The meeting of experts in the field of human rights took place in Bender



The working groups for human rights met on October 10, 2023 at the Bender headquarters of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Chișinău delegation being led by Mrs. Nadejda Burciu, State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice.

The experts from Chișinău pointed out the problems related to the restriction by Tiraspol of the freedom of movement of citizens towards the Transnistrian region, especially regarding journalists and human rights promoters, they demanded the access of media companies from the right bank of the Nistru River to the left bank, in order to ensure the right to inform the residents. The case of journalist Elena Covalenco was mentioned, who was not only stopped on her way to a football match by the force structures from Tiraspol, but also forbidden to enter the uncontrolled region for 3 years.

A special place in the discussion agenda was given to the identification of an effective intervention mechanism in individual cases of human rights violations. Chișinău's representatives have been promoting this idea on the platform of human rights working groups since 2020, but Tiraspol's reluctance to reach a favorable decision prevents its realization. In this mechanism, it is proposed to involve civil society on both banks of the Nistru River, human rights defenders, attorneys, exponents of the academic environment, but also interested international organizations. The support of external partners could be employed for the creation of permanent offices on both banks of the Nistru River, where citizens would have the opportunity to be informed about their rights, to benefit from legal services and other support in order to ensure the rights and freedoms guaranteed by instruments international.

At the same time, demands were re-addressed regarding the restoration of rights to the citizens of Dudnic, Dimov, Menzarari, Pleșcanov, Pogorletchii and other persons illegally detained by the force structures subordinate to Tiraspol.

Among the current topics elucidated during the working meeting by the representatives of the Ombudsman's Office were ensuring the rights of people with mental or intellectual deficiencies; respecting the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the Transnistrian region; respecting the rights of citizens who have found temporary shelter in the localities of the Transnistrian region in the context of the war in Ukraine.

International standards in the field of ensuring the rights of persons belonging to national minorities constituted the topic addressed by the representatives of the Agency for Interethnic Relations. The inclusion of the issue of national minorities on the agenda of the working group for human rights was recommended following the monitoring visit to the Republic of Moldova of the delegation of the Consultative Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This fact could provide the opportunity to identify a mechanism for monitoring the situation of the rights of national minorities in the Transnistrian region, actively involving civil society.

At the meeting, the concern of the authorities regarding the provision of adequate operating conditions for penitentiaries no. 8 and no. 12 subordinated to the National Administration of Penitentiaries, which are located in Bender, was reiterated. It was mentioned about the difficulties that still persist in the area of free movement of penitentiary officials, in the provision of food products, medicines, fuels and other goods of strict necessity, in the uninterrupted supply of energy and communication resources, the exclusion of impediments from any other administrative processes, etc.

Regarding the claims of Tiraspol regarding the control procedures applied to some people when passing through the Chișinău International Airport, the alleged difficulties generated by the criminalization of separatism in the criminal legislation of the Republic of Moldova, the authorization of imports of certain categories of goods introduced by companies from the region, the documenting mechanism with plates neutral of automobiles in the region, the call was reiterated to abandon the artificial politicization of these aspects and to comply with the requirements of the national legislation in force.

We specify that the previous joint meeting of the working groups for human rights took place on November 22, 2021. Since then, Tiraspol has repeatedly refused to examine priority issues at the level of human rights experts, and Chișinău has constantly addressed the issue of human rights in the uncontrolled region in the process of negotiations, as well as on the discussion platform with external partners, requesting their support for the restoration of the rights of the victims.

