

**Electoral Rights in the Transnistrian region of Moldova**  
**Promo-LEX Association, Moldova**

The right to vote and to be elected is one of the fundamental human rights and also the basis of a democratic society. However, almost 10% of the Moldovan citizens with voting rights (residents of the Transnistrian region) are not free to enjoy their electoral rights for almost 20 years.

Holding the control of the Transnistrian region, Tiraspol administration imposes conditions that contravene the democratic principles and constitutional norms, thus restricting fundamental rights and liberties of the local population. At the same time, electoral rights are also linked to other fundamental rights and liberties such as the right to information, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, as well as the freedom of movement. The observance of these rights is also ignored.

In order to ensure electoral rights of the Transnistrian region residents, Moldovan constitutional authorities establish special polling stations in the localities bordering the Transnistrian region and under the jurisdiction of the constitutional authorities. However, the number of these polling stations is insufficient. At the same time, Constitutional authorities fail to constitute there appropriate election organs and legal mechanisms.

Thus, cases of impossibility to exercise the right to be elected as local elected officials in the administrative-territorial units Bender and UTA Transnistrian Region were also registered.

During the past 20 years the separatist administration posed numerous obstacles for local population willing to participate at Constitutional polls. Numerous cases of intimidation and persecution of the Transnistrian region population were registered, so that they do not participate in the elections. Many people have been visited at their homes by the illegal local 'militia' and were threatened with dismissal and criminal liability.

On Election Day, the roads to the localities in which the special polling stations are established are intensely patrolled by numerous road militia teams, and there were recorded cases of withdrawal of driving licenses or vehicles' number plates from persons who are transporting voters to polling stations. The roads to localities in which the polling stations are established are blocked.

Representatives of illegal custom structures strengthen controls, especially with regard to identification of electoral materials. Numerous cases of goods and electoral materials confiscation were registered.

At the same time, the Moldovan constitutional authorities made insufficient efforts to provide proper information to the electorate of the region. Activities specific to election campaigns are practically absent in Transnistrian region. The voters do not have the possibility to be informed about the electoral candidates and their electoral programs. Over the past 20 years, the electoral candidates have ignored this region.

Due to all these difficulties, local population' participation in constitutional polls significantly decreased. To this end, we emphasize on the urgent measures that have to be undertaken by Constitutional authorities as well as by international actors involved in negotiation format to redress this situation and to ensure the observance of the electoral rights in this region.

It is highly important to ensure security of all polling stations, including those open to voters from the Transnistrian region;

Constitutional authorities have to investigate all cases of violation of the electoral rights in the Transnistrian region and sanction the perpetrators;

Constitutional authorities have to intensify diplomatic efforts to raise public opinion and national and international awareness and make the Tiraspol administration to ensure minimum conditions for exercising the right to vote;

Constitutional authorities have to ensure proper information about the electoral procedure;

The electoral candidates have to be more active in campaigning activities in the region;