offensive and homophobic expressions in Russian)". Neither the trolleybus driver nor the passengers got involved in the conflict. Irina explained to them that she is a transgender girl and got off the trolley as soon as she had the chance. The teenagers got off after her. When Irina said she was going to call the police, they briefly disappeared, then caught up with her, applied polyurethane foam to her hair and fled. At home, Irina tried to remove the foam, but it had hardened and could not be washed out. Irina's father had to cut her hair very short.

The next day, Irina turned to the police and filed a complaint at the 7 Rascani police station, speaking to police officer Andrei Covalciuc, but received an evasive response and no information about identifying and punishing the assailants.

Case 3: On 25 June 2023, Boris B., a gay man, left his house in the morning and walked to his car parked nearby. A group of four young men were standing near the staircase of the apartment block and asked Boris if he had any cigarettes. Sensing aggression in their tone, Boris quickened his pace towards the car. The young men chased him, and after Boris got into the car and locked the doors, they tried to break the window to get in. All the while, they insulted Boris, calling him a "*paedophile, bitch, parasite, animal*" and saying that "*people like him should not exist*". Boris called the police and the group of aggressors were detained and behaved aggressively at the police station. After lodging the complaint, Boris was escorted out the back door to avoid meeting the attackers. The next day, the sector policeman informed Boris that the incident could be considered criminal and suggested he file a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office. The lawyer of the GENDERDOC-M Centre took over Case to provide legal support.

Boris later discovered a video on social media in which the same four individuals appear to have destroyed another car.

Following the complaint filed at the police station, a criminal case was opened. The perpetrators have been identified and Boris plans to file a claim in court for moral and material compensation once the investigation is complete.

Case 4: On 19 June 2022, Marin Pavlescu, a young gay man, received a persistent call from a stranger. Marin answered the call and recorded the conversation, as the man swore at him and threatened to "*cut off his legs*" and "*kill him for being a paedophile*". Following the incident, Marin went to lodge a complaint with the Ciocana Police Inspectorate. The policeman on duty, noticing the mention of "sexual orientation" in the complaint, called three other colleagues, showed them the complaint and they started laughing. When Marin asked them why they were laughing and insisted that his complaint be registered, they refused to do so. Marin called his lawyer, Doina Ioana Străisteanu, who told them by phone that they were obliged to register the complaint. The claim was registered only after the intervention of a superior, who heard the noise and asked police officers to treat the case professionally.

A criminal case has been opened for "Threatening to kill and grievous bodily harm on grounds of prejudice". The assailant has been put on the wanted list and has been located in Italy. The man was apprehended at the border in August 2023 when he entered the country. The offender expressed surprise at the charges, saying he did not expect and "regrets" not having anticipated the consequences.

Case 5. On October 8, 2023, in the city centre of Chisinau, during the celebration of Wine Day, a young woman (S.R.) who had a rainbow drawn on her raincoat, was verbally attacked and threatened by a teenager. The young man approached her, pointed to the rainbow drawing and asked her "*What does that mean?*". S.R., feeling frightened, did not get a chance to react as another teenager from the boy's group approached and pulled him aside, telling him to leave her alone.

Case 6: On the night of 13 to 14 October, in front of the Oro club in the Botanica sector, at 24 Decebal Boulevard, a young man named Mihai was attacked and hit twice in the face by two unknown men, being insulted with the words "*gay, pederast*". The incident happened when Mihai came out of the club to wait for a taxi. A group of drunken young men started insulting him and then one of them approached and punched him in the face. Mihai pulled out his phone and started recording video, at which point the assailants started shouting at him to hide the phone. Another young man approached from behind and hit him again, causing Michael to fall down. A security guard intervened, stopped the conflict, but allowed the attackers back into the club. Mihai called the police. The cops did not go to identify the attackers, inviting Mihai and his friends to the police station to press charges. A week later, Mihai was informed that a misdemeanour case had been opened for incitement to discrimination and not-so-serious harassment committed for reasons of prejudice.

Case 7: On 14 November, a 15-year-old teenager, after a fight with his father (according to a friend), took a large amount of pills. He then called the ambulance and ended up in hospital. The teenager came to the GENDERDOC-M office a few times and just sat and talked to office visitors and employees. He said he felt good and safe here. He mentioned that his parents do not accept his sexual orientation and that he needs help because he suffers from depression. On his arms were traces of extinguished cigarettes. He had put them out on his own hand. This teenager also said that he turned to Neovita (youth medical center).

GENDERDOC-M has approached the children's ombudsman for support for this teenager.

Case 8: On 9 December, O., a teenage non-binary person, was walking in the centre of Chisinau with some friends. Around 9pm, they were attacked by a group of about 15-20 young people. While O. tried to call the 112 emergency service, the assailants tried to destroy their phone. The assailants used homophobic verbal insults and threw snowballs and pieces of ice at them. As a result of the incident, O and his friends suffered physical injuries from the ice chips

and were psychologically affected, experiencing stress and anxiety. This unpleasant experience had a profound impact not only on O. but also on their friends.

O. mentioned that this is not the first time they has experienced such attacks.

The teenagers have managed to call the police, a complaint has been filed, but they say it is not the first time and they have no confidence that the police will do anything to protect them.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The [Law on Ensuring Equality](#) in the Republic of Moldova, voted in 2012, includes the protection criteria 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' starting from 2022. For the implementation of the law, the Council for Equality was created in 2013. The members of the Council are appointed by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova for a five-year term. The current composition includes: Ian Feldman, Victorina Luca, Andrei Brighidin, Svetlana Doltu, Evghenii Golosceapov.

The mission of the Council is to prevent and protect against discrimination, ensure equality, and promote equal opportunities, and diversity.

According to the study "[Discrimination in the Republic of Moldova, 2022](#)" conducted by the Council for Equality, 18.18% of the cases of discrimination submitted to the council were on the criterion of "sexual orientation" and 2.27% on "gender identity". The main cause of these complaints was the infringement of dignity (11.36%) and access to publicly available goods and services (4.54%).

Of the total decisions issued in 2022, 24% relate to the workplace (8% of these on sexual orientation).

Of the total decisions issued in 2022, 22% relate to access to publicly available goods and services (22% of these on sexual orientation and gender identity).

Of the total number of decisions issued in 2022, 22% relate to the infringement of dignity (60% of these on sexual orientation).

Of the total decisions, in 12% of the cases, discriminatory actions related to other areas were established (20% of these on sexual orientation).

The council's recommendations for improving the situation in the field of prevention and combating discrimination and ensuring equality to the Government of the Republic of Moldova are: To revise the normative framework concerning the modification/correction of civil status documents for transgender persons, to offer these categories of people an accessible, predictable procedure compatible with the principles of the rule of law and human rights standards.

The recommendations to the Ministry of Defense and subordinate institutions are: To introduce the initial and continuous professional training system for military personnel and soldiers, subjects related to the prevention and combating of discrimination and ensuring equality on the criterion of sexual orientation and other criteria, including with the involvement of organizations and/or specialists in the field.

The recommendations to the Public Services Agency are: To start the process of supplementing the normative framework in the part concerning the modification/correction of civil status documents in the case of transgender persons, to offer these categories of people an accessible, predictable procedure compatible with the principles of the rule of law and human rights standards.

During this year, the GENDERDOC-M Information Center registered ten cases of violation of the right to health in the context of mandatory HIV testing for asylum seekers in the Republic of Moldova. Despite legislative norms that provide for voluntary HIV testing, these individuals are forced to undergo mandatory medical procedures, including HIV testing, which violates the principles of equity. It is noteworthy that individuals who already know their HIV status are not exempt from the repeated testing procedure, which causes additional stress and breaches medical confidentiality.

Cases reported by beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M

Case 1: On 29 January, Stela Roxana Pascal, a trans woman, went to FinComBank to pick up 200 euros sent by her mother. The cashier refused to release the money because it was in her name on her ID (male), even though the photo on her ID matched her actual appearance. Stela asked the police to intervene. The police arrived on the scene and confirmed that the ID was valid and belonged to the person present. However, even with police involvement, she was refused the money. A complaint was lodged and a report was made.

Stela also complained to the Equality Council. The Council concluded that the photo on her ID card matched her actual appearance and therefore the person could be properly identified. The Council issued a [decision](#) on 25 July saying:

"The facts established constitute discrimination in access to banking services on the basis of gender identity. In order to prevent similar acts in the future, the Council recommends "Fincombank":

- *Inform all employees about this decision, depersonalising the petitioner's personal data;*
- *Not to allow similar facts in the future by applying all customer identification measures".*

Case 2: On 13 June, the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre was approached by C.S., a young gay man. He reported that he went to the military commissariat and was issued a certificate with the diagnosis F66.0, to be admitted to the psychiatric hospital. The ICD-10 diagnosis F66.0, relating to 'Sexual Maturation Disorder', was assigned to him because of his homosexual orientation.

GENDERDOC-M has contacted the Ministry of Defence to ask why a gay person was issued with this certificate. The Ministry representative apologised and said she would contact the commissioner. The next day, the young man was called and asked to report for alternative service and was asked to return the certificate.

Case 3: On June 16, several guests of the Moldova Pride Festival, coming from various countries in the region, passed through Chisinau Airport. One person from the Russian Federation was stopped and questioned about the purpose of his visit. She mentioned that she came for Moldova Pride. She waited at the checkpoint for two hours, after which a border police representative invited her to a separate office and asked her about her sexual orientation. The person replied that she had no defined sexual orientation, to which the policeman replied, *"If you were a lesbian, I would have let you go immediately"*. The person insisted she had no reason to lie. Afterwards, the policeman checked her passport several times and advised her not to attend the Pride march.

We reported this incident to the chief of the border police, who assured us that he would take the necessary measures. The following day, no further incidents of this kind occurred.

THE SITUATION OF TRANS PERSONS

According to the International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems 2019 (ICD-11) issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), the term "gender identity disorders" has been updated to "gender incongruence." This reclassification now places gender incongruence in the chapter on sexual health, distinguishing it from the previous category of 'mental disorder'.

Despite this international change, the Republic of Moldova has not yet aligned its system accordingly. For a gender and name change in identity documents, trans persons are still required to provide a certificate indicating a diagnosis of "transsexuality." Currently, the modification of these documents depends on court decisions, a process that generally takes between 24 and 48 months.

Until January 2023, the Gender Identity Disorders Commission of the IMSP Clinical Psychiatric Hospital issued F64 diagnostic certificates after a 6-24 month evaluation. This commission was disbanded in January 2023, leaving the trans community without a defined procedure. Considering the updated ICD-11 guidelines, we have focused on promoting depathologization and demanding a transparent legal framework, without medical documentation.

In March 2023, GENDERDOC-M organized a round table with representatives of Parliament, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Services Agency (ASP), and the Equality Council. With the support of experts, the GENDERDOC-M Information Center presented current challenges and potential solutions. GENDERDOC-M asked the government to consider the successful strategies of European countries, such as the self-determination model used in Malta, Spain, and recently in Germany, or the French approach, which facilitates document changes without imposing medical procedures.

By October 2023, the government's response leaned towards adopting the French model as a basis for new protocols. Although this is a potential solution, we, as part of civil society, have reservations about the development and execution of this law. The French regulation requires that individuals seeking to change their gender marker participate in a court hearing and present at least two witnesses and additional confirmatory documents. Considering the capacity constraints of the Moldovan judicial system, a mechanism must ensure a court decision within 3-6 months (180 days are the maximum in French law). Moreover, given the prevalence of transphobia, there must be clear and unequivocal guidelines to eliminate ambiguity. If trans persons can provide witness testimonies, the court should not have the discretion to refuse their request.

Most crucially, the law should not require any medical certification as proof of gender. Such a requirement would be regressive, pushing individuals back into the quagmire of medical consultations or diagnoses.

Effective LGR procedures will not only improve the well-being and mental health of the trans community but will also facilitate their social integration. This progression can empower them to pursue academic and employment opportunities, reducing stigma.

Work carried out by civil society before 2023:

Since 2010, through the lawyer representing the rights and interests of trans persons in Moldova, applications have been submitted to the courts to obtain a clear and predictable procedure for changing civil status and identity documents following sex and gender identity changes. As a result of these litigations, initiated in court and exposing the issue in public, the Supreme Court of Justice issued Recommendation No. 16 on the procedure for examining requests for rectification of civil status documents following sex changes, and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova issued Order No. 1268 of 17.12.2012 on the establishment of the Gender Identity Disorders Determination Commission. To date, following the first cases initiated in court and the multiple advocacy efforts carried out by the GENDERDOC-M Information Center as a public association, only these two acts regulate the procedure for changing civil status documents for trans persons, and no other legal mechanisms exist in the Republic of Moldova.

After 4 years of litigation, multiple challenges, retrials, and appeals, the Civil Status Service has resigned itself to the explanations given by the Supreme Court of Justice, to the procedure established by the Ministry of Health's order, and has taken the position of leaving it to the discretion of the national courts to resolve requests for modification of civil status documents for trans persons. Specifically, the procedure was as follows: the trans person submits all documents with the request to the civil status office in the territorial area of the Codru Clinical Psychiatric Hospital where the Commission was active, the civil status office issues a refusal decision, the person with the lawyer challenges the act in administrative litigation procedure, the court issues a decision to fully admit the request to the Civil Status Office, and the decision comes into force within 30 days of issuance in the absence of an appeal request from the Civil Status Office. Thus, trans persons went through an administrative and judicial procedure to change

documents, which lasted approximately 4-6 years from the submission of the request to the Civil Status Office until the issuance of the decision with the stamp "final and enforceable".

On March 12, the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination sent an Opinion and Alternative Proposals regarding the draft law for amending certain normative acts (modernization of civil status documents) to the Ministry of Justice.

"Coalition members welcome the initiative to develop a draft law for the modernization of civil status document completion and modification procedures. The draft law published for public consultation on March 2, 2023, should lead to a significant update and optimization of the legal framework, primarily by extending the scope of protection of individuals' rights to self-identification.

The principle of equality implies the positive obligation of the state to effectively ensure the recognition of gender identity and equal protection under the law without discrimination. The fact that transgender persons are generally unable to obtain legal recognition of their gender redefinition, including modifying state-issued registers and documents to change their sex or pronouns, constitutes a violation of the right to private and family life guaranteed by Article 8 of the ECHR and represents obstacles in exercising a large number of rights."

TRANSNISTRIAN REGION

On January 1, 2019, the law "[On the Protection of Children Against Information Harmful to Their Health and Development](#)" came into force in Transnistria.

The law contains Article 5. *Types of Harmful Information: Among the information prohibited for dissemination among children are those:*

g) that deny family values, propagate non-traditional sexual relations, and foster disrespect towards parents and (or) other family members.

On July 10, 2023, the newspaper "Transnistrian news" published the following news (translated from Russian):

"On December 23, 2022, in cinemas in Tiraspol, Bender, and Grigoriopol, the premiere of an animated film produced by the Disney studio took place, announced globally as a family fantasy film about the journey of a family of legendary explorers into uncharted and dangerous territories.

A few days after the film's release, the prosecutor's office and other government authorities received written and verbal complaints from citizens who had watched the film with their children. People complained about the presence in the film of information forbidden for distribution among children. According to the complainants, the film contains propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors.

The Prosecutor's Office of the PMR (Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic) conducted a check, withdrawing the film from cinemas, according to a statement from the institution's press service.

The PMR law "On the Protection of Children Against Information Harmful to Their Health and Development" stipulates that information propagating non-traditional sexual relations is forbidden for distribution among children, as it may harm their health and development. However, during the check, it was found that there is a lack of an effective control mechanism to enforce the legislation in this area.

At the initiative of the Prosecutor, the Government created an Interdepartmental Commission of Experts, which determined that the film "presents caricatured gender images of men and women, perceived by children, who in the future may encounter problems in forming their gender identity and, as a result, in establishing traditional love and family relationships."

"Thus, the legal entities that presented the animated film to an audience, including minors, violated the established requirements for the distribution of informational products among children," representatives of the Prosecutor's Office noted.

The Prosecutor of the PMR initiated administrative proceedings against the Gorki Cinema (Bender), the East Cultural and Leisure Center (Grigoriopol), and the state enterprise Tiraspol Cinema and Concert Complex (Tiraspol) for administrative violations provided by point 1 of article 6.17 of the PMR Code on administrative violations.

The Courts of Justice in Tiraspol, Bender, and the Grigoriopol district found that these legal entities are guilty of committing administrative violations, imposing corresponding sanctions (fines with the confiscation of the objects of administrative violations). The judicial decisions entered into legal force."