

RADIOGRAPHY OF ATTACKS ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2023





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INTRODUCTION

Radiography of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova is a joint effort of documenting the information and events that contribute to the deterioration of the working environment of these actors. The publication is now in its seventh edition, which covers the period of 1 January – 31 December 2023. Similar analyses were produced for the periods 2016–2017,¹ 2018,² 2019,³ 2020,⁴ 2021,⁵ and 2022.⁶

For the context of this document, attacks specifically refer to statements and actions by politicians, articles published in the mass media, messages posted on social media, in applications, or in news channels, and other public statements that portray the non-profit sector as a “criminal group,” “executioners serving the system,” or the “government’s secret police that infiltrates state structures at all levels” and whose purpose is to serve foreign interests while masquerading as social projects to secure maximum funding. Sometimes these attacks take the form of deliberate decisions that hinder the work of civil society organizations (CSOs), restrict access to information of public interest, and infringe upon human rights and freedoms protected nationally and internationally.

The need to monitor and document the attacks is determined by the fact that a fair number of independent CSOs and human rights defenders (HRDs) became the targets of numerous discrediting and denigration actions, especially after showing support for the reforms backed by the government or advocating for human rights, particularly those of minority groups. The purpose of this document is to raise awareness about orchestrated attacks against CSOs and HRDs and to urge public authorities, companies, and individuals who support such actions to stop them and let CSOs and HRDs to operate freely. Additionally, this document provides CSOs and HRDs with a platform to formulate responses to the attacks directed at them.

¹ Radiography of Attacks against Nongovernmental Organizations from the Republic of Moldova, September 2016–December 2017, available at https://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-02-21_radiografia-atac-ONGs_fin.pdf.

² Radiography of Attacks against Nongovernmental Organizations from the Republic of Moldova, 1 January–31 December 2018: http://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-19-timeline-atac-OSC_2018_final.pdf.

³ Radiography of Attacks against Nongovernmental Organizations from the Republic of Moldova, 1 January–31 December 2019: <https://crjm.org/radiografia-atacurilor-asupra-organizatiilor-societatii-civile-din-republica-moldova-in-2019/6679/>.

⁴ Radiography of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations in the Republic of Moldova, 1 January–31 December 2020: <https://crjm.org/radiografia-atacurilor-asupra-organizatiilor-societatii-civile-din-republica-moldova-in-2020/19034/>.

⁵ Radiography of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova, 1 January – 31 December 2021: <https://crjm.org/radiografia-atacurilor-asupra-organizatiilor-societatii-civile-si-a-aparatorilor-drepturilor-omului-din-republica-moldova-in-2021/7551/>.

⁶ Radiography of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova, 1 January – 31 December 2022: <https://crjm.org/radiografia-atacurilor-asupra-organizatiilor-societatii-civile-in-2022/16416/>.

This edition of the publication covers attacks on civil society and HRDs that took place in 2023, as well as the reactions of CSOs to these incidents. The information presented in the publication derives from diverse sources, including online media outlets and social media, especially Telegram channels. The monitoring and documenting of the attacks continued throughout 2023. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the monitoring may not have captured absolutely all incidents. The presentation follows a chronological order, beginning with attacks from January 2023.

To enhance readability and clarity, we have categorized attacks into four distinct groups based on their subject matter: attacks on CSOs, attacks on media outlets, attacks on journalists, and attacks on the LGBT community. Some categories are further subdivided to distinguish between attacks from known sources and those originating from Telegram channels, whose authors usually remain anonymous. The document provides links to websites or reports where relevant materials were published. Even if some links may no longer be active, the authors of this edition maintain evidence of the originally published materials.

The phenomenon of attacks on civil society extends beyond the borders of the Republic of Moldova. Similar trends persist across South-Eastern European countries with fragile democratic structures. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders confirmed this during an official visit to Georgia from 30 October through 7 November 2023.⁷ The methods and means employed in these attacks are increasingly sophisticated and widespread.⁸ A concerning consequence of the attacks is the coercion and demotivation of CSOs and civic activists, leading to self-censorship or reduced activity.⁹ Judging by experiences in neighboring states, the stigmatization of CSOs can be a precursor to state-led persecution.¹⁰ The initiative to document and monitor these attacks finds inspiration in Hungary, a country whose nonprofit sector has grappled with similar challenges for years. This publication is a collaborative effort by signatory organizations, who are listed in the back matter and whose joint data collection efforts have made this overview possible.

If you possess information related to attacks on CSOs, please share it with us at victoria.mereuta@crjm.org and we will include it in the next edition of the monitoring report. Your contribution plays a vital role in documenting and shedding light on these actions, ultimately promoting transparency and safeguarding the rights of CSOs.

⁷ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders: 30 October–7 November 2023, Visit to Georgia: <https://srdefenders.org/country-visit-report-georgia/>.

⁸ Balfour R., Bouchet N., policy paper: Supporting Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans: Old and New Challenges, 2018, GMF Europe Program, available at <https://www.gmfus.org/news/supporting-civil-society-eastern-europe-and-western-balkans-old-and-new-challenges>.

⁹ Amnesty International, Laws Designed to Silence: The Global Crackdown on Civil Society Organizations (2019) ACT 30/9647/2019, p. 2, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3096472019ENGLISH.PDF>.

¹⁰ Buyse A., Squeezing Civic Space: Restrictions on Civil Society Organizations and the Linkages with Human Rights, 2018, The International Journal of Human Rights, 22:8, p. 966–988, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642987.2018.1492916>.

SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS IN 2023

In 2023, attacks on CSOs and HRDs in the Republic of Moldova remained at levels comparable to the previous year. However, there was a significant shift in the way these attacks were disseminated. The number of incidents that employed traditional media outlets – television, radio, and print – decreased, while the number of incidents on social media increased. **Notably, there was a proliferation of various Telegram channels that were used to launch an increasing number of anonymous attacks.** This phenomenon is likely due to the fact that, currently, this platform is not subjected to a regulatory framework concerning the work of media outlets, allowing false information and narratives to spread unchecked. These Telegram channels also exhibited a tendency to align with or protect the image of controversial political parties or politicians. Moreover, a mutually supportive dynamic emerged among these channels, with frequent content redistribution.

The attacks in 2023 were closely tied to justice reform, targeting CSOs and their representatives actively involved in promoting or shaping this process. Key events – including the general local election in November 2023, the Moldova Pride Festival celebrating the LGBT+ community, and the issue of the European Court of Human Rights' judgment of 17 January 2023,¹¹ which called on member states of the Council of Europe to adopt legislation recognizing and safeguarding same-sex couples – became focal points for attacks.¹² Media organizations and investigative journalists who delved into corruption cases involving former or current dignitaries and politicians were also frequent targets.

The attacks launched during this year took various forms: false and derogatory public statements, hate-inciting speeches, stigmatization, insults, intimidation, threats, legal actions, and decrees aimed at hindering the work of CSOs, restricting access to information of public interest, and infringing upon human rights and freedoms protected nationally and internationally.

Moldovan CSOs were often accused of usurping key public positions and were associated with the concept of “GONGO,” which refers to nongovernmental organizations established or sponsored by the government to advance its political interests. These organizations, while ostensibly engaged in social projects, serve their own interests, thus distorting the essence of civil society. Several CSOs were directly targeted by frequent attacks in 2023. Among them were the Institute

¹¹Fedotova and others v. Russia: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-222750>.

¹²The ECtHR's position was confirmed on 23 May 2023, in the case of Buhuceanu and others v. Romania, where the ECtHR condemned Romania for failing to ensure a legal framework for the recognition and safeguarding of the right to respect for the private and family life of same-sex couples: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre?i=001-224774>.

for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM), the Soros Foundation—Moldova (SFM), the Independent Journalism Centre (CJI), the Investigative Journalism Centre (CIJ), AO Media Alternativă (TV8), and the Association of the Independent Press (API). These organizations faced accusations of serving the interests of the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) or foreign entities, being politicized, and exploiting social issues for fundraising purposes.

IPRE and the LRCM bore the brunt of the attacks related to the justice reform. IPRE was accused of political espionage and labeled as a “criminal group engaged in illegal activities” in the interest of Moldovan President Maia Sandu, PAS, and external partners. These attacks intensified amid the data privacy scandal during the competition for the position of chief prosecutor at the Office of the Prosecutor for the Fight against Organized Crime and Special Cases (PCCOCS). The LRCM was frequently accused of staying at the helm of the justice reform process and controlling the Pre Vetting Commission through its former members who serve on the commission. The SFM was labeled “a transnational criminal organization” that impacts the economy, infiltrates state institutions, and sows social discord across countries where it operates. There were calls to eliminate the SFM from the country, which echoes similar sentiments in Hungary.¹³ Other organizations, namely CJI, CIJ, TV8, and API, faced accusations of being part of the Soros network, collaborating closely with the government, and manipulating and misleading public opinion.

HRDs also faced attacks. Investigative journalist Mariana Rață, documentarists Viorica Tătaru and Andrei Captarenco, Ziarul de Gardă (ZdG) CEO Alina Radu, and LGBT+ activists Angelica Frolov and Leo Zbancă were accused of complicity in “PAS’ crimes” and of receiving “informal bonuses and excessive grants and salaries.” They were also called “trash, dirt, and societal decay.” There were even calls to physical violence against some of them.

In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Republic of Moldova found itself embroiled in a hybrid conflict. This multifaceted conflict manifested through political propaganda, disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, energy coercion, and economic pressures. Propagandist messages targeting the government, reforms, and European integration intensified during the local election of November 2023. In this context, the Committee for Exceptional Situations (CES) issued a decree on 30 October 2023,¹⁴ suspending broadcasting licenses for six television stations — Orizont TV, ITV, Prime TV, Publika TV, Canal 2, and Canal 3 — as well as 30 websites. The rationale behind this decision was that these media outlets were allegedly linked to criminal groups associated with Plahotniuc and Șor. These groups were believed to promote Russian interests through manipulative narratives and disinformation campaigns aiming to destabilize the country and undermine its democratic processes. Consequently, the television stations were deemed a threat to informational security. The CES adopted this decision by derogating from Article 84 (10) of the Audiovisual Media Services Code, which requires other sanctions and repeated violations before license suspension. Additionally, the decision derogated from the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code, which stipulate that license suspension falls under the jurisdiction of the judiciary. In response, several CSOs issued a statement¹⁵ on 30 Oc-

¹³The propaganda directed by the government of Viktor Orbán presented Soros as the top public enemy of Hungary, which determined the foundation to leave the country: <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/soros-de-la-budapesta-la-berlin-/29228208.html>.

¹⁴Decree 91 of 30 October 2023 of the Committee for Exceptional Situations: https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/dispozitia_cse_nr91_30.10.2023_1.pdf.

¹⁵Statement concerning the suspension of the broadcasting licenses of six television stations: <https://cji.md/cji-apel-si-centrul-acces-info-is-i-exprima-ingrijorarea-in-raport-cu-suspendarea-licentelor-posturilor-tv-in-conditii-de-lipsa-de-transparenta/>.

tober 2023, urging authorities to transparently communicate the factual and legal basis for the CES' decision to suspend the licenses of the six television stations. The CSOs also expressed regret that a previous call¹⁶ regarding the suspension of licenses for another six television stations had been disregarded.

Meanwhile, numerous incidents and attacks by politicians involved in election campaigns occurred during the November 2023 local election. These attacks spanned both public spaces and online platforms, especially Telegram and TikTok. They included denigrating statements, insults, the spread of false information and threats against journalists, and decisions that led to abusive restrictions on the work of some CSOs. Notably, in 2023, GENDERDOC-M Information Centre, its activists, and the entire LGBT+ community remained targets of denigrating remarks, stigmatization, and incitement to hatred – tactics that were frequently employed in the populist rhetoric of many Moldovan politicians. These attacks intensified following a judgment of the ECtHR concerning the recognition and safeguarding of same-sex couples, during the Moldova Pride March, and during the general local election in November 2023.

In 2023, only a few “active” media portals continued to source content from sources with questionable reputation as a result of the CES' license suspension decrees and the migration of many media outlets to alternative platforms, especially Telegram.¹⁷

Among the politicians who disseminated biased and denigrating information about CSOs and their representatives were Bogdan Țîrdea, MP from the Bloc of Socialists and Communists of Moldova (BSCM), and Igor Dodon, former president of the Republic of Moldova.

The list of the signatories is presented at the end of the publication.

¹⁶Statement concerning the suspension of the broadcasting licenses of six television stations in 2022: <https://crjm.org/declaratie-pri-vind-suspendarea-dreptului-de-emisie-a-sase-posturi-de-televiziune/>

¹⁷Telegram channels that actively sourced and created content of a dubious and manipulative nature: t.me/lustratiapreseiMD, t.me/casadenebuni, <https://t.me/observatorul>, <https://t.me/prepetting>, t.me/luchianiuc_com, t.me/moldovatelegraph, t.me/patriot137, <https://t.me/vitalieflorea>, <https://t.me/ZiuaMoldova>, <https://t.me/indexMD>, etc.

JANUARY–DECEMBER 2023

ATTACKS ON CSOS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

January–November 2023 Attacks from known sources

6 January 2023

Lawyer Iurie Mărgineanu [characterized](#) Moldovan CSOs as a “kind of government’s secret police that infiltrates state structures at all levels.” He stressed that some national CSOs “painted themselves in political colors,” receiving substantial funding “to assist the government in its efforts to cleanse the judicial system and not just that...” The post referred to “IPRE, among others. The one the justice minister actively kept promoting” and which “pretends to have the noble goal of supporting the vetting mechanism for justice sector actors in cooperation with ‘international development partners.’” He also wrote that certain Moldovan CSOs, operating as “secret police,” gained access to databases containing information about judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other justice sector actors “who do not lick politicians’ boots” and report this information to “their masters” (that is, development partners). Mărgineanu also wrote that when “non-state actors” — by whom he meant “the mafia, military leaders, CSOs, etc.” — “supplant state institutions, the resulting scenario is a ‘failed state.’”

15 January 2023

During a television show on NTV Moldova, PSRM MP Bogdan Țirdea [said](#) that “today, one can’t make any movement in Parliament without being asked: ‘Has civil society offered their expert review yet? Does civil society endorse this bill?’ This was a shock for me.” To the host’s question about who Țirdea meant by ‘civil society,’ the latter answered: “By civil society I do not mean the Metropolitanate of Moldova — God forbid! — or trade unions or employers’ unions or certain citizens’ associations, but rather these 100 CSOs that have established a network in Moldova and monitor all bills, all public procurements, the president’s travels, absolutely everything. They monitor and criticize from the perspective of the donors’ interests, of those who pay.” Bogdan Țirdea later shared this sequence from the show, adding: “These individuals are not to be underestimated. They swiftly neutralize opponents, prompting widespread fear and reluctance to utter their names in vain.”

16 January 2023

During the show [Puterea a patra](#), journalist Gheorghe Gonța asked Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development Andrei Spînu whether he considered it acceptable that Moldovan civil servants “receive their official salaries through CSOs” (min. 51:52) as confirmed by “Telegram leaks.” Andrei Spînu replied that he did not know concrete details and could comment but the dealings of the ministry he led. He also stressed the need to abandon populism.

1 February 2023

Former prime minister of the Republic of Moldova Vlad Filat was invited on the show [Puterea a patra](#) to comment on the judgment of 31 January 2023 of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) on his case [Filat v. Moldova](#), in which the Court had found a violation of Article 6 (1) of the Convention, which guarantees the right to a fair trial. The judgment concerns the criminal trial and conviction of Vlad Filat in 2016. The former prime minister called the LRCM “this CSO that deals with all the justice reforms, all very ‘successful,’” (min. 15:40) and said that the LRCM’s members held positions in the Pre-Vetting Commission and its secretariat and were “involved in doing evil rather than good, because these are their outcomes.” Filat also claimed that he had talked to the LRCM’s Justice Program Director Vladislav Gribincea and was going to publish their discussion at the right time and added that what the LRCM had done was effectively “issue the verdict of the Supreme Court of Justice, they anticipated,” referring to [a legal analysis](#) on that judgment produced by the LRCM to clarify the confusion present in the minds of the public. In the analysis, the LRCM emphasized that in its judgment, the ECtHR only found that trial in closed session was not justified, without mentioning the need for a retrial of the case. Breach of the public nature of a trial is usually not sufficient for the reopening of the trial.

Vlad Filat was also asked to [comment](#) on the European Moldova National Assembly of 21 May 2023 (min. [55:09](#)). He replied that the discussions the chief of state had had about this event did not involve political parties, but only representatives of civil society. He criticized IPRE, calling it “the number one hacker of personal data across all the globes” and described other civil society representatives as “propagandists owned by Maia Sandu and PAS.”

23 February 2023

Former interim chair of the Moldovan Judges Association Ion Chirtoacă [said](#) that “there are CSOs that are interested in denigrating the work of judges.” This statement came after several [Supreme Court justices resigned](#), which significantly impacted the Court’s work.

18 March 2023

One day after the [General Assembly of Judges](#) on 17 March 2023, former prime minister Ion Chicu launched several attacks on the LRCM's Justice Program Director Vladislav Gribincea in a [Facebook post](#). Chicu wrote that "Litvinenco pushes his brother-in-law Gribincea" to become the sixth justice of the Constitutional Court, adding that "Maia sent him to take this position." Chicu also added that the president of the Republic of Moldova intended to capture the judicial system rather than to reform it and that Vladislav Gribincea was one of the "most prominent figures" of the reform and "a loser."

23 March 2023

Former prime minister Ion Chicu [accused](#) IPRE of illegal espionage and announced that he would file a criminal complaint with the Prosecutor General's Office to request that those who had illegally accessed personal data be held to account. He called IPRE "a criminal group that carries out illegal activities in the interest of Maia Sandu and PAS" and "criminals financed from the taxes paid by German citizens." Chicu also said that he had no doubts that "these individuals spy on anyone in this country who would be of any interest for the PAS criminal group." The accusation came amid [a scandal around illegal access to personal data](#) emerged during the competition for chief prosecutor of PCCOCS, where Eugeniu Rurac, former anti-corruption prosecutor and one of the candidates for chief of PCCOCS, [requested](#) that the competition be halted until the formation of a new pre-selection committee and the exclusion of IPRE's CEO Iulian Groza. In reply, IPRE's CEO [declared](#) that [access to data had been erroneous](#) and that Ion Chicu had not contacted IPRE for explanations about the incident.

19 April 2023

Writer Vasile Ernu [said during the television show Puterea a patra](#) (min. 42:33) that the ministries "started taking on the appearance of CSOs" and the state policy adopted "the organizational forms and thinking of the CSOs, whose social mission is completely different," which he considered "harmful." He also added that CSOs had better kept clear of politics: "They would do well to mind their own business, while politicians mind theirs. If we mix them too much, we will lose."

Erratum:

The originally published text describing writer Vasile Ernu's statements in the above-mentioned TV show does not accurately reflect his assertions. The LRCM regrets this admitted omission due to the processing of a large volume of information and publishes this erratum.

Corrected statement (from minute 53:00, not 42:33): *"What bothers me is when ministries start looking like CSOs, when state policies start looking like policies... like organizational forms and thinking of the CSOs, whose social mission is completely different. And then I think this is damaging, it doesn't help anyone and in the medium and long term we have something to lose. That's why I say it's good to separate:*

CSOs to mind their own business and politics to mind its own, without mixing them too much... when we mix them too much, we usually lose".

Note: Following referrals by the author of these allegations, the LRCM repeatedly watched the program in question and, even if the author's statement is not a classic attack against CSOs or HRDs, the assertions made, in particular the phrase "*CSOs to mind their own business and politics to mind its own*" were perceived as a limitation of CSO involvement. It should be emphasized that the right of CSOs to engage in activities, including public policy activities, is closely linked to freedom of expression, the right of association and the right of assembly. CSOs play a vital role in influencing public policy and representing the interests of civil society, which often requires interaction with policy makers. When bills that are being promoted threaten the sustainability of the state or the rule of law, CSOs not only have the right but also the obligation to intervene, even if some would label such actions as "political activity".

19 May 2023

Leader of the Dignity and Truth Platform Dinu Plîngău [said](#) that the negative outcomes of [the report](#) produced by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) regarding the anti-corruption actions undertaken by the Republic of Moldova were due to "CSOs controlled by PAS, which had assured everybody that we had implemented 89%, 90%, and 290% of the EU's recommendations and, where the judicial system was concerned, we were the best in the world (perhaps only when it comes to PowerPoint)." He added that, hopefully, his former colleagues got to understand "at least now, after this slap, that one can't do a reform on the fly" by making use of the "executioners serving the system" (a reference to CSOs).

7 August 2023

Lawyer Igor Stoica wrote in a [Facebook post](#) that Moldovan CSOs did not perform their social role and that their representatives took over various positions in public institutions instead. Stoica highlighted the similarity of Moldovan CSOs with the concept of "[GONGO](#)," referring to those organizations whose purpose is to serve the political interests of clandestine services or the powers that be while masquerading as social projects, thus "distorting civil society." He also wrote that, in the Republic of Moldova "civil society exists de jure, but it is dying de facto."

Former prosecutor Gheorghe Malic [commented on](#) Stoica's post, writing that "by their essence and purpose, many Moldovan CSOs were interested primarily in profiting from social problems." Malic confirmed Stoica's remarks about the takeover of public positions by civil society, writing that eventually they were going to "swallow the state."

Judge Victoria Sanduța reposted these messages, accompanying them with the [comment](#): “This pro-government propaganda pushed heavily by some ‘CSO-ists’ and some ‘independent journalists’ is disgusting for democracy.” She pointed out that a similar phenomenon contributed to the establishment of authoritarian regimes in Russia and Nazi Germany.

1 September 2023

Former president of the Republic of Moldova Igor Dodon made several [statements](#) about the SFM during a live stream on Facebook entitled Live with Igor Dodon. He said that for the liquidation of the Soros office in the country, it is necessary “to be at the helm of state and to have a majority.” He provided the example of Hungary, whose Prime Minister Viktor Orban, while being “in an EU country, a NATO country, promoted laws that reduced the influence of externally funded organizations, such as Soros, in the state's foreign policy.” Dodon endorsed this policy and said that similar actions were possible in Moldova should there be “a parliamentary majority and a government favoring Moldova rather than the EU or Russia.” He added that if he came to power, he would start similar reforms and that it was necessary to follow Hungary's example.

26 September 2023

During the show [Rezoomat](#) on Rlive television channel, politician Dinu Plîngău had an argument with SCM member and former LRCM member Ion Guzun. Dinu Plîngău said that the LRCM's members took hold of multiple key positions in the justice sector and that the justice reform ran exclusively under the control of this association (min. 14:00).

4 October 2023

A Facebook user created [an event](#) on the platform to attack the LRCM. The event had the title “STOP THE LRCM! STOP UNJUST REFORMS!” and the following description: “Under the guise of the justice reform, the LRCM clan undermines and compromises justice with the aim of subordinating it to their own interests.” The date and time were set for 3 December 2023, 10:00 a.m., Sunday, at the LRCM's office. The post was made public so that anyone – with or without a Facebook account – had access to it. The background picture used the LRCM's logo with a red X symbol over it as a sign of annihilation.

7 October 2023

In the context of the election campaign launch in the Municipality of Bălți, where the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) introduced its slate of candidates for general mayor and municipal councilors, former president Igor Dodon [asserted](#) that it was time for Moldovan citizens to reclaim their country. He added that until that moment, “the country had not been ours, but rather subjected to Soros and various CSOs, who dictated what to do with our people to Maia Sandu and other puppets.”

1 November 2023

Former mayor of the Town of Codru and former member of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) Vladimir Munteanu [took to Facebook](#) to accuse Primăria mea Association of Codru of spreading fakes, defamation, and political partisanship. He referred to an article published by the association that presented all the candidates for mayor of the Town of Codru, including, in his case, details about his wealth.

Vladimir Munteanu considered this discriminatory treatment because the article presented these details only about him.

In a subsequent [statement](#), the association explained that it had obtained the information presented in the article exclusively from public sources and, unlike other candidates, Vladimir Munteanu had served as mayor of Codru for three terms and had held various other public positions in the town hall for 24 years. Thus, the association considered it necessary to analyze and present the information from his asset declaration, just as it did to other candidates who had held public positions. Earlier, Vladimir Munteanu [had accused](#) the association of political partisanship once, during the election of 2019.

3 November 2023

[The day before the electoral debates](#) for mayor of the Town of Durlești, organized by Primăria mea Association on 29 October 2023, the town hall tried to restrict the work of the association abusively, informing them [through a letter](#) that they did not have the right to organize such events. The Election Council of the Constituency of Durlești sent [a similar letter](#), specifying that candidates for mayor can only participate in debates organized by media outlets.

The association requested clarification from the Central Election Commission (CEC), which [stressed](#) that public associations carrying out voter education activities are free to organize public electoral debates with election candidates. This case [also came to attention](#) of the observation mission of Promo-LEX, which backed the position of the CEC.

¹⁸Video recording of Local Council meetings, Durlești case: <https://cpr.md/2024/03/12/filmarea-sedintelor-consiliilor-locale-da-sau-ba/>.

This was not the first time¹⁸ the Town Hall of Durlești tried to restrict the work of the association, whose goal is to bring local elected representatives closer to their constituents. In previous instances, the town hall [declined](#) to include the association in the comprehensive list of interested parties, effectively restricting its access to information regarding decision-making processes within both the Mayor's Office and the Local Council. This would have allowed the association to inform the public about the work of local elected representatives and to contribute to ensuring transparency in decision-making. The reason cited by the town hall was that the petition motivation did not comply with the requirements of the Administrative Code. On 29 March 2023, the Supreme Court of Justice [ruled in the favor](#) of Primăria mea Association, which had challenged the town hall's refusal to include it in the list of interested parties. As a result, the town hall was ordered to include the association in this list. According to the association, the town hall [called](#) their requests "groundless," accusing them of disrupting the work of the town hall "through various CSO initiatives sponsored by the Soros Foundation" and of not acting in the interest of the public.

March–December 2023

Attacks from Telegram channels (including anonymous ones)

2 March 2023

Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni posted a [message](#) that “the Pre-Vetting Commission seems to be a kind of a subsidiary of Gribincea’s LRCM.” The channel pointed out that relatives of the current employees and former members of the association are part of this commission. The channel spread the narrative that the Pre-Vetting Commission was not independent and that the LRCM, and specifically the CSO’s Justice Program Director Vladislav Gribincea, controlled it.

2 March 2023

Telegram channel Comisia “Pre-Petting” published a [post](#) that called Vladislav Gribincea the “most unlucky reformer in the history of the Republic of Moldova” because he had failed to become chief over all lawyers, prosecutor general, chief justice of the SCJ, and even chairperson of the SCM and that was why “out of hatred he made up his mind to destroy everything through this ‘reform.’” The channel also wrote: “This character, brother-in-law of Sergiu Litvinenco, put justice on stand-by.”

17 March 2023

The vlogger and Telegram channel owner who goes by the name Vitalie Florea published a [video](#) in which he called the SFM “the mother of pan-sies,” accusing them of having received the green light to do whatever they want in Moldova. He added that “this Sorosist rainbow brotherhood and Moldovans are incompatible” and that it was time “to choose either us and Moldova or the Sorosists.” In one of his [previous posts](#), he stressed that the SFM was a “transnational criminal organization that destroys the economy, captures state institutions and justice, and divides society in all the countries where it operates,” adding that it must be recognized as a “terrorist organization” and banned in Moldova to give Moldovans a “slim chance of surviving as a nation and a country.”

He also [shared a video](#) showing the anti-government protests that were taking place in Yerevan as a result of the Azerbaijani offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh. He attributed these protests to “Sorosists” and the secret services of “certain overly democratic countries,” emphasizing the similarity with the events in Ukraine and Georgia and asserting that the goal of the SFM was “to reduce the area of influence of the Russian Federation.” He also suggested that “our opposition should learn lessons,” mentioning the possibility of taking “training at the Soros Foundation.”

It is worth noting that this Telegram channel often attacks the SFM, including by reposting from international sources that present the foundation in a negative light.¹⁹

¹⁹Statements of Romanian Senator Diana Iovanovici-Șoșoacă, known for her anti-vaccine, anti-European, and pro-Russian messages: <https://t.me/vitalieflorea/1119>. Repost of the message of journalist Valeriu Reniță, who commented on the post of the Romanian Political Investigation Group from 2018 about Rise Project in Romania with the question: “Is Rise Project journalism or propaganda?” <https://t.me/lustratiapreseiMD/162>.

13 April 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post with an announcement that the LRCM's Justice Program Director Vladislav Gribincea, along with other lawyers, was invited to the show Cutia neagră at TV8. The author used uncensored expressions, blaming Vladislav Gribincea for compromising the justice reform. He insinuated that Vladislav Gribincea controlled the Pre-Vetting Commission from the shadows and influenced its decisions. The author hinted that the main goal of Vladislav Gribincea was to become the chief justice of the Moldovan Constitutional Court.
23 May 2023	In one of its posts, Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni suggested that, since the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) had asked the Parliament Committee for Legal Matters to interpret the way of calculating quorum in deciding on judges' careers, they would be better off addressing this question to the LRCM because "it is already well-known who will write the opinion of Stamate's Committee in Parliament," thus implying that the association controlled the work of that committee. The message is part of a false narrative that the LRCM influences national justice institutions and the justice reform process.
23 May 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published an offensive post against the LRCM's Human Rights Program Director Daniel Goinic and the association as a whole. The post called the LRCM's Justice Program Director Vladislav Gribincea "the great gravedigger of justice reforms." The post asserted that the main concern for the LRCM – and other CSOs, too – was how to absorb foreign funds and that they produced nothing and brought no added value. The post accused the LRCM of misinforming foreign partners and donors in order to obtain funding. The post called CSOs "suckers of European and party funds."
23 May 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post on its Facebook page, calling the LRCM "pseudo-CSO" and noting that the LRCM's report and the GRECO report were "two parallel worlds." In yet another post , the channel asserted that the LRCM was involved in the "lawlessness" unfolding at the SCM, which postponed the hearing of the 25 judges who had requested permanent tenure until the retirement age. Anatol Chirilov asserted that since the LRCM was "subordinated" to its Program Director Vladislav Gribincea, it would not "react to these crimes."
25 May 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post accusing the Pre-Vetting Commission of acting like a "political bat" and lacking independence, being influenced by the LRCM and former members of this association. The post came out after the rejection of the request submitted by commission representatives for the recusal of judges who examined appeals from the commission's decisions.

Later, the same Telegram channel published [a post](#) with two screenshots of the online portal of the agendas of the SCJ's Civil and Administrative Litigation Board. The channel wrote that the rejection of the recusal requests would lead to the conviction of the country at the ECtHR. The channel suggested that the members of the Pre-Vetting Commission – that is, "LRCM representatives" or "justice reformers," including the LRCM's Program Director Vladislav Gribincea – should bear potential damages.

9 June 2023

After the Moldovan president's [statement](#) about the tense relationship between the National Anticorruption Center and the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office, Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#) suggesting the LRCM's Program Director Vladislav Gribincea to rename "the LRCM as the GPRJ (Gravedigging P**** Reformer of Justice)," implying that the justice reform is stalling because of the LRCM.

9 June 2023

Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni [reposted](#) the announcement of the Pre-Vetting Commission that three candidates for member of the Superior Council of Prosecutors failed repeated evaluation. The channel wrote that not a single judge candidate would pass the repeated evaluation because "none has wriggled into the favor of Vladislav Gribincea and Olesea Stamate," thus suggesting that the Pre-Vetting Commission was guided and controlled by the LRCM's program director.

30 June 2023

In the context of [the visit](#) of LRCM members to the SCM, Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#), calling the LRCM's Program Director Vladislav Gribincea "coordinator – the Gravedigger of Justice from the Bâc River" and swearing at the LRCM. The post also insinuated that Vladislav Gribincea controlled SCM members from the shadows.

22 August 2023

Telegram channel Telegraph Moldova published [a post](#) with a photo of the LRCM's Program Director Vladislav Gribincea, calling him "the eternal reformer of the Moldovan justice" who "wants to become a Supreme Court justice, and for this ascension, he is going to be evaluated by his LRCM colleagues, who currently hold all key positions in the Pre-Vetting Commission." The post ended with "Stop them!" and an emoji with a negative connotation. Telegram channel PATRIOT [reposted](#) this message. The channel commented that "lawyer Vladislav Gribincea, who amended the law so that lawyers could become Supreme Court justices, has applied for SCJ justice" and his colleagues from the LRCM would evaluate his candidacy, which was deemed as "family business." Both posts spread the false narrative that Vladislav Gribincea influenced the decisions of the Pre-Vetting Commission.

1 September 2023 Telegram channel PATRIOT published [a post](#) with a picture showing Vladislav Gribincea and the SCJ's building in the background and the comment that he was "permanent guest" and "chief adviser" at the court, followed by: "The chief justice has left, long live the chief justice!" The post appeared on the day when Vladislav Gribincea was going to offer a seminar for Supreme Court justices. The post insinuated that he was trying to impose his own interests on Supreme Court justices.

20 September 2023 Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#) about [the scandal](#) around former SCM member Iulian Muntean, who, despite being implicated in a corruption case, managed to pass the vetting. The author insinuated that this was due to the LRCM's Program Director Vladislav Gribincea, who presumably controlled the entire vetting of judges and prosecutors.

Later, Casa de Nebuni published [a more detailed post](#), accusing the Pre-Vetting Commission and its secretariat of deliberately hiding the information about the criminal case involving Iulian Muntean at the request of Vladislav Gribincea. The channel wrote that Nadejda Hriptievski, member of the commission, founder and former program director at the LRCM, as well as Elena Prohnițchi, chief of the Pre-Vetting Commission's Secretariat and former member of the LRCM's Administration Board, were deliberately infiltrated by Vladislav Gribincea in order to carry out his instructions in the vetting of judges and prosecutors. The posts are part of a series of conspiracy narratives according to which "the owner of the LRCM" – meaning that he had "bought them all" – Vladislav Gribincea secretly controlled and influenced the work and decisions of the Pre-Vetting Commission and its secretariat.

2 October 2023 Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#), accusing Vladislav Gribincea of the failures of the Pre-Vetting Commission, calling him the "Gravedigger of the Justice Reform." The channel insinuated that former employee of the Pre-Vetting Secretariat and former member of the LRCM's Administration Board Cristina Pereteatcu was a mole planted by the LRCM's Program Director Vladislav Gribincea and that her work at the secretariat was unfavorable for, and discredited, the justice reform. The post also asserted that Cristina Pereteatcu's remuneration was exaggerated and unjustified. LRCM members and employees were also attacked and labelled as "festering abscesses" that pervaded the commission. The channel also mentioned former member of the LRCM and current member of the SCM Ion Guzun and wrote that this was the only way to pass the vetting, implying that the commission was made up of proxies of the LRCM, especially Vladislav Gribincea.

4 October 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post commenting the announcement of European MP Siegfried Mureşan about the resolution of the European Parliament to start negotiations for the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union. The post read that the reports produced by IPRE and the LRCM manipulated the MP, making him believe that “reforms in Moldova, especially anticorruption ones, were in full swing.” This was an insinuation that IPRE and the LRCM presented fake and inaccurate reports on the implementation of reforms in the country, thus manipulating the opinion of foreign development partners.
6 October 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post that insulted former members and employees of the LRCM. This post came out after former member of the Pre-Vetting Commission Vitalie Miron announced his resignation amid the scandal around lawyer Iulian Muntean, who had passed the vetting despite being involved in a corruption case. In a subsequent post , the same channel labelled the LRCM as the “CSO of legal parachutes.” The author also hinted that current and former members and employees of the LRCM had discredited the work of the Pre-Vetting Commission and favored certain people, who passed the vetting.
6 October 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post with the SCJ’s judgment on the rejection of an appeal of the Justice Ministry in an administrative case. The post read: “The Justice Ministry should take not only courses on incompetence and legal impotence from the LRCM (...).”
24 October 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post , re-sharing the LRCM’s publication about the ECtHR’s judgment in the case of former prosecutor general Alexandr Stoianoglo. The channel called the LRCM’s employees “legal illiterates” and insisted that the LRCM should change its name to the “Gravediggers of Justice Reforms.”
24 October 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post with a picture that included the comment: “The house was not big, but it was of ill fame” (Russian original text: “Домик был небольшой но публичный...”). The post noted: “About the LRCM.”
29 October 2023	Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published a post that called most of the members of the Pre-Vetting Commission and the employees of its secretariat “canned stuff” from the LRCM and the SFM. This post appeared following the journalistic investigation “ The Secrets of Pre-Vetting ,” which aired on TV8’s Cutia neagră+ show. A subsequent post reinforced this narrative, accusing the journalists of whitewashing the image of the members of the Pre-Vetting Commission, the LRCM, and the “gravedigger of justice” (a reference to Vladislav Gribincea), who allegedly were responsible for all the chaos in the justice sector.

8 November 2023

Telegram channel ZIUA – Ai dreptul să știi published [a post](#) signed by journalist Nicolae Federiuc, noting that, although he did not know the other five out of the nine conditions that the Republic of Moldova had to meet in order to start negotiations for accession to the European Union, he could swear on blood that one of them was increasing the involvement of civil society in decision-making at all levels. Federiuc wrote that this condition was 100% satisfied, calling civil society representatives “grant devouring troublemakers.” He rhetorically asked about the perspective of the European Union on the benefits of involving civil society in decision-making, suggesting the possibility of ironies toward the country.

Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni [reposted](#) this comment and expressed full agreement with the journalist. According to the channel, “not only do CSOs participate, but they even control certain processes in the country,” referring to the LRCM’s “leaders” who “keep failing the bar examination” and “have been dealing with the justice reform since the Plahotniuc Government.” The channel also attacked civic activist Sergiu Tofilat, calling him “an idiot typical for those from WatchDog.” It asserted, without evidence, that [his appointment](#) by the Energy Ministry to the Board of Directors of SA Moldovagaz was a form of bribing a civil society representative not to criticize certain representatives of the government.

17 November 2023

Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#) that distorted facts, implying that the sister of the LRCM’s employee Olga Cortac had been arrested in the US for bank card frauds several years ago. The post included her picture stolen from the LRCM’s website. A [subsequent post](#) provided more details on the subject, without any supporting evidence. The post aimed at denigrating the work of the LRCM and creating false associations between the organization’s employees and people close to them and various illegal activities.

24 November 2023

Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#) with a footage of a Parliament session where judge Tatiana Răducanu [was appointed](#) to the Prosecutor Vetting Commission. The post ended with the rhetorical question “Who else is going to evaluate prosecutors?” thus implying that it would be the LRCM and using an expletive remark toward it.

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- 7 December 2023** Telegram channel OBSERVATORUL published [a post](#) claiming that “illiterate CSO-ist” Ilie Chirtoacă, currently president of the LRCM, had purchased the lawyer license for EUR 6,000. The author wrote that Ilie Chirtoacă had paid this money to the members of the Appeals Resolution Commission in order to obtain a favorable decision. The same post called him “cardboard reformer from the LRCM” and “the loyal man and executor of Vladislav Gribincea” and described the bar profession in Moldova as a trash bin that lets all dubious prosecutors and functionally illiterate CSO-ists in through its backdoor.
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- 21 December 2023** Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni published [a post](#) accusing the LRCM of having “destroyed” the judicial system of Moldova. The comment was made in the context of a series of resignations by certain judges, slated for examination [at a meeting](#) of the SCM. The post also insulted the LRCM’s employees, calling them “illiterate.”
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- 27 December 2023** Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni [reposted](#) Vladislav Gribincea’s announcement of the sale of his personal car. The post called Vladislav Gribincea the “gravedigger of justice from the Bîc River, Gribincea RIP-reforms.”
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- 29 December 2023** Telegram channel PATRIOT published [a post](#) without text but with pictures of the LRCM’s Program Director Vladislav Gribincea and the Ungheni District Court’s Judge [Constantin Chilian](#), along with screenshots of their comments on a post of the LRCM about salary increases for judges and prosecutors who would pass vetting in 2024. A subsequent [post contained reaction titled](#) “Gribincea – propagandist? Or how a judge slapped the Gravedigger of Justice from the Bîc River.” The author accused the LRCM of disinformation, calling it “Reformer CSO No. 1 from Moldova – Gribincea’s LRCM.” The post also called Vladislav Gribincea “El Reformatoro,” accusing him of trying to intimidate the judge and of controlling the work of the SCM.
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APRIL–NOVEMBER 2023

ATTACKS ON MEDIA OUTLETS

May–December 2023

Attacks from known sources

3 May 2023

PSRM MP Bogdan Țîrdea [wrote](#) in a social media post that “PAS is the party of Sorosists,” and the international organization [Reporters Without Borders \(RSF\)](#) – which had produced the World Press Freedom Index for 2023, where Moldova ranked 28th – was part of the same network. Țîrdea specified that the report “is written by several CSOs from the same Soros network – the Association of the Independent Press (API), the Investigative Journalism Centre (CIJ), and the Independent Journalism Centre (CJI)” and that “all these CSOs are close to PAS.” MP Țîrdea wrote that Moldova was a “champion of freedom,” making an ironical reference to the six television stations and web portals [blocked](#) by the government, which “completely eliminated the opposition media.”

It is worth noting that some of the CSOs criticized in Bogdan Țîrdea’s post had previously signed the CSOs’ public statement that expressed [concern](#) over the suspension of the licenses of those television stations and urged the authorities to provide detailed explanations and evidence supporting that decision.

Limitation of access to information
29 June 2023

The team of journalists from [Portalul IaloveniOnline](#) reached out to the secretary of the Council of Costești Lilia Crețu for the list of the draft decisions put up for debates at the meeting of 30 June 2023. The request was determined by lack of information on the online platforms of the town hall. However, the journalists were [denied access](#) to this information and advised to file an official request. The journalists sent their request by email to the Town Hall of Costești as required by [Act on Access to Information](#). Two days later, the secretary answered that they could not receive the draft decisions and advised them to consult the register of local acts for decisions. The reason cited for the refusal was non-conformity of the request with formal norms. The mayor of the Village of Costești Vasile Borta repeatedly and categorically refused to provide information of public interest when the journalists contacted him for explanations.

On 29 June 2023, nine media watchdog organizations [signed a joint statement](#) condemning the mayor’s attempt to prevent journalists from accessing draft decisions of the Village Council and urging him to comply with the obligations under the law on transparency in decision-making.

18 December 2023

During [the weekly meeting](#) of the City Hall of the Municipality of Chişinău, Mayor Ion Ceban lashed out at investigative journalists. He called them “political killers hired for very big money of dubious origin,” who “docilely execute political orders.” These statements were made in the context of a [journalistic investigation](#) that aired on TV8 the evening before, which dealt with issues of public interest, namely fictitious sums donated to certain political parties during election campaigns, including the mayor and the National Alternative Movement Party (MAN). In his speech, the mayor pointed out that, during the November 2023 election campaign, city hall employees were intimidated by journalists’ “hidden cameras and biased questions” about their political options in the local election. The mayor urged the employees to report the actions of such pseudo-journalists to the prosecutor’s office and said that, previously, at the request of MAN and himself, the television stations that broadcasted fake news, manipulative information, and lies had been fined more than MDL 300,000.

Later, MAN addressed several diplomatic missions and international organizations in the Republic of Moldova with [a letter](#) accusing TV8 of intimidating party members and sympathizers at work by asking about sums donated to the party and their incomes. The letter mentioned that TV8 was one of the television stations that presented MAN and Ion Ceban negatively and the purpose of the investigation was “to discourage the active involvement of their members and supporters.”

In response, media watchdog organizations issued [a statement](#) condemning the mayor’s inappropriate behavior and his intimidation of journalists who fulfill their role of informing the public about matters of public interest. The signatories of the statement also criticized the use of administrative resources to undermine press freedom. The signatories requested the mayor to use dignified and appropriate language and to avoid any form of intolerance toward journalists and media outlets.

April–November 2023

Attacks from Telegram channels (including anonymous ones)

8 April – 4 May 2023	<p>Telegram channel Observatorul published several posts with the results of a survey that had the question: “Who would you compare the free press from Moldova with?” The answer options included degrading and derogatory descriptions, such as “with a hideous, envious, evil old witch” or “with an elegant and refined escort.” The answer option that 78% of the 120 respondents selected was “with a frustrated and hungry prostitute on the roadside.”</p> <p>On 4 May 2023, Telegram channel Lustrația Presei conducted a similar survey with the question: “Who sells themselves cheaper on the sidewalk of Moldovan journalism?” with such answer options as ProTV, Jurnal TV, ZdG, the Association of the Independent Press, the Investigative Journalism Centre, TV8, Radio Europa Liberă, Publika TV, and CJI. The channel did not publish the survey results.</p>
20 April 2023	<p>On the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, Telegram channel Observatorul launched several attacks on journalists in one of its posts. The post congratulated “all those who make a living from this profession in Moldova, amass fortunes, and make their sponsors, donors, and funders happy by brainwashing people and censoring the agenda of events to the pleasure of their financiers.” The post also noted that the national media “had lost their credibility worse than the judiciary,” being accused of “pushing ideologies and visions down people’s throats” and ignoring the fundamental principles of freedom of expression and the right to information. The post ended by suggesting that, in Moldova, this day “should be renamed as the ‘Day of the Fight against the Debauchery of the Media.’”</p>
30 April 2023	<p>Vlogger and Telegram channel owner Vitalie Florea commented on the award given by the Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Moldova to WatchDog.md for the fight against disinformation, comparing it to an award to a “cannibal for the fight against cannibalism” and making negative remarks about the LGBT+ community. The post was reposted from Telegram channel Cutia albă with the comment: “owners reward their puppies.”</p>
3 May 2023	<p>Telegram channel Lustrația Presei called the World Press Freedom Day the “International Day of Freedom of Prostitution” and wished “compromised journalists of the country a long life with enforcement” for misinformation, defamation, and unjust lynching. The channel accused journalists of “selling themselves as cheap prostitutes,” “representing the scum of the earth in this country,” and receiving “envelopes from owners of slave-journalists to cover up thefts.”</p>

The channel added that they “could count genuine journalists on the fingers of one hand.” Later, this channel published [a post](#) that included a series of screenshots. First of all, the post included a caricature that presented ZdG, TV8, and Radio Europa Liberă as prostitutes taking money from PAS. Then, the post contained an image with the post of WatchDog.md showing the award for the fight against disinformation, received from the Delegation of the European Union in Chişinău. The post contained the comment of ZdG’s investigative journalist Victor Moşneag about negative and ironic reactions to the World Press Freedom Day. The post asserted that journalists with *zgardă* (*translator’s note: Romanian for “dog collar”, a pun on the full name of ZdG*) had lost their dignity and had “become media prostitutes.” The post also commented that, for all the analyzes and surveys carried out by WatchDog and the CSOs they “eat with out of the same bowl,” the journalists will still be considered the least credible. The post went on that ZdG’s journalists have always been and would remain “politicians’ escorts” who had turned an “entire profession into a hack job.”

In [one of its posts](#), Telegram channel PATRIOT marked 3 May as a “day of national mourning.”

On the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, vlogger Vitalie Florea also published [a post](#) on his Telegram channel, expressing disapproval of the accusations that the media manipulates public opinion and misleads society. He considered such accusations unacceptable in the current context, given the diversity of available information sources. Florea addressed journalists with these words: “Continue to manipulate, to ridicule, and to underestimate the intelligence of the Moldovan public. They want it, they expect it, they choose their favorite sources that will give them the desired ‘truth.’” He also assured journalists that he would keep criticizing them every time they “overstepped the line in influencing public opinion” so that they “come back to earth.” Later, Florea published a survey with the question: “Who sells themselves cheaper on the sidewalk of Moldovan journalism?”

11 May 2023

Vlogger Vitalie Florea published [a post](#) on his Telegram channel, lacerating TV8 and its journalists. He called TV8 “the television that licks the government 24/7, with an annual budget of millions of euros and... 65 people who watch it.”

28 June 2023

Telegram channel Casa de Nebuni [published a post](#) that attacked some journalists and media outlets from Moldova in the context of a ZdG article about Vladimir Plahotniuc. The post criticized Mariana Rață for the alleged lack of opposition to the leaks TV8 and ZdG received from Ciumacenco and called ZdG “newspaper of media gangbang.” The post suggested that the press prostituted themselves in exchange for information they “could get from PCCOCS” and added that Ciumacenco could even offer them a prostitute “dirt cheap.”

11 October 2023

Telegram channel PATRIOT [published a video](#) recorded by lawyer Fulga Grabovski, where she accused Moldovan media representatives – TV8, anticoruptie.md, ZdG, and JurnalTV – of bias and manipulation. The video was addressed to the chairperson of the Pre-Vetting Commission Herman von Hebel to warn him “not to let himself manipulated by local ‘corruption-fighting’ thugs” – an allusion to the journalists of the previously mentioned media outlets and some representatives of civil society. The author accused the journalists of collaborating and conspiring with national law enforcement authorities.

2 November 2023

In [one of its posts](#), Telegram channel INDEX – Află primul! bashed API’s CEO Petru Macovei for having shared Victor Chironda’s post about two letters from Mayor of Chișinău Ion Ceban to the ambassadors of [the Russian Federation](#) and [the US](#) in Chișinău. The post asserted that Petru Macovei “is paid millions of dollars annually to combat FAKE NEWS,” but distributed “information with a fake document, as Mayor of Chișinău Ion Ceban had proven.” Telegram channel PATRIOT [reposted](#) the message and accompanied it with a derogatory comment that “this Pechea Macovei” was “a parody of a man, of a CSO, and of a journalist,” and one of the “regime’s insignificant puppies who do what they can to pick up one more bone.”

FEBRUARY–DECEMBER 2023

ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

February–October 2023 Attacks from known sources

7 February 2023

Guests of the show [Обсуждаем вместе](#) at the regional television station Gagauziya Radio Televizionu (GRT) repeatedly attacked journalist and founder of [Nokta.md](#) Mihail Sirkeli for his critical stance on the [referendum of February 2014](#) – subsequently [outlawed](#) by the national courts – concerning the declaration of “the independence of the Gagauz Autonomous Territory.” The guests – including Member of the People’s Assembly Leonid Kiosa, civic activist Ivan Kîlcik, and civic activist and chair of the Board of Observers of the regional public media service provider GRT Mihail Vlah – called the journalist “dishonorable,” “despicable,” “dirty,” “sold-out,” and “following orders.” They went on by saying: “We don’t need the propaganda for gays and lesbians, he himself, this Sirkeli, being one of them.” Host Irina Caraman also showed bias by asking questions and expressing opinions that were in agreement with the guests and by failing to intervene to stop their direct attacks on the journalist.

This was not the first time that local politicians and activists from the ATU of Găgăuzia attacked journalists and personally Mihail Sirkeli, including on GRT. Earlier, on 15 February 2023, media watchdog organizations signed a [statement of solidarity](#) with the journalist, signaling the degradation of the quality of journalism at GRT and the lack of media pluralism at the shows produced by this television station. The signatories requested the dismissal of Mihail Vlah as the chairperson of the board, the termination of attacks on journalists, and respect for their work.

13–20 March 2023

During the weekly meetings of the City Hall of Chişinău on [13](#) and [20](#) March 2023, Mayor Ion Ceban made disparaging speeches toward the journalists who investigate how the city hall manages various problems in the municipality. He called the journalists’ materials “lies,” “half-measures,” “nonsense,” and “gross manipulation.” He also asked his deputy mayors and department chiefs of the city hall to urgently hire media watchdog services to protect the “dignity and image of the Chişinău City Hall” after he had seen “over 300 negative news” the week before.

Media watchdog organizations [condemned](#) the mayor's intimidation campaign against the press that covers the problems of the capital city. They also condemned the practice of using administrative resources, including public money and time from city hall meetings, to attack and threaten media representatives. The signatories pointed out that Ion Ceban held a public office, whose actions fell under the scrutiny of the media, and according to [the Act on Freedom of Expression](#), journalists have the right to criticize the way he discharges his duties.

14 September 2023 In a press conference, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry Vladimir Bolea, unaware that the microphones were on, [cursed](#) a journalist, muttering: "That d**k pi**es the f**k me off!" when the latter asked him about subsidies for farmers. The incident caused various reactions, and shortly after, Vladimir Bolea [apologized publicly](#) on his Facebook page, expressing regrets about his "unworthy" expression and explaining his reaction by the stress of the moment.

On 15 September 2023, media watchdog organizations issued a [statement](#) calling the minister's behavior "inadmissible" and insisting that such language was incompatible with his position. The signatories urged Moldovan Prime Minister Dorin Recean to ensure that Minister Vladimir Bolea was held disciplinary accountable.

21 September 2023 IPN Press Agency's photojournalist Elena Covalenco wrote a [Facebook](#) post revealing that she was not allowed to enter the Transnistrian region because the "so-called authorities had declared her undesirable person" for three years. She had learned about this ban during a business trip to Tiraspol, where she intended to take the pictures of a football match between Sheriff and the Italian club Roma. The journalist assumed that this decision was related to an earlier trip to the left bank of the Nistru, when she accompanied a fellow journalist working on a material for Deutsche Welle.

Media watchdog organizations signed a [statement](#) condemning the abusive and illegal practices of Tiraspol in relation to journalists and requested the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova to ensure its citizens the rights and freedoms guaranteed by law. On the same day, the Reintegration Policy Bureau (RPB) came up with [a reaction](#) calling the situation "regrettable" and "yet another sign that Tiraspol pursued a different agenda than the one declared publicly, which brings the negotiations into impasse." The RPB assured that they "would come with a legitimate response capable of deterring this kind of actions."

17 October 2023

At a [press briefing](#) held amid election campaigns, Leader of the National Alternative Movement Party (MAN) and Mayor of Chişinău Ion Ceban threatened journalists that he would monitor the media that published materials about him and would sue for any derogatory information about him. He added that some television stations had already been “fined MDL 10,000 or penalized in other ways” for actions “that do not meet the requirements and criteria of an election campaign.”

26 October 2023

ZdG’s reporter Măriuța Nistor [reached out](#) former prime minister, currently leader of the Moldovan Development and Consolidation Party (PDCM), Ion Chicu by phone for comments about the lists of candidates from the party he leads. During the call, Ion Chicu threw insults at the journalist and the ZdG’s editorial office. He said that ZdG should write about PAS, told the media outlet to stop “terrorizing” people, and called its team just as corrupt as “all the rest of PAS,” after which he ended the call. When the journalist redialed, Ion Chicu asked: “You are really insolent, aren’t you?” and called her a “terrorist.” He blamed ZdG’s journalists once again, calling them a “media brothel” and “scumbags paid by PAS to defend and clean up their image.” To obtain answers to her questions, the journalist had to address them in a text message. Once again, Chicu’s response contained insults and reproaches. He called ZdG’s journalists “media escorts,” “ridiculous and disgusting” and accused them of complicity in “PAS’ crimes.”

Later, ZdG wrote in [a statement](#) that the politician’s behavior was an attack on media freedom and its goal was to discourage journalists. He used a sexist and hateful rhetoric “toward not just investigative reporters, but the entire journalistic profession.” The editorial office requested that the politician publicly apologize to ZdG’s team and to reporter Măriuța Nistor in particular. Media watchdog organizations also condemned Ion Chicu’s behavior in a [statement](#), requesting that he publicly apologize and show decent language and behavior in the future.

April–December 2023

Attacks from Telegram channels (including anonymous ones)

4 April 2023

Telegram channel Lustrația Presei launched a series of attacks on investigative journalist and editor-in-chief of web portal [Crime-Moldova](#) Julieta Savițchi as a reaction to her decision to withdraw from CIJ. She had officially [announced](#) her departure from CIJ on April 4. On the same day, Lustrația Presei reposted the journalist's announcement and commented: "today it's a dispensation day for piglets..." Earlier, on 11 January 2023, this Telegram channel [had posted](#) derogatory messages about the journalist, calling her "Julieta Alcogolevna SAVIȚCHI" and pointing out that she was in fact expelled from the CIJ." It also stated that the real reason for her departure was an "internal conflict with Cornelia Cozonac related to the dramatic decrease in the audience and credibility of this so-called 'Independent Press'" as a result of the exposure of journalistic corruption in the summer of 2022. The post went on with the statement that donors had disclosed "the journalistic prostitution of alcoholic Savițchi" and that the "de-prostitution of the Moldovan media continues."

17 May 2023

Journalist Gabriel Călin [posted a video](#) on Telegram, where he accused journalists Alexandru Cozer, Val Butnaru, and Vasile Năstase of receiving money to their Romanian bank accounts from offshore companies directly connected with the billion stolen from Moldova. Gabriel Călin published several documents that allegedly proved that the journalists in question had [received](#) between EUR 1,000 and 5,000 on multiple occasions from offshore company Aero Flight Limited during the years from 2010 through 2015. These wire transfers were made through [ABLV Bank](#), which had been accused of involvement in multiple global frauds, including the theft of the billion from Moldova. The journalist stated that he obtained the information from a reliable source and that Moldovan law enforcement authorities were also aware of it.

Telegram channel Lustrația Presei [reposted](#) Gabriel Călin's message, adding ironic comments about the journalists and Jurnal TV, calling it 'Pocket Journal.'

14 June 2023

Telegram channel Lustrația Presei published [a post](#) with a picture of CIJ's CEO Cornelia Cozonac next to journalists Mariana Rață, Valentina Ursu, and [Anatolie Golea](#) and a screenshot of a [post](#) by Cornelia Cozonac about the salaries of former judge Ion Cazacu.

The post called Cornelia Cozonac a “yellow journalist” with a “new business plan: whitewashing the image of the corrupt,” implying that she “begs money from the corrupt.” In addition, the post called CIJ’s CEO, Mariana Rață, and Valentina Ursu “prostitutes from the Boulevard of Moldovan Journalism,” who “begged profit from pimps who pump money into the enslaved media.”

26 June 2023

Telegram channel PATRIOT published [a post](#) attacking documentarists Viorica Tătaru and Andrei Captarenco. The two received awards from President of the Republic of Moldova Maia Sandu for producing “The Road of War” – a documentary that tells the stories of the residents of Irpin, occupied by the Russian army in the very first days of the war in Ukraine. The post called the journalists “the faithful servants of the regime,” mocking their quality of independent journalists.

Later, vlogger Vitalie Florea [reposted](#) this message on his own Telegram channel. He wrote that journalist Viorica Tătaru sat in the Board of Directors of TV8 and asserted that “the president officially bribes her ‘black boxes’” (*translator’s note: allusion to the name of a talk show produced by TV8*). In addition, Telegram channel Lustrația Presei [posted](#) a picture of the journalist calling her “garbage from TV8” and making other derogatory comments, such as “sold-out provocateur,” “traitor of Moldova and propagandist of Ukraine, just as all the trash bin of TV8.”

29 July 2023

Vlogger Vitalie Florea took to his Telegram channel to [attack](#) TV8 journalist Mariana Rață. He pointed out the small viewership of Cutia neagră, estimating it at between 200 and 300, a figure he considered very small compared to the success of the shows hosted by journalist Gheorghe Gonța, whose show once hit 5.8 thousand views (when he had a party leader as a guest). This discrepancy in the viewership led Florea to conclude that there was a huge gap between “a talented journalist and a mediocrity,” even suggesting a change of the name of the show to Rață în Neagra-i Coștoreață (*translator’s note: literally “A Duck in Her Black Coop,” which is a pun on the names of the journalist and her show*). This Telegram channel publishes [many derogatory posts](#) about the journalist.

31 July 2023

Telegram channel Observatorul published a [post](#) claiming that, just as other TV8 reporters, TV8 journalist Viorica Tătaru showed “biased behavior and used the media to solve her personal interests” and that she arrived on site not to report about events, but to intimidate “state employees who are doing their job.” The post appeared in the context of the house search at former police officer of Fulger Brigade, veteran of the war on the Nistru, and one of those who had fought in the International Legion of Ukraine [Arslan Safarmatov](#). The post also stated that Viorica Tătaru “made herself known through posts, public appearances, and pro-government reports” and was “an active promoter of LGBT and destructive values in society.” The post asserted that she “gets informal bonuses and excessive grants and salaries for speaking in the name of Moldovan democracy.” The channel suggested the introduction of vetting of journalists.

6 August 2023

Telegram channel PATRIOT published [a post](#) with the statement of ZdG’s journalist and CEO Alina Radu about the increase of the parking fee at Chişinău Airport. The post stated that it was not necessary to hire communicators to obtain explanations; one could “buy the free press” and journalists would act as “trumpets.”

Several Telegram channels reposted this remark. Two of them were Casa de Nebuni – which [commented](#): “Alina Radu has stooped so low” – and the channel of vlogger Vitalie Florea – who did not lose the occasion to [attack](#) ZdG’s journalists. He ironically characterized them as “independent press with European values” and added that “it feels peculiar to watch how these tools from the coop of the PAS government, whom one can call anything but journalists, justify the atrocities, thefts, and incompetence of the PAS criminal group” and that they do it for two reasons – “money and complicity.” Vitalie Florea also wrote that this was an example of “moral and human degradation.” Alina Radu deleted her post on Facebook.

7 August 2023

Vlogger Vitalie Florea took to Telegram to make [disparaging comments](#) about journalist Ştefan Grigoriţă and all journalists in general. This happened after the journalist posted a caricature that highlighted citizens’ reaction to the MDL 10 increase in the parking fee at Chişinău Airport.

Vitalie Florea ironically called Ştefan Grigoriţă “a free and independent journalist” who “feeds off grants” and tries to justify the actions of the PAS government. The vlogger added that “these tools, confusingly called journalists, are ready to justify anything, be it cannibalism, Nazism, or pedophilia. It’s only a question of price.”

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- 11 August 2023** Telegram channel Lustrația Presei published [a post](#) that attacked multiple media representatives. The channel reposted a critical message of ZdG's investigative journalist Victor Moșneag about the Anti-corruption Prosecutor's Office, which refused to disclose the names of the individuals who had posted bail to have former Democrat MP Vladimir Andronachi released from house arrest. The channel accompanied the post with the comment that "the biggest failure of the prosecution system" was that "social scum like those from ZdG – Julieta Savițchi, Cornelia Cozonac, and Maria Olar – remain free."
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- 7 November 2023** Telegram channel Lustrația Presei published [a derogatory post](#) about CIJ's CEO Cornelia Cozonac. The channel shared a picture of her and accompanied it with the comment: "Piggy flushes with happiness at the sight of a grant to her CSO."
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- 10 November 2023** Telegram channel Lustrația Presei published [a post](#) that attacked several Moldovan journalists, including Mariana Rață, Vitalie Călugăreanu, Viorica Tătaru, Victor Moșneag, Julieta Savițchi, Anatolie Golea, Cornelia Cozonac, and Alina Radu. The channel called them "prostitutes from the Harem of Moldovan Journalism," [adding](#) later that "the price for satisfaction requested by journalist-prostitutes starts from a bottle of vodka and reaches 40k euros." The channel also encouraged its subscribers to physically assault these journalists: "if you meet these people on the street, spit in their face."
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- 22 December 2023** Telegram channel Lustrația Presei [lashed out](#) at the journalists who participated in the 29th edition of the [Annual Gala of the Press Club](#) organized by CJI and the Committee for Freedom of the Press (CLP) to present the [Journalists of the Year 2023](#) awards and to encourage Moldovan journalists to produce high-quality content that meets international standards. The channel commented: "Once again, they shared awards among themselves... They call themselves 'journalists of the year.' Shouldn't it be 'of the anus?'" (*translator's note: pun on the Romanian words "anului" ("of the year") and "anusului" ("of the anus")*)
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JANUARY–OCTOBER 2023

ATTACKS ON THE LGBT COMMUNITY

19 January 2023

In an interview, former president of the Republic of Moldova Igor Dodon [commented](#) on the ECtHR's [judgment](#) of 17 January 2023, by which it obliged the member states of the Council of Europe to adopt a legal framework for the recognition and safeguarding of same-sex couples. Dodon argued that the adoption of a legal framework that recognizes same-sex couples and ensures their protection would “strongly hit the values of our people, Moldova being an Orthodox country.” He declared that he would do whatever he could to make sure that those “foreign” values were never implemented in Moldova. The former president continued to make negative references to LGBT couples in other [subsequent posts](#).

24 January 2023

Leader of Our Party Renato Usatîi made an [ironic statement](#) about the couple of LGBT+ activists Angelica Frolov and Leo Zbancă. He offered to buy them a house in Italy if they register their marriage and settle in that country. The politician also suggested that they could later help with “long-term relocation to Italy for all others who wish to enter into such marriages.” Renato Usatîi referred to the houses that [sell for EUR 1](#) in sparsely populated areas of Italy.

This statement appeared following a series of events where the couple [requested](#) the Public Services Agency to register their marriage and later [sued](#) the public institution for refusal, citing the obligation imposed by the ECtHR on the member states.

30 January 2023

The Metropolitanate of the Republic of Moldova [commented](#) on the ECtHR's judgment of 17 January 2023, calling it “outrageous.” It urged its parishioners to oppose its legalization and promotion “so that such a legalization and promotion of sin may not take place.” The Metropolitanate also warned the authorities that it depended on them how “they will remain in history – as people with dignity or traitors who promote values that do not belong with this nation for the sake of fleeting benefits and gratitude.”

2 February 2023

In a plenary session of Parliament, MP Alexandr Nesterovschi from the parliamentary group of the Bloc of Communists and Socialists presented a [bill](#) to ban “homosexual propaganda” and requested to have it included in the agenda. The **bill** provided for sanctions – such as fines of MDL 5,000 to 20,000 and a ban on holding certain positions or carrying out certain activities for a period of one to five years – for promoting and displaying non-traditional sexual relationships in educational institutions and for disseminating information among juveniles that could lead them to express their wish to change their sex. The bill was rejected by a parliamentary majority.

13 April 2023

Invited to a live stream on Sputnik channel, Orthodox priest Vitalie Şincari made various [statements and attacks](#) on the LGBTQI+ community. He said that the LGBT agenda is about “I want to have sex in such a way that the whole world is f****d by me, I can't find more cultured words. And this is told to us, as being a free person.” He added that the concept of marriage was a “religious invention” created by Christians and urged the LGBT community to create their 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...”²⁰

20 April 2023

Mayor of Chişinău Ion Ceban made several statements about the Pride March during the [talk show Puterea a patra](#) hosted by Gheorghe Gonţa. He said that the city hall would not authorize this event and that he considered that “propaganda for children and not only” was reasonable. Although authorization from the city hall was not necessary for the march, Ion Ceban reiterated [this statement](#) during the municipal meeting of 12 June 2023.

Ombudsman Cezlav Panico later published [a statement](#) expressing concern about the humiliating and discriminatory rhetoric of some members of Parliament toward the LGBTQI+ community in the Republic of Moldova and about the intention of the mayor of Chişinău to prohibit the Community March on 18 June 2023. Cezlav Panico warned that such rhetoric can lead to intolerance, discrimination, and social tension and requested the authorities to treat this issue seriously.

14 June 2023

Pediatrician Igor Pletosu took to social media with [a video](#) where he lashed out on the LGBT community. He described gay people as “mentally ill persons who must be taken to a psychiatrist for treatment” and stated that they promote “stupid propaganda,” “idiocies,” and “debauchery.” In another [post on 19 June 2023](#), he expressed his wish that “public promotion of LGBT ideas be prohibited by law to avoid it reaching absurdity.” He made these statements in the context of the LGBT March. As a reaction, GENDERDOC-M Information Centre filed a complaint with the Equality Council.

16 June 2023

Former president of the Republic of Moldova Igor Dodon [publicly urged](#) Mayor of Chişinău Ion Ceban to close Bucharest Street – where the LGBT March was to take place on 18 June 2023 – for repairs. He said that this was a chance for the mayor to prove that “he is a great patriot and protector of traditional values.” On 17 June 2023, the City Hall of Chişinău [communicated](#) about the issue of an order for cleaning and cutting of trees exactly along the route planned for the LGBT March. However, those streets were later re-opened.

²⁰Translation from Russian taken from the Report on the Situation of LGBT+ Rights in the Republic of Moldova—Year 2023, produced by the GENDERDOC-M Information Center: https://gdm.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Raport-GENDERDOC-M-2023_romana.pdf.

17 June 2023

Members of Renaştere Party condemned the initiative to organize the march of the LGBTQI+ community in the center of the capital city and announced their own “Traditional Family” march. The announcement was made by unaffiliated MP Vasile Bolea and leader of Renaştere Party Natalia Parasca at [a press briefing](#). Vasile Bolea asserted that the LGBTQI+ March involved “propaganda of values that do not belong with Moldovans and threaten public morality and the right of children to stay away from values that lead to perversion.” Natalia Parasca said that, as a mother, she was categorically against anyone “imposing a sexual ideology or orientation on her child” and that, as a representative of a traditional family, she did not impose her style of life on anyone.

18 June 2023

On the day of Moldova Pride, dozens of priests along with their parishioners held multiple [counter-protests](#) in support of the traditional family. They came with crosses, icons, and placards with messages “Traditional families,” “Stop the propagation of homosexuality,” and “LGBT is not normal” and chanted “Shame.” One of the protesters stated: “We are against sin. We are an Orthodox country.” At some point, parishioners with crosses and icons intended to move toward the participants of the LGBTQI+ March, but the police stopped them.

Meanwhile, another group of protesters [gathered](#) with placards in front of the US Embassy. One counter-protester, activist Veaceslav Valico, said: “Today it is LGBTQ+, tomorrow – zoophilia, and the day after tomorrow – cannibalism.”

19 July 2023

In an interview, leader of Our Party Renato Usatîi and MP Bogdan Țîrdea made sexist and derogatory comments about the LGBT community. Renato Usatîi said that when “two combine operators kiss on a hill, it looks very ugly,” “but when two girls kiss, this can’t be called an ugly sight.” Bogdan Țîrdea added that he considered himself “lesbian in the sense that I like women.”²¹

15 September 2023

Renaştere Party organized [a protest](#) in front of the office of the European Union Delegation in Chişinău to express opposition to European integration. During the protest, party representatives exhibited a flag that had the colors of the European Union flag on one half and the colors of a rainbow – the symbol of the LGBT community – on the other. The party leader Alexandr Nesterovschi tore that flag.

²¹ Report on the Situation of LGBT+ Rights in the Republic of Moldova—Year 2023, produced by GENDERDOC-M Information Center, p. 14: https://gdm.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Raport-GENDERDOC-M-2023_romana.pdf.

20 September 2023 PSRM MP and former candidate for general mayor of Chişinău Adrian Albu made a [statement](#) during the election campaign that one of his goals was to transform the municipality into a “place free of gay propaganda” and to protect it from any “form of aggressive propaganda of relationships that don’t belong to traditional society.” He also said that he cared about social, moral, and Christian values, which state that a family consists only of a man and a woman, a mother and a father, and therefore he would ban any LGBT propaganda in the schools of Chişinău to protect children from potential crumbling of traditional values. He promised to ban gay pride parades, which he considered “aggressive propaganda of relationships that did not belong with traditional society,” and asserted that “democracy should reflect the will of the majority.”

6 October 2023 During the talk show [Discuția de seară](#) on TVC-21, member of PSRM group in the Municipal Council of Bălți and candidate for mayor Maxim Moroşan made derogatory comments about the LGBT community, saying that it was “trash, dirt, and societal decay.” He wished LGBT supporters in government that each of their children “have someone of the same sex in bed with them at night. That’s what you brought for them.”

After these statements, GENDERDOC-M Information Centre filed a complaint against hate speech. On 13 October 2023, Moroşan posted a message where he described the complaint as an attack on common sense and millions of citizens. He added that “LGBT, in the person of Ms. or Mr. (I have no idea what’s the custom there) Frolov Angelica from GENDEROC-M, through her lawyer, filed a complaint with law enforcement authorities for the defamation brought to ‘pederasts and lesbians.’” The post sparked threats and attacks from many followers, directed at activist Angelica Frolov and the LGBT community.²²

²²Report on the Situation of LGBT+ Rights in the Republic of Moldova—Year 2023, produced by GENDERDOC-M Information Center, p. 15: https://gdm.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Raport-GENDERDOC-M-2023_romana.pdf.

16 October 2023

During [election debates](#) on Orizont TV, PSRM MP and former candidate for general mayor of Chişinău Adrian Albu said that the socialists “will fight and will not allow LGBT propaganda in schools and this point is included in our election manifesto,” making reference to the fact that this point was part of his campaign. Later, during the [election debates Eu vreau să fiu primar](#) on ProTV, he stressed his categorical stance against LGBT marches, objecting to “LGBT propaganda in schools” as a father of three. He said that, for all his tolerance and respect for everyone’s right to love, he believed that “love is something intimate,” which should stay at home. He also added that “there is a difference between the protection of rights, which is ok, and their propagation, which is not ok.”

Other politicians participating in the election debates, such as members of Parliament Diana Caraman and Vasile Bolea, also expressed their negative position about the LGBT community and the gay pride march. Diana Caraman [called](#) for the strict protection of “traditional values, which more than 90% of Chişinău residents support.” In an interview to Newsmaker’s show 5 întrebări incomode, Vasile Bolea [criticized](#) the LGBT community and GENDERDOC-M Centre, saying that such organizations “attacked the basic institutions of society, such as the church and traditional family.” He stressed that “if the city hall receives other requests for the organization of such parties in public places, legal measures will be applied.”

17 October 2023

PSRM MP Bogdan Țîrdea made derogatory comments about the LGBT community and GENDERDOC-M Information Centre during an [interview](#) on TVC-21. The MP said that he had already been asked by a journalist in Parliament why he did not participate in Pride Moldova 2023 and his answer was: “Dear lady, have you gone nuts? What, shall I put on stockings and heels, too? I am a member of Parliament, and I believe that everyone can do whatever they want and with whom they want at home, but they don’t have to expose it in public.” He claimed that he was persecuted because he was not gay and that “Genderdoc-M demands MDL 100,000 from me because I insulted or humiliated or wanted to rape them or whatever else it is that they accuse me of.”

LIST OF SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS:



Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 10 million people who do not accept injustice. We campaign for a world where human rights are respected by all. We are independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion. More information is available at: www.amnesty.md.



The Public Association "Centre for International Communication and Human Rights" is the non-governmental organization that manages the platform IaloveniOnline. The website ialovenionline.md is a media source for the Ialoveni district, fulfilling also the role of a local watchdog. It monitors and reflects the work of local public administration, informing citizens about local governance. More information is available at: www.ialovenionline.md.



Media Alternativa Public Association is a nonprofit organization that founded TV8 station. TV8 has managed to position itself as a credible and objective information source, as confirmed by all independent monitoring reports. The organization offers platform for people who think, care, and act for the future of Moldova. More information is available at: <https://tv8.md/despre-noi>.



The Association of Independent Press (API) is one of the most active media organizations in the Republic of Moldova, promoting and assisting the independent press. API is appreciated for its media campaigns in different areas of public interest and its advocacy for media development, defense of freedom of expression, access to information and promotion of journalistic self-regulation. More information is available at: www.api.md.

API is running **the campaign against false and biased information STOP FALS!** (www.stopfals.md), through which it contributes to reducing the effects and impact of false, propagandistic and manipulative information disseminated through various communication channels, as well as to developing citizens' ability to analyze and react critically to the information received.

Promo-LEX*Promovarea democrației și a drepturilor omului*

Promo-LEX Association is an NGO that promotes democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian Region, by advocating and defending human rights, monitoring democratic processes, and strengthening civil society. More information is available at: www.promolex.md.

GENDERDOC
M

GENDERDOC-M is the first NGO that defends and promotes LGBT rights in the Republic of Moldova. The mission of the organization is to create a legislative, legal, and social environment for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders by developing the LGBT community, informing, promoting their rights, providing services, and expanding organizational capacities. More information is available at: www.gdm.md.

LRCM
Rights and justice for all

The Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) is a think tank with extensive expertise in analyzing the functioning of the justice sector, reforming it, and promoting human rights and reforms that ensure an enabling environment for CSOs. More information is available at: <https://crjm.org/>.

CONTACT
DEZVOLTĂM OAMENI, ORGANIZAȚII, COMUNITĂȚI

The National Support and Information Centre of NGOs of Moldova "CONTACT" is an active platform of resources, analysis, advocacy, debate and communication for active people, community leaders and civil society organizations that want to contribute to the development of a strong, credible and influential civil society with a high degree of participation of women and men and transparent and accountable public authorities. More information is available at: <https://contact.md>.

**CNPAC**

The National Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse (CNPAC) is a non-governmental organization in the Republic of Moldova that promotes children's right to protection from all forms of violence, focusing its actions on raising awareness and motivating society to stop child abuse. More information is available at: <https://www.cnpac.md>.



The Soros Foundation Moldova is part of the Open Society Foundations group founded by George Soros. The Foundation's priorities are strategically aligned with the common priorities of the regions of Europe and Central Asia. Our vision is for the Soros Foundation Moldova to be a democracy lighthouse, a well-known, innovative and sustainable organization, a trusted partner which promotes and defends a free, just, and healthy society with efficient and accountable institutions and a functional free economy, where individuals and communities have the confidence and opportunities to build a meaningful future. More information is available at: <https://soros.md>.



Institutul de
Politici Publice

The Institute for Public Policy (IPP) is an apolitical nonprofit organization. Its purpose is to contribute to the development of the Republic of Moldova in the spirit of an open, participative, and pluralistic society committed to democratic values. More information is available at: www.ipp.md.

nokta

nokta is an independent media institution created as a project of the Public Association "Piligrim-Demo" in December 2017. Our mission is to be a voice of reason, not to be afraid of taboo topics and to inform for positive change. The basic principles of the nokta newsroom are honesty, independence, credibility, objectivity and impartiality. More information is available at: <https://nokta.md/>.



PRIMĂRIAMEA is a community of citizens who want a comfortable, accessible and beautiful Chișinău. Launched in March 2016, the project promotes the idea of a better city where authorities consult citizens when setting priorities, developing and implementing public policies. More information is available at: <https://primariamea.md>.

The document is open for signing.

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