

Stifling freedom of speech and of the press in Moldova. List of events

Tuesday; 7.04.2009

- Over 20 Romanian journalists were denied entry into Moldova on various pretexts Tuesday night. The Moldavian Border Police pretexts for refuse were: the lack of a written invitation, the lack of a special medical insurance; the lack of an accreditation from the Moldovan Foreign Affairs Ministry; malfunctioning of the Border Police computerized control system. Romanian journalists never needed to present such papers at the border before this time.
The Romanian Journalists belonged to news agencies Associated Press, EPA, France Press, Intact Images, NewsIn, Mediasfax, Reuters, newspapers Evenimentul Zilei, Jurnalul Național, Ziua, Gindul, Adevarul, tv stations TVR and Realitatea TV, public station Radio Romania Actualitati.
Wednesday morning, President Vladimir Voronin announced that Moldova introduced visas for Romanians. He declared the Romanian Ambassador in Chisinau persona non grata. No Romanian journalists were able to cross the Romanian – Moldovan border from then on.

Wednesday; 8.04.2009

- 2 journalists from Antena 3 were retained over night on the Chisinau Airport, under police surveillance, and in an unheated waiting room. Their passports were kept by the border police, and they went through police questioning for several hours. They were sent back to Romania on the 9th of April. The same happened with a journalist for Adevarul, who arrived in Chisinau with a flight from Budapest. He was also rejected and sent back with the next flight. During the same day, AP correspondent from Moscow arrived in Moldova and had no problems in getting in.
- In the evening, four women, reporters of „Ziarul de Gardă” weekly from Chisinau, were aggressed by policemen who refused to show any ID. The journalists had their arms twisted at their back, and they were threatened their photo cameras will be destroyed. The journalists attempted to find out what was the reason why people dressed as civilians were beating and taking under custody young protesters, while policeman in uniforms were supervising their action.
- Oleg Brega, cameraman of the Internet based tv station „Jurnal TV”, was severely beaten by 5 plain clothes policeman, who seized his equipment (two video-cameras).
- Camera crews from Moldova 1 and EuTv were aggressed by protesters. The two channels were accused during the electoral campaign by NGOs and part of the public of being biased towards the Communists.
- Natalia Morari, correspondent in Chisinau for the Moscow based publication "New Times", was accused of being one of the main organizers of the protest actions. On her name an arrest warrant was issued, but she managed to go into hiding. Several police teams who tried to find Natalia visited her mother's apartment. Her apartment is under surveillance.

- cameraman Constantin Rogodantev, ProTv Chisinau, was brutalized on Wednesday evening, at 11p.m., by police officers wearing fight masks. His camera was almost destroyed.
- Romanian tv channels were reported to have been removed from some of the cable distribution networks in Moldova.

Thursday; 9.04.2009

- Realitatea TV crew (journalist Yevgenyia Kironaki, camera Mihai Valentin Buzduga and driver Gabriel Colac) were detained at 9 p.m., held for 4 hours and forced to get out of the country. On Friday, Realitatea TV team reported from Romania that they have been intimidated by police officers while in custody. Police officers said "we should shot them" and "they will get 2 years in prison, for sure".
- Oleg Brega and Vasile Costiuc, both cameraman for JurnalTV.md were detained by Moldovan authorities.

Friday; 10.04.2009

- Oleg Brega's apartment was searched by prosecutors Friday morning. Later that day, Oleg Brega was released by the prosecutor's office. For a while, during that day, JurnalTV.md head office lost any contact with other camera journalists the tv station had on the field.
- around 11:40 a.m. deputy editor in chief of Jurnal de Chisinau, Rodica Mahu, was arrested on the street by 4 civilians. Her phone was switched off for several hours. After 2 and a half hours she was released. She told the media she was arrested by police special missions department, by officers Catlabuga and Pantea, and she was accused of "assessing and collecting information to attack the government building".
- Peru Terguta, journalist for Moldavian TV 7 and correspondent for Antena 3, a Romanian news channel, cameraman Dan Nitescu, image assistant Victor Alexandru left the country under OSCE escort. Terguta had received phone calls from people threatening him and announcing that he will be soon arrested.
- Doru Dendiu, correspondent in Chisinau of the Romanian public television TVR was arrested around noon. Nobody knew anything about him until his release around 6 o'clock p.m. He was detained for about 6 hours. He had no access to a lawyer and his cell phone was confiscated.
- Ion Terguta (brother of Petru Terguta), who stayed in Chisinau with the aim to report for Antena 3, was arrested on the street, and taken to police in the same car with Dendiu. He was held for more than 6 hours, with no access to a lawyer. His cell phone was confiscated.

- Communications in Moldova (cell phone, internet, websites) were cut off from time to time. After being intermittently unavailable on Thursday, the news website unimedia.md was blocked completely.
- 14 journalists from Jurnal TV and Jurnal de Chisinau asked for US political asylum. They journalists said they are threatened, and aggressed. In many of the video news on the website of Jurnal TV policemen threatening the tv crews can be seen.

Saturday, Sunday, Monday; 11-13.04.2009

- Media reports show that the newspaper "Comunistul", official newspaper of the communist party, was printed in more than 1 million copies, during this weekend. Usually, Comunistul only has a circulation of 35.000 copies. The printing house Universul refused to answer journalists' questions related to this topic. Comunistul printed information describing the independent and opposition media portals as "fascists". Comunistul is reported as being massively distributed in the country, for free (www.comunist.md).

Complaint against OSCE mission in Chisinau:

- Antena 3 TV team who got out of Republic of Moldova escorted by OSCE, complained about violent and abusive behavior of Philip N. Remler, head of OSCE mission in Moldova. The press officer invited the team in the OSCE building. The team was already under threats and harassment by local police and secret services. Terguta, a journalist with local TV 7 and correspondent for Antena 3, received threat calls and a warning that he will be arrested. So the team was looking for help, assistance and protection. Once in the building journalists said that Philip Remler shout at them, saying that they should leave the building immediately, or else they "will call the police". Antena 3 team eventually left the building, and they also left the country. However an OSCE car escorted them to the border. Producer Aura Titirga (+40745103907) from Antena 3 reported to RCIJ the arrest of Ion Terguta and the problems they had in the OSCE office.

LOCAL CONTACTS:

- local lawyer who gathers info on abuses: Vladislav Gribincea: +373 794 85 070
- Natalia Morari +373 7993113, +373 650 13637
- Director of Jurnal de Chisinau, Val Butnaru +373 691 72021
- Opposition leader Mihai Ghimpu +373 691 33559 (he has the contacts of a young man, Moldovan citizen and student in France, who was arrested and held for several days by police, because he translated for a couple of Swedish journalists, during the riots. The young man showed visible signs of police brutality)

Sources of info (selection):

www.unimedia.md
www.unimedia.info
www.ong.md
www.jurnal.md
www.jurnaltv.md
www.garda.com.md
http://protv.md
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