

Press Release

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Moldova: "Ill-treatment and police brutality should be stamped out" says Commissioner Hammarberg in his report

Strasbourg, 17.07.2009 – "The violations of the prohibition against ill-treatment, which surfaced so acutely after the post-electoral demonstrations of 6-7 April, must be tackled head-on to restore a climate of confidence. Decisive action should be taken to enforce a firm attitude of 'zero tolerance' of ill-treatment throughout the criminal justice system" said the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights on publishing today his [report](#) on the visit to Moldova.

"It is clear that there is a need to review not only the behaviour of individual police officers, but also the responsibility of their superiors" says Commissioner Hammarberg. "Full clarity must be established on this breakdown of professionalism and respect for basic standards. I hope that the resolve expressed by the Moldovan authorities to overcome this problem and ensure accountability will be followed by concrete, resolute and sustained action."

Furthermore, Commissioner Hammarberg stresses that "prosecutors, judges, senior police officers and lawyers should be attentive to allegations or signs of possible ill-treatment, and there needs to be proper screening, recording and reporting of injuries in police detention facilities."

The Commissioner finds that pressure put upon media and non-governmental organisations involved in reporting on allegations of human rights violations is unacceptable. "Free expression and information should be protected, including in times of crisis. At the same time, media professionals should make a special effort to adhere to professional and ethical standards."

Finally, Commissioner Hammarberg recommends that thorough and comprehensive inquiries be carried out into the events. "Apart from clarifying the issues relating to the elections themselves, it is essential that the developments during the demonstrations, including the violent acts and the failed riot control measures be investigated. There needs to be a prompt follow-up to the human rights violations, in particular the numerous instances of ill-treatment by the police. The inquiries must be independent, impartial, transparent and perceived as credible by the people of Moldova."

The report is based on the findings of a visit to Moldova carried out by the Commissioner on 25-28 April 2009. It is available, together with the government's comments, on the [Commissioner's website](#).

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