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Human Rights Committee**Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Republic of Moldova***

1. The Committee considered the fourth periodic report of Republic of Moldova¹ at its 4272nd and 4273rd meetings,² held on 9 and 10 March 2026. At its 4284th meeting, held on 17 March 2026, it adopted the present concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee is grateful to the State Party for having accepted the simplified reporting procedure and for submitting its fourth periodic report in response to the list of issues prior to reporting prepared under that procedure.³ It expresses appreciation for the opportunity to renew its constructive dialogue with the State Party's high-level delegation on the measures taken during the reporting period to implement the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee thanks the State Party for the oral responses provided by the delegation for the supplementary information provided to it in writing, and for the high degree of transparency with which it approached the dialogue.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the adoption of a wide range of legislative, policy and institutional measures, including those adopted in contemplation of accession to the European Union. In particular, the Committee welcomes the adoption of:

- (a) Law No. 86/2020, streamlining the registration process for civil society organizations and removing restrictions on membership and internal governance structures;
- (b) Law No. 165/2023, providing protections for whistleblowers;
- (c) Law No. 148/2023, facilitating access to information of public interest;
- (d) Law No. 231/2024, introducing the concept of femicide and safeguards against psychological violence, including its digital dimension, in the State Party's criminal legislation;
- (e) Law No. 114/2024, establishing a new legal framework for the protection of mental health;
- (f) Law No. 100/2025, introducing additional safeguards against electoral corruption and vote buying practices;

* Adopted by the Committee at its 145th session (2 – 19 March 2026).

¹ [CCPR/C/MDA/4](#).

² See [CCPR/C/SR.4272](#) and [CCPR/C/SR.4273](#).

³ [CCPR/C/MDA/QPR/4](#).

(g) Law No. 192/2025, introducing an anti-corruption college within the District Court of Chişinău and specialized anti-corruption panels within the Court of Appeal Centru;

(h) Law No. 241/2025, further refining the framework for performance evaluations of judges and prosecutors;

(i) Law No. 252/2025, enhancing safeguards against obstruction, intimidation and violence targeting journalists;

(j) Law No. 252/2025, criminalizing forced marriage and stalking, including digital stalking, expanding the definition of domestic violence, and enhancing victim protection;

(k) Law No. 4/2026, directing the use of assets confiscated as proceeds of criminal activities for social initiatives;

(l) Government decision No. 926 of 29 November 2023, establishing the National Agency for the Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;

(m) The National Program of Deinstitutionalization of People with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities for the period 2018-2026;

(n) The National Strategy for Ensuring the Independence and Integrity of the Justice Sector for the period 2022-2025;

(o) The National Program for Child Protection for the period 2022–2026;

(p) The National Program on Mental Health for the period 2023-2027;

(q) The National Program for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the period 2023-2027;

(r) The National Program for the Promotion and Assurance of Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova for the period 2023–2027;

(s) The National Program on Ensuring Respect for Human Rights for the period 2024-2027;

(t) The National Integrity and Anti-corruption Program for the period 2024-2028;

(u) The National Program on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2024-2028.

4. The Committee also welcomes the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), on 31 January 2022, and the State Party's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, on 22 September 2023.

C. Principal matters of concern and recommendations

Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented

5. The Committee appreciates the information provided by the State Party regarding the Law No. 74/2025 on the Constitutional Court, which is aimed at increasing the autonomy of the Court and preserving the immunity of its judges. The Committee also welcomes information regarding the reference of its Views and recommendations in the decisions of the Constitutional Court, however it regrets that the State Party was unable to provide comprehensive data in this regard (art. 2).

6. **The State Party should continue its ongoing efforts to strengthen its national legal framework and national judicial system. It should also continue to raise awareness of the provisions of the Covenant among judges, lawyers and prosecutors, promote its application by national courts and collect data on the impact of the Covenant in national courts.**

7. The Committee takes note of the information provided regarding the ongoing negotiations and efforts made by the State Party aimed at the effective protection of human rights in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, including in particular with regard to journalists and human rights defenders. However, the Committee remains concerned about impediments, including structural and linguistic barriers, to the full realization of Covenant rights in the region, including with regard to access to justice, and the extension of medical insurance, identity documents and social payments to its residents (arts. 2, 25 and 26).

8. **The State Party should continue to review and strengthen its policies, in line with its due diligence obligations, to ensure that all individuals in Transnistria can effectively enjoy the rights guaranteed under the Covenant, both in law and in practice.**

National human rights institution and the Equality Council

9. The Committee notes the legislative processes underway to strengthen the mandates and independence of the People's Advocate Office and the Equality Council. However, it expresses its concern about information indicating that the human and financial resources allocated to both bodies are insufficient. In particular, the Committee is concerned that both bodies suffer from high staff turnover and a large number of vacant posts, reportedly in part due to low salaries, and that neither body enjoys full financial independence. The Committee also regrets that there are currently no initiatives in the State Party which would require informing the Equality Council of cases of discrimination brought before the courts, or to permit it to itself refer cases to the Constitutional Court (arts. 2 and 26).

10. **Recalling the Committee's previous recommendations,⁴ the State Party should ensure that the Office of the Ombudsman and the Equality Council can carry out their mandates fully, effectively and independently, in accordance with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). In this regard, the State Party should:**

(a) **Ensure the financial independence and adequate staffing of both institutions;**

(b) **Ensure that employees of both institutions receive remuneration on par with the staff members of similar authorities with the same status;**

(c) **Consider establishing a mechanism to inform the Equality Council of all cases relating to its mandate which are before the courts and endowing it with the competency to refer cases to the Constitutional Court.**

Anti-corruption measures

11. The Committee welcomes legislative and institutional reforms aimed at combating corruption, including through the establishment of specialized anti-corruption judicial mechanisms, measures to strengthen the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, the National Anti-Corruption Centre and the National Integrity Authority, and legislative amendments to tackle electoral corruption, as well as the adoption of Law No. 165/2023 on whistleblower protection. However, the Committee remains concerned that, according to information received, corruption at all levels persists in the State Party, including allegations involving senior public officials and members of the judiciary, and is concerned over the limited number of final convictions in such cases, due in part to the weak oversight of public officials and recurring issues related to institutional instability and possible political pressure affecting anti-corruption bodies. The Committee further notes information provided by the State Party indicating its intention to further refine Law No. 165/2023 on whistleblower protection (arts. 2, 19 and 25).

12. **The State Party should:**

(a) **Increase its efforts to prevent and eradicate corruption at all levels, including among high-level officials;**

⁴ [CCPR/C/MDA/CO/3](#), para. 8.

(b) Redouble its efforts to investigate all allegations of corruption promptly, thoroughly, independently and impartially, and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence, including in cases involving senior public officials, judges and prosecutors;

(c) Strengthen the operational independence and effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions, including through transparent procedures for the appointment and dismissal of their leadership and the provision of adequate resources, and improve transparency in the handling of corruption cases, including through public reporting on investigations, prosecutions and judgments;

(d) Ensure effective implementation of the asset declaration and verification system, including systematic verification of declarations, sanctions for unjustified wealth and conflicts of interest and the recovery of illicit assets;

(e) Ensure that any amendments to Law No. 165/2023 on whistleblower protection are adopted promptly and comply fully with international standards, including as they relate to the establishment of confidential reporting channels, protection against retaliation and access to remedies.

Non-discrimination

13. The Committee is concerned that, in spite of cross sectoral strategies aiming to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities, such persons still face discrimination and stigmatization, including minimal access to public services, information and justice. While the Committee takes note of efforts to improve access to justice for persons with disabilities, including through enhancing the accessibility of online tools and resources and the creation of dedicated informative materials for persons with disabilities accessing the court system, the Committee regrets that many courts remain physically inaccessible (arts. 2 and 26).

14. The State Party should redouble its efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate all forms of discrimination, with a particular focus on preventing and combatting discrimination in practice, including direct and indirect discrimination against persons with disabilities. In this regard, the State Party should continue to conduct public awareness campaigns to combat stigmatization of persons with disabilities and promptly adopt the National Program on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2026-2030.

Hate crimes and hate speech

15. The Committee is concerned over information indicating the continued prevalence of hate speech and hate crimes in the State Party, including online, particularly targeting Roma and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities. In this vein, the Committee is concerned over reports that bias motivations are not systematically considered at the outset of investigations into crimes committed against members of these and other minority communities. The Committee similarly regrets that the State Party lacks a unified methodology for collecting and disaggregating data on hate crime incidents, hindering effective monitoring and adequate law enforcement responses, though it notes the State Party's plans to soon develop such a methodology (arts. 2, 19, 20, 26 and 27).

16. The State Party should strengthen its efforts to combat hate speech and hate crimes, in particular against Roma and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities. In doing so, the State Party should:

(a) Ensure that alleged hate crimes are thoroughly investigated, that suspected perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, are punished with penalties commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and that victims have access to full reparation;

(b) Ensure that all investigations into potential hate crimes systematically take possible bias motivation into account from the outset;

(c) Take measures to tackle the prevalence of online hate speech, in close cooperation with Internet service providers, social networking platforms and the groups most affected by hate speech;

(d) Continue to conduct awareness-raising campaigns to promote a culture of respect for diversity and combat stereotypes and negative attitudes among the general public directed towards persons on the basis of their actual or perceived ethnicity or sexual orientation and gender identity;

(e) Ensure that hate speech and hate crimes are condemned at the highest levels and that instances are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted, with perpetrators receiving appropriate sanctions;

(f) Ensure effective monitoring of hate speech and hate crimes through the systematic collection of data on related complaints and their outcomes.

Gender equality

17. While taking into account the notable advances the State Party has made in increasing the representation of women in political institutions, the Committee remains concerned that the continued prevalence of hate speech, sexist attitudes and smear campaigns are major deterrents to women's decisions to run for political office and fully participate in public life. The Committee also regrets that women's representation in law enforcement agencies remains low, while a large proportion of women also remain economically inactive, due, in part, to traditional gender roles in the family. The Committee further expresses concern that refugee women face structural barriers in accessing the formal labour market, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation (arts. 3, 25 and 26).

18. **The State Party should:**

(a) Continue its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of measures aimed at solidifying the enduring representation of women in public decision-making positions;

(b) Implement appropriate measures to combat harassment of women politicians and address negative gender stereotypes, including through public information campaigns to promote gender equality;

(c) Continue establishing egalitarian roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and in the family;

(d) Adopt measures, including temporary special measures, to address labour market inequalities, in particular those disproportionately affecting groups of women in situations of vulnerability, including refugee women.

States of emergency

19. While noting the State Party's right under article 4 of the Covenant to suspend the application of certain rights and freedoms otherwise guaranteed under the Covenant in times of public emergency, the Committee is concerned about the proportionality of decisions made by the Commission for Exceptional Situations adversely affecting access to justice and freedom of expression. The Committee is also concerned about the continued application of a state of emergency, reported by the State Party to have existed for 975 days, creating the risk of normalizing the use of emergency powers (arts. 4, 14, 19 and 21).

20. **In the light of the Committee's general comment No. 29 (2001) on derogations from provisions of the Covenant during a state of emergency, the State Party should comply fully with all the conditions set forth in article 4 of the Covenant. The State Party should also guarantee that any measures that restrict human rights during a state of emergency are exceptional, temporary, strictly necessary, proportionate, non-discriminatory and subject to independent judicial review.**

Violence against women, and domestic violence

21. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the State Party during the period under review to combat violence against women and domestic violence, particularly through the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, on 31 January 2022, and the promulgation of a series of legislative acts to strengthen protections for victims of gender-based and domestic violence and amend certain provisions of the Criminal Code. However, the Committee is concerned that domestic violence remains pervasive in the State Party, particularly among women with intersecting vulnerabilities, and that despite recent positive trends in increased reporting, domestic and gender-based violence remains unreported due to gender stereotypes, social stigma, fear of retaliation, and continued distrust in law enforcement and health care providers. The Committee also expresses its concern over the reported underpenalization of domestic and gender-based violence, in particular economic and psychological violence, and regrets that the State Party still lacks a fully consent-based definition of rape (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 26).

22. The State Party should redouble its efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls. In particular, it should:

(a) Continue to strengthen the legal framework protecting against all forms of gender-based violence, including through the incorporation of a gender perspective when considering or reviewing legislation and the establishment of a fully consent-based definition of rape in domestic criminal legislation that is in line with international standards;

(b) Ensure that all cases of violence against women are promptly and thoroughly investigated, that such crimes are considered for ex officio prosecution irrespective of the victim's consent, that perpetrators are prosecuted and, where appropriate, convicted and sanctioned with adequate penalties, and that victims are provided with adequate protection and effective remedies;

(c) Ensure that judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers and health personnel receive appropriate training to enable them to deal with cases of gender-based and domestic violence in an effective and gender-sensitive manner;

(d) Collect and make publicly available disaggregated data on violence against women, including information on complaints, investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sentences related to gender-based violence and develop methodologies to monitor cases of psychological and economic violence, including investigations, prosecutions and eventual sanctions.

Sexual and reproductive rights

23. The Committee is concerned over reports that some groups, in particular young persons, women in rural areas, and women with disabilities, continue to face difficulties in accessing modern contraceptives, and that the State Party lacks age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education in school curricula that also incorporates age-appropriate information on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (arts. 2, 6 and 7).

24. The State Party should continue its efforts to promote and protect equal access to affordable contraceptive measures and incorporate age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education into school curricula, including information on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. The State Party should also promptly adopt the draft National Program on Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

25. While noting recent decreases in the number of complaints of torture and ill-treatment, as well as the introduction of procedures for the identification and reporting of alleged acts of torture and the establishment of an electronic register of bodily injuries, the Committee is concerned over reports which indicate underreporting of instances of torture and ill-treatment, including due to fear of retaliation, the re-qualification of acts of torture and ill-treatment as

lesser criminal offences, and the gap between the number of complaints of torture and ill-treatment and the number of convictions. The Committee also notes that a significant number of convictions for torture and ill-treatment have resulted in suspended sentences or fines, raising concerns that penalties handed down may not be commensurate with the gravity of the offence, and regrets that full accountability for the abuses committed during the April 2009 protests has not yet been achieved (art. 7).

26. The State Party should:

(a) Continue strengthening existing complaint mechanisms in all places of detention, including by ensuring unhindered access to such mechanisms in complete confidentiality and by ensuring that complainants, witnesses, and members of their families are protected against any intimidation or reprisals as a consequence of their complaints, and strengthen the independence and resources of the Council for the Prevention of Torture so that it can effectively carry out its mandate as the national preventive mechanism;

(b) Ensure that information about the possibility and procedure for filing complaints is widely publicized, including by being prominently displayed in all places of deprivation of liberty;

(c) Ensure that all complaints of torture or ill-treatment are investigated promptly and impartially by an independent institution, and ensure that the alleged perpetrators are duly prosecuted under the appropriate provisions of the Criminal Code and, if found guilty, given a sentence commensurate with the gravity of their acts, and that victims have access to effective remedies, including compensation, rehabilitation and psychological support.

Elimination of slavery, servitude and trafficking in persons

27. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Program on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2024-2028, and the considerable resources invested in the maintenance and functioning of shelters for victims of trafficking and violence. However, the Committee is concerned over the low numbers of identified victims receiving assistance, due in part to a fear of Government institutions. The Committee also regrets that labour inspectors reportedly lack sufficient training in the proactive identification of victims of trafficking in persons, which may hinder the effective identification of victims and their access to assistance and justice (arts. 2, 7, 8 and 26).

28. The State Party should:

(a) Take proactive measures to increase public assistance to victims of trafficking in persons, including through the development and distribution of informative materials and the training of judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers and health personnel on working with victims of trafficking, and strengthen measures to identify victims of trafficking;

(b) Redouble its efforts to ensure that victims are informed before formal statements are made to investigators that assistance is not conditional on their cooperation with law enforcement authorities, and ensure that victims have access to protection and assistance, including shelters, medical and psychological support and legal aid, regardless of their willingness to participate in criminal proceedings;

(c) Ensure that labour inspectors are provided with the training necessary to effectively identify victims of trafficking in persons;

(d) Ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of trafficking offences, including cases involving organized criminal groups, complicit officials or workplace abuses, while facilitating victims' access to justice and compensation through victim-centred procedures and accessible information.

Treatment of persons deprived of their liberty

29. The Committee notes measures aimed at reducing overcrowding and plans to construct a new penitentiary facility. However, it is concerned about high levels of

overcrowding, particularly in Prison No. 11-Bălți and Prison No. 13- Chişinău, noting that in some locations prisoners are allegedly allocated less than 2m² of living space per person. The Committee is also concerned that problems related to overcrowding, including as they relate to detention regime and protection against inter-prisoner violence, are exacerbated by a lack of adequate human resources. According to reports received, many aspects of the daily management and effective control of prisons are left in the hands of informal criminal hierarchies, contributing to serious concerns regarding extortion between prisoners and inter-prisoner violence. The Committee is further concerned by reports that prisoners face barriers to obtaining health care at a level equivalent to that provided in the community because prisons lack an appropriate number of qualified medical personnel, that health care staff are subordinated, in the case of prisons, to the Ministry of Justice via the National Administration of Penitentiaries, and in the case of police custody, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, rather than the Ministry of Health, and that prisoners do not receive state-covered compulsory health insurance (arts. 7 and 10).

30. **Bearing in mind the Committee’s general comment No. 35 (2014) on liberty and security of person, the State Party should:**

(a) Continue its efforts to improve the conditions of detention in all places of deprivation of liberty and urgently alleviate the overcrowding of penitentiary institutions and other detention facilities, including through the application of non-custodial measures and the recruitment of an adequate quantity of trained staff. In this regard, the Committee draws the State Party’s attention to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules);

(b) Continue its efforts to eliminate criminal subculture and hierarchies in all places of detention, and carry out prompt and effective investigations into all allegations of inter-prisoner violence and abuse;

(c) Ensure that all necessary measures are taken to ensure the right of persons deprived of their liberty to the highest attainable standard of health, including through the extension of state-covered compulsory health insurance to all prisoners and the provision of the necessary human, material, and financial resources, and the hiring and allocation of an increased number of physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other medical personnel;

(d) Ensure the functional independence of medical personnel and hasten its efforts to transfer competency for healthcare in all places of deprivation of liberty to the Ministry of Health, in line with international standards.

31. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Law No. 114/2024 on mental health and well-being, however it remains concerned over reports that frequent abuses, including cases of torture and ill-treatment, still occur in psychiatric institutions. In this regard, the Committee regrets that the law does not appear to provide sufficient safeguards allowing for the periodic or detainee-initiated judicial review of involuntary placement. The Committee also expresses its concern over allegations of excessive use of force in October 2022 by special police brigade “Fulger” at the Clinical Psychiatric Hospital in Codru (arts. 2, 7, 9, 10 and 26).

32. **The State Party should:**

(a) **Carry out prompt, impartial, thorough, and effective investigations into all allegations of excessive use of force, including torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials and medical professionals, prosecuting alleged perpetrators and providing those found guilty with sentences commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(b) **Ensure that sufficient legal and procedural safeguards for patients in psychiatric institutions and social care facilities are implemented, both in law and in practice, and that they are accompanied by periodic judicial reviews of, and effective avenues of appeal against, involuntary institutionalization;**

Treatment of aliens, including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

33. The Committee welcomes the State Party's extension of temporary protection status to nationals of Ukraine until 1 March 2027, along with the considerable efforts the State Party has undertaken to provide support to these individuals. However, it is concerned over reports indicating poor conditions of detention and barriers to accessing asylum procedures at Chişinău Eugen Doga International Airport, including time-limited asylum interviews and inadequate translation services. The Committee is also concerned that recipients of temporary protection face a number of structural obstacles with regard to the full enjoyment of their rights under the Covenant, including difficulties in obtaining equivalence of professional qualifications, public health insurance and entrepreneur licences (arts. 7, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 24).

34. **The State Party should:**

(a) **Ensure that no person is expelled, returned or extradited to another state where there are substantial grounds for believing that they would be in danger of being subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. As such, the State Party should ensure asylum procedures are conducted in a format and with adequate resources to enable comprehensive and individualized determinations for each applicant;**

(b) **Ensure that detention for the purposes of deportation is applied only as a last resort, when determined to be strictly necessary and proportionate in the light of an individual's circumstances and for as short a period as possible;**

(c) **Ensure recipients of temporary protection have effective access to livelihood opportunities and public health insurance, removing administrative barriers and providing requisite support to enable their full enjoyment of Covenant rights on an equal basis with nationals without arbitrary distinction.**

35. While acknowledging positive developments, such as the adoption of Law No. 142/2023, amending article 11 of Law No. 1024/2000 on citizenship, granting nationality to children born to parents who are stateless or beneficiaries of international protection, the Committee expresses its concern over Law No. 253/2025, which altered the regime of citizenship by recognition by including requirements for a demonstrated knowledge of the Romanian language and of the Moldovan Constitution, which may adversely and disproportionately affect persons with limited literacy, persons belonging to linguistic minorities, older persons and persons with long-term health conditions or disabilities. The Committee is also concerned that the Law could remove persons who have legally and habitually resided in Moldova since June 1990 from eligibility for citizenship through recognition, potentially denying persons at risk of statelessness following the dissolution of the Soviet Union a clear pathway to citizenship (arts. 2, 16, 24 and 26).

36. **The State Party should consider amending the legal framework on citizenship by recognition to eliminate any potential for indirect discrimination against groups in situations of vulnerability or at risk of statelessness.**

Access to justice, independence of the judiciary, and fair trial

37. The Committee notes the ongoing judicial reform process, including pre-vetting and vetting procedures for judges and prosecutors aimed at strengthening integrity within the justice system. However, it remains concerned about the effects that the mass resignation or

dismissal of judges may have on the administration of justice in the State Party, taking into account that the judiciary currently has approximately 100 positions which remain vacant. In this regard, the Committee expresses its concern over the compounding effects that such vacancy rates may have on access to justice, taking into account the postponement and suspension of court proceedings subsequent to the state of emergency in the State Party, as well as broader concerns regarding delays in court proceedings and challenges in the enforcement of judicial decisions. The Committee is also concerned that, according to information received, the recent judicial reform lacked transparency and meaningful consultation with minority communities, resulting in reduced linguistic accessibility and greater physical distance to court services for affected populations, in a context where persistent perceptions of corruption and political influence within the judiciary and prosecution service remain (arts. 2, 4, 14 and 26).

38. Taking into account article 14 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 32 (2007) on the right to equality before courts and to a fair trial, the State Party should continue to take proactive measures to tackle judicial backlogs and ensure that trials are not impeded by undue delays, including through ensuring the recruitment of a sufficient number of judges, improved case-management systems and adequate staffing of courts. Procedures for the selection, appointment, promotion evaluation, imposition of disciplinary measures and removal of judges should be transparent and impartial and should comply with the Covenant and international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary. The State Party should also ensure that law reform processes which may affect access to justice incorporate meaningful consultations with minority communities so as to fully uphold their rights under the Covenant.

Freedom of conscience and religious belief

39. The Committee takes note of article 31 of the Constitution of the State Party guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religious belief and Law No.125/2007 on freedom of conscience, thought and religion, which abolished the requirement to prove membership in an association in order to be recognized as a conscientious objector. However, the Committee remains concerned that, according to information received, conscientious objection may only be recognized prior to enlistment in the armed forces. The Committee further expresses its concern regarding high rates of rejection of conscientious objector applications, insufficient deadlines for appeals against such decisions (arts. 2, 18 and 26).

40. The State Party should promptly take all measures necessary to ensure that the right to conscientious objection to military service is guaranteed in law and in practice in line with article 18 of the Covenant, and that alternative service is accessible to all conscientious objectors, without discrimination.

Right to privacy

41. The Committee takes note of positive developments introduced by Law No. 179/2023, which provides for judicial authorization for counter-intelligence measures, strengthens parliamentary oversight of the Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) and provides legislative guarantees for journalists and lawyers. However, the Committee is concerned that some provisions of the law use overbroad terminology, particularly with regard to the powers of the SIS, that counter-intelligence measures may be taken without a court order in some circumstances, and that, according to information received, instances of excessive or unlawful surveillance of electronic communications have occurred, engendering a chilling effect on the work of journalists and human rights defenders (arts. 17, 19 and 22).

42. The State Party should:

(a) Consider reviewing Law No. 179/2023, and other legislation regulating counter-intelligence activities and the activity of the SIS, in order to ensure full conformity with the Covenant and other relevant international standards;

(b) Ensure that surveillance activities and any other interference with privacy are carried out in full compliance with article 17 of the Covenant and in line with the principles of legality, proportionality and necessity.

Freedom of expression

43. The Committee notes positive developments in facilitating access to information of public interest and the State Party's recognition of the importance of combatting hate speech and disinformation. However, the Committee expresses its concern over the excessive recourse to suspension of media broadcasting licences during the state of emergency by the Commission for Exceptional Situations, and subsequently by the Council for the Promotion of Investment Projects of National Importance and the Audiovisual Council. The Committee is also concerned that the revised Audiovisual Media Services Code lacks clarity and precision, which may have a chilling effect on freedom of expression. The Committee is further concerned over continuing allegations of harassment and intimidation of journalists, particularly in Transnistria and Gagauzia (arts. 4 and 19).

44. **The State Party should take all measures necessary to ensure that everyone can freely exercise the right to freedom of expression, in accordance with article 19 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011), and in particular:**

(a) **Consider reviewing the legal framework governing freedom of expression, including the Audiovisual Media Services Code, to ensure that any restrictions on the exercise of that right are clearly defined, necessary and proportionate, in conformity with the strict requirements of article 19 (3) of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011);**

(b) **Prevent and combat all acts of harassment, intimidation and violence against journalists, including to the extent possible those working in the territory of the State Party but in areas outside of its effective control, to ensure that they are free to carry out their work without undue control or interference.**

Freedom of peaceful assembly

45. The Committee expresses its concern that ambiguities as to the applicability in cases of public gatherings of Law No. 302/2025 on the organization and conduct of public events and Law No. 26/2008 on public assemblies may have adverse effects on freedom of assembly, in particular that Law No. 302/2025 may impose burdensome requirements on event organizers. The Committee further expresses its concern regarding alleged arbitrary restrictions on farmers' right to freedom of peaceful assembly in the context of protests in the State Party in October 2024 (arts. 2 and 21).

46. **In the light of article 21 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly, the State Party should facilitate the exercise of the right of peaceful assembly and ensure that any restrictions comply with the strict requirements of article 21. In this regard, the State Party should consider revising Law No. 302/2025 to further clarify its scope of application and ensure that any restrictions to the right of freedom of peaceful assembly, including the imposition of administrative requirements, are necessary and proportionate.**

Freedom of association

47. While noting the adoption of Law No. 86/2020 on non-commercial organizations, which significantly streamlined the registration process for civil society organizations and removed restrictions on membership and internal governance structures, the Committee is concerned that practical barriers remain as regards the full enjoyment of the right of freedom of association in the State Party, including instances of exclusionary rhetoric and intimidation against civil society organizations and their members by public authorities. The Committee is also concerned that human rights defenders continue to be subject to smear campaigns, threats and harassment, both online and offline. As regards Transnistria, the Committee is concerned that civil society organizations face allegations of bias and extremism and continue to work in an environment of heavily restricted civic space (arts. 2, 19, 22 and 25).

48. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their work in an enabling environment, free from threats, reprisals, violence, or other forms of harassment;**

(b) Promptly and firmly condemn and sanction instances of exclusionary rhetoric and intimidation by public authorities, mindful of the fundamental role that human rights defenders and civil society organizations play in upholding the Covenant;

(c) Investigate and prosecute instances of online and offline harassment, threats, and smear campaigns against human rights defenders and civil society organizations, including those orchestrated or endorsed by public figures;

(d) Establish a clear legal framework governing the status of human rights defenders, incorporating adequate protection mechanisms into national legislation;

(e) Develop and implement a formal code of conduct for public officials strictly prohibiting the stigmatization of civil society and ensuring that State-owned or State-influenced media are not used as tools for discrediting human rights defenders or organizations.

Rights of the child

49. While noting the information provided by the State Party regarding alternatives to detention and probation programmes for children in conflict with the law, the Committee remains concerned over information received indicating that restorative justice and diversion systems in place remain underutilized, that there are insufficient mechanisms to prepare children for reintegration after detention, and that coordination between the justice and child protection systems is inadequate (arts. 2, 9, 10, 23, 24, 26).

50. The State Party should ensure that the detention of children is applied only as a last resort, when determined to be strictly necessary and proportionate in the light of the individual's circumstances, and for the shortest possible period of time, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules).

51. The Committee is concerned over reports that child neglect and violence, as well as specific forms of child abuse, still persist in the State Party, and that, despite article 14 of the Family Code establishing a minimum age of marriage registration at 18 years of age, instances of child marriage still allegedly occur in the State Party, particularly among the Roma community (arts. 2, 7, 23, 24, 26).

52. The State Party should redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against children, including through:

(a) Ensuring that all allegations of any form of violence against or abuse of children are promptly, impartially and effectively investigated, that those responsible are brought to justice and that all victims have access to effective remedies and appropriate protection and assistance;

(b) Take measures to prevent child and forced marriages, in particular by conducting outreach and education activities, especially among the Roma community.

Participation of minorities in public affairs

53. The Committee notes information provided by the State Party regarding efforts undertaken to uphold minority rights and promote and facilitate the participation of minorities in public life. However, the Committee regrets reports that minority communities, particularly linguistic minorities and Roma, are not sufficiently consulted and involved in decision making processes and face barriers in participating, and that the State Party lacks robust legislation ensuring linguistic rights, affecting, inter alia, access to justice, health care and information. The Committee takes note of the positive practice of employing Roma mediators to liaise with Roma communities and State authorities. However, it regrets that many positions remain unfilled, in part due to the low salaries and multiplication of responsibilities of mediators (arts. 25, 26 and 27).

54. In accordance with article 25 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 25 (1996) on participation in public affairs and the right to vote, the State

Party should take all measures necessary to ensure the full and effective enjoyment and exercise of the right to participate in public affairs. In particular, the State Party should:

(a) Develop measures to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to minority communities, in particular Roma and linguistic minority communities, both in law and in practice, including by enacting robust legislation ensuring linguistic rights in the State Party and dismantling structural barriers to participation;

(b) Redouble its efforts to ensure that minority communities are adequately represented in government bodies and public administration, including in senior and decision-making positions;

(c) Intensify efforts to ensure access to justice, health care and information for linguistic minorities, including through the allocation of the human and financial resources necessary to provide adequate interpretation and translation;

(d) Promptly fill all vacant community mediator positions and consider revising the remuneration and responsibilities associated with such positions.

D. Dissemination and follow-up

55. The State Party should widely disseminate the Covenant, the two Optional Protocols thereto, its fourth periodic report and the present concluding observations, with a view to raising awareness of the rights enshrined in the Covenant among the judicial, legislative and administrative authorities, civil society and non-governmental organizations operating in the country and the general public. The State Party should ensure that the periodic report and the present concluding observations are translated into the official language of the State Party.

56. In accordance with rule 75 (1) of the Committee's rules of procedure, the State Party is requested to provide, by 19 March 2029, information on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee in paragraphs 12 (anti-corruption measures), 16 (hate crimes and hate speech), and 22 (violence against women and domestic violence) above.

57. In line with the Committee's predictable review cycle, the State Party will receive in 2032 the Committee's list of issues prior to submission of the report and will be expected to submit within one year its replies, which will constitute its fifth periodic report. The Committee requests the State Party, in preparing the report, to broadly consult civil society and non-governmental organizations operating in the country. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words. The next constructive dialogue with the State Party will take place in Geneva in 2034.