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Summary record of the 4273rd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 10 March 2026, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Soh

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)

*Fourth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova (continued) (CCPR/C/MDA/4;
CCPR/C/MDA/QPR/4)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Republic of Moldova joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of the Republic of Moldova to the meeting, explained that some members of the delegation would be participating via video link. He invited the delegation to resume replying to the questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting (CCPR/C/SR.4272).
3. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the “\$1 billion bank fraud” case remained a major priority for the justice system in the Republic of Moldova, both because of the complexity of the investigation and because of the extent of the damage caused to the financial and banking system. The criminal investigation had been initiated on 4 December 2013 and more than 70 criminal cases were currently linked to the main file, involving activities carried out between 2011 and 2015, including fraud, embezzlement, tax evasion and money-laundering. Approximately 70 individuals from both the public and the private sectors had been charged. Over the years, 11 cases involving 19 individuals had been separated from the main criminal case and sent to trial, and 6 cases were currently pending before the courts, some of which were connected to other cases still under investigation. There had recently been significant developments, including the arrest and extradition to the Republic of Moldova of Vladimir Plahotniuc, a former political figure implicated in the affair. The interim president of one of the defrauded banks had been sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment, and one of the key figures behind the fraud had been sentenced to 15 years. In both instances, significant assets had been seized. Asset recovery was advancing along two parallel tracks: capitalization of the assets of banks undergoing liquidation and international judicial cooperation. Through the capitalization of assets, approximately 2.9 billion Moldovan lei (MDL), equivalent to about \$170 million, had been recovered. Through judicial cooperation, assets totalling around MDL 7.5 billion, equivalent to approximately \$440 million, had been frozen. Cooperation was ongoing with more than 15 countries and jurisdictions.
4. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that her country had a comprehensive legal framework to prevent and combat discrimination. Law No. 60/2012, on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, provided for equal participation in all areas of life and expressly prohibited any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on disability that would limit the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. Law No. 121/2012, on ensuring equality, established further safeguards against discrimination in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres, including on the grounds of disability. That law also recognized intersectional discrimination, and a violation of equality committed on the basis of multiple characteristics could constitute a criminal offence under the Criminal Code.
5. There were also several national policies and programmes aimed at strengthening inclusion and combating discrimination against persons with disabilities, including the National Programme on Ensuring Respect for Human Rights 2024–2027, the National Regional Development Strategy 2022–2028 and the National Health Strategy. As a priority for the current year, the State planned to adopt the draft national programme on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities 2026–2030, which would further consolidate reforms in that area.
6. An individualized approach was followed in the organization and provision of social services for persons with disabilities, involving the adaptation of support to the specific needs, capacities, preferences and personal situation of each individual, with the aim of ensuring social inclusion, autonomy and respect for fundamental rights. The minimum standards for social services explicitly provided for the application of the principle of non-discrimination,

requiring providers to offer support equally to all beneficiaries without distinction based on criteria such as type or degree of disability, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, social status or other personal characteristics.

7. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, in December 2022, the Commission for Exceptional Situations had decided to suspend the licences of six television channels, on the basis of a review by the Audiovisual Council, which had found that those channels had failed to provide accurate information regarding the Russian war against Ukraine and had attempted to manipulate public opinion in their coverage of events in the Republic of Moldova. The Audiovisual Council had determined that the channels had deliberately promoted war propaganda, legitimized Russian aggression and manipulated information about national events. Control over those six broadcasters had been exercised by an individual subject to international sanctions, which had been a supplementary justification for the suspension. Prior to the suspension, the Audiovisual Council had applied sanctions to those channels, and the licences granted to them had already expired.

8. As of 2023, whistle-blower protection had been part of the mandate of the People's Advocate Office. There had been five requests for protection in 2023, seven in 2024 and six in 2025. Some of those requests had been rejected on the grounds that they fell outside the scope of whistle-blower protection. In relation to one request submitted in 2024, the People's Advocate had represented the whistle-blower concerned before the courts. There were plans to update the law on whistle-blower protection, taking into account the relevant European Union directives. Between 2017 and 2020, four individual complaints against the State had been submitted to the Human Rights Committee, of which one had been rejected on the merits and the other three on grounds of inadmissibility. A study had been undertaken to examine the possibility of amending national legislation in order to provide a specific mechanism for the consideration of the Committee's Views. In the meantime, Views were examined thoroughly by the official responsible for liaison with the European Court of Human Rights.

9. **Mr. Helfer** said that the Committee had been made aware of concerns regarding the application of the legal framework governing the promotion of equality for persons with disabilities, including a lack of reasonable accommodation in access to courts, polling stations and social services. He would welcome information on any plans to address such disparities in order to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in public life. He would also welcome an update on efforts to promote the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities, including, for example, information on the number of persons who had been transferred from institutions to community-based care over the reporting period.

10. Despite the State Party's commitment to improving conditions in and increasing funding for psychiatric institutions, credible reports indicated that abuses continued to occur and that resources and adequate training were still lacking. Information on the measures planned to uphold the rights of persons in psychiatric institutions would therefore be welcome. In that connection, he would be grateful if the delegation could comment on reports of an incident at the Codru clinical psychiatric hospital on 27 October 2022, according to which a group of patients allegedly undergoing coerced treatment had been physically abused by a special police brigade.

11. Regarding compliance with the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *V.I. v. the Republic of Moldova*, while the State Party had indicated that compensation had been provided to the victim, he would appreciate information on any measures taken to address the underlying conditions of stigmatization that had led to the violation in that case, in order to prevent similar violations in the future. He would also welcome information on compliance with the ruling in a more recent case, *E.T. v. the Republic of Moldova*, in which the European Court of Human Rights had ruled in favour of a child with psychosocial disabilities who had been improperly removed from his community.

12. Although the State Party's efforts to protect displaced and stateless persons and facilitate access to citizenship were commendable, reports indicated that beneficiaries of temporary protection faced structural obstacles in their access to the labour market and public health insurance. Information on the measures being taken to remove such barriers would be welcome. Moreover, in the light of concerns regarding poor conditions of detention and

barriers to access to asylum procedures at Chisinau airport, he wondered whether the State Party planned to improve those conditions and review asylum procedures in order to ensure the timely and fair examination of asylum claims.

13. He wished to know whether children born in the Republic of Moldova to foreign parents who were not beneficiaries of international protection were automatically eligible for citizenship. Furthermore, in the light of concerns, following the recent amendment of the Citizenship Law, regarding stricter income requirements for obtaining Moldovan nationality and the exclusion of persons who had legally and habitually resided in the Republic of Moldova since June 1990 from eligibility for citizenship through recognition, he wished to know how equal access to citizenship would be ensured for women and persons with disabilities, who tended to earn less than other groups, and for such long-term residents.

14. **Mr. Šimonović** said that despite the State Party's significant efforts to combat trafficking in persons, concerns remained regarding a lack of proactive investigations, underidentification of victims, limited labour inspection capacity and shortcomings in protection services. He would therefore be grateful for information regarding labour inspections specifically targeting forced labour; criminal investigations into the alleged complicity of public officials in trafficking-related offences; the reasons for the significant gap between the number of victims identified and those receiving assistance; and the percentage of identified victims who had received long-term assistance, including housing, psychological support, legal aid and reintegration support. He would also welcome information concerning the annual budget allocated to victim support services, including shelters and specialized assistance programmes; the safeguards in place to ensure that access to assistance was not conditional on participation in criminal proceedings; the manner in which effective cross-border cooperation in trafficking cases was ensured; trends in online recruitment or grooming for trafficking purposes, including through social media platforms, and the preventive measures in place to address those risks; and the steps taken to strengthen early identification of victims among migrant workers, seasonal labourers and Moldovan nationals returning from abroad.

15. While the State Party's initiatives to reduce prison overcrowding were welcome, limited data were available on the actual impact of the reforms undertaken. It would be useful to receive information on the current prison occupancy rate and recent trends and on any measures being implemented to address inter-prisoner violence and informal hierarchies within detention facilities. Information on access to healthcare and complaints mechanisms for persons in detention, including those held in police custody, would also be welcome. In addition, despite recent progress, concerns remained regarding transparency, procedural safeguards and appeal rights in vetting processes for judges, and insufficient data were available on dismissal rates, pending appeals and the duration of judicial proceedings. He would therefore welcome clarification regarding the number of judges and prosecutors removed following vetting, the appeal mechanisms available, reversal rates and the safeguards in place to ensure merit-based selection and promotion without political influence. It would also be useful to receive information on the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system, including the average duration of civil and criminal proceedings.

16. **Mr. Korkelia** said that he would appreciate clarification regarding the body responsible for examining applications for exemption from military services and the methodology applied to the examination of applications for alternative civilian service. He would also welcome statistical data on cases in which conscripts had been denied the right to perform alternative service, the main reasons for refusal and the number of complaints and appeals lodged during the reporting period. Likewise, it would be useful to learn how the State Party ensured that military conscripts, reservists and professional members of the armed forces who raised religious or non-religious objections during or after service were able to enjoy their rights under article 18 of the Covenant. He would also like to know on what grounds alternative service could be terminated, including with a view to conscription in extraordinary situations.

17. The State Party's reforms aimed at enhancing safeguards against unlawful surveillance and protecting the right to privacy were commendable. However, in the light of persistent concerns about the scope of the State's surveillance powers, clarification would be welcome on the precise legal safeguards governing the interception of mail, telephone and

Internet communications; any plans to establish an independent oversight or complaints mechanism to complement parliamentary and judicial control and other means of seeking an independent and effective review of alleged privacy violations; and the State Party's response to concerns regarding the technical access granted to the Intelligence and Security Service to telecommunications infrastructure and reports of surveillance abuse. In addition, he would welcome information on measures in place to ensure that the legal safeguards introduced by Law No. 179/2023, in particular the right of journalists not to reveal their sources and the obligation to destroy accidentally collected data, were implemented effectively and subject to independent verification; and measures taken to ensure prompt, effective and impartial investigations into online threats, death threats and intimidation targeting investigative journalists and to provide them with protection and remedies.

18. According to information from various sources, improvements to the legal framework governing freedom of association had not yet been fully implemented. He would therefore welcome information on comprehensive measures and legal mechanisms to protect non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their members from intimidation by public authorities, including disciplinary action against officials who targeted organizations for criticizing government decisions, and on measures to increase sanctions for illegal interference in the activities of NGOs. It would also be useful to learn what steps had been taken to establish in national legislation a clear framework governing the status of human rights defenders and an adequate protection mechanism; to investigate and prosecute instances of online and offline harassment, threats and smear campaigns orchestrated or endorsed by public figures, including the number of such investigations and their outcomes; and to develop and implement a formal code of conduct for public officials that strictly prohibited the stigmatization of civil society and ensured that State-owned or State-influenced media were not used to discredit human rights organizations.

19. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she would welcome information on the impact of the recent amendments to the Criminal Code and the Contravention Code intended to strengthen the protection of journalists. Examples of cases of hate speech linked to disinformation and of sanctions applied would also be appreciated. In the light of concerns raised regarding the power of the Centre for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation to suspend television station licences outside a state of emergency and without a court order, she would welcome clarification on the safeguards in place to prevent possible misuse of authority arising from the Centre's allegedly broad mandate and powers. An explanation of the work of the "Countering Disinformation in Moldova" project, which had recently been launched to strengthen media independence, would also be appreciated.

20. She would welcome the delegation's comments on reports by Amnesty International that, in October 2024, ahead of a farmers' demonstration against insufficient central government support, some protesters had been contacted by the police and asked whether they intended to participate, and that, on the day of the demonstration, police had prevented some farmers from reaching the protest location with their agricultural vehicles. She would also be interested to hear the delegation's comments regarding concerns raised by civil society about the absence of a participatory parliamentary process prior to the adoption of Law No. 302/2025, on the organization and conduct of public events, and about perceived restrictions on the right to freedom of assembly under that law.

21. **Mr. Yigezu** said that, in view of reports of shortcomings in the juvenile justice system, he would welcome information on any plans to promote and systematically apply diversion and restorative justice approaches at all stages of the juvenile justice process, including through the expansion of mediation and the development of community-based alternatives to detention. Information would also be welcome on any planned measures to strengthen and promote child-friendly non-judicial complaint mechanisms; to ensure access to quality legal aid services for all children, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds; to ensure the effective separation of children from adults in all places of deprivation of liberty; and to improve detention conditions in all regions, including for children in pretrial custody.

22. In the light of reports that child abuse, neglect and violence persisted in the State Party, further information would be welcome on the measures taken or planned to protect children from all forms of violence and to ensure their effective protection from abuse, neglect and all forms of exploitation, whether on the part of educational institutions, care providers, peers or

third parties. It would be appreciated if the delegation could indicate how the State Party was strengthening efforts to prevent the sexual abuse of children and prosecute the perpetrators in such cases, and what steps were being taken to rehabilitate victims of such abuse and reintegrate them into society. Reports indicated that, despite the minimum legal age for marriage being 18 years, in practice child marriage between the ages of 12 and 14 years remained prevalent in Roma communities. Information on the measures being taken to prevent early marriage, particularly in Roma communities, through culturally sensitive interventions, support to keep at-risk girls in school, and improved access to sexual and reproductive health education and services would therefore be welcome.

23. It would also be useful to learn what measures would be taken to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities were meaningfully consulted and could participate effectively in decision-making processes, and to ensure equal access for such persons to public positions at all levels, in view of reports that the representation of such groups in elected bodies and public administration remained limited. Information would be welcome on any plans to introduce legislation ensuring linguistic rights, with a view to enhancing access to public services in minority languages, particularly in the justice, public information and healthcare sectors, in the light of concerns about failures to ensure reasonable accommodation of language needs. He also wished to know how the State Party intended to ensure adequate and sustainable financial allocations for Roma inclusion policies, including through the provision of dedicated budgets at the local level to enable Roma mediators to conduct field visits and outreach activities.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

24. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that deinstitutionalization was one of the priorities set out in the draft national programme on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. The public authorities were collaborating with local social assistance services and other public and private providers to develop community-based social services aimed at deinstitutionalization and social inclusion. Procedures were in place to assess the needs of beneficiaries, develop appropriate services and provide support for integration into the community. Currently, there were 29 protected housing units, of which 21 were managed by the Highly Specialized Social Services Management Agency and 8 by the local social assistance services. There were also 16 community homes, 8 of which were managed by the aforementioned Agency and 8 by local social assistance services. Under the draft national programme, there were plans to extend those services and further promote the integration of persons with disabilities into the community. Over MDL 11 million had been allocated for community home services and over MDL 2.7 million for protected housing units. Those capacities were to be further extended as part of ongoing reform of the social assistance sector, which aimed to improve the provision, coordination and standardization of high-quality social services in order to eliminate regional inequalities.

25. As part of reform efforts, measures were also being taken to establish a more professional and capable social workforce. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection had established a specialized unit for capacity-building in the field of social assistance and, in 2025, more than 15,000 professionals had participated in training. Efforts had been made to improve living conditions in residential institutions, with more than MDL 56 million invested to that end in recent years. In the residential institutions managed by the Highly Specialized Social Services Management Agency, sleeping conditions had been improved and spaces reorganized to provide a safer, friendlier environment. All residential buildings were equipped with accessibility ramps and had recreational areas and libraries.

26. Under Law No. 140/2013, on the special protection of children separated from their parents, when a child was identified as being at risk, an intersectoral cooperation mechanism for case management based on the child's needs was activated. Where the child concerned had intellectual disabilities, mental health specialists provided the expertise necessary to identify appropriate measures. Where it was suspected or confirmed that a child was at risk, the local guardianship authority was required to request a psychological assessment. Such assessments were conducted by qualified psychologists and were used to identify the optimal solution for the child. In late 2025, a new regulation and minimum quality standards on child and family psychological assistance and rehabilitation services had been approved to ensure that beneficiaries of such assistance received quality care. In an evaluation carried out in

2024, the online portal for the court system had been found fully compliant with accessibility standards. An evaluation of the accessibility of the websites of courts and other justice institutions had also been carried out in 2024.

27. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, pursuant to the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in the cases mentioned by the Committee, the Government had adopted Law No. 114/2024 on mental health and well-being, establishing a system for the protection of mental health that ensured quality of life and supported the growth and development of persons affected. All interventions in the field of mental health were carried out on the basis of free, prior and informed consent. Consent documents must be signed by the person concerned and his or her legal representative and must set out the treatment measures envisaged. A second medical opinion on the need for involuntary hospitalization or treatment could be requested from an independent psychiatric specialist.

28. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, at the Codru clinical psychiatric hospital on 27 October 2022, around 60 patients had barricaded themselves into a wing of the hospital, set fire to mattresses and furniture and destroyed closed-circuit television cameras. Special police officers had been dispatched. As negotiations had failed, the local authorities had intervened, together with firefighters; however, as the firefighters had been unable to enter the premises, the public prosecutor had requested police intervention. The actions of the police officers concerned had been lawful. The Prosecutor's Office had subsequently initiated criminal proceedings which, after the necessary evidence had been gathered, had been dismissed.

29. The main amendments made to Law No. 270/2008 concerned access to the asylum procedure for vulnerable groups and persons with specific needs. New definitions of "material reception conditions" and "applicant with specific needs" had been established, and provisions on material conditions in reception centres and access to medical services for vulnerable applicants had been introduced. National rules on fast-track procedures for examining asylum applications had been brought into line with European Union rules, in particular regarding the fast-track examination of unfounded applications and applications lodged by persons allegedly posing a danger to national security or public order. The concepts of "safe country of origin" and "safe third country" had also been introduced into national law.

30. On 18 February 2026, the Government had approved a draft law on the admission, stay and monitoring of foreigners, under which persons who posed a threat to national security would be identified in a timely manner, and foreigners would be required to prove that they had sufficient means to support themselves in order to obtain the right to stay. The draft law would introduce clear rules for various categories of stay, provide for the digitalization of migration procedures and introduce a single residence card to simplify interaction with the authorities and reduce bureaucracy. It would support sectors of the economy facing staff shortages by facilitating short-term labour mobility. It was expected to be adopted by the parliament and to enter into force in June 2027.

31. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the Republic of Moldova was a Party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The principles of those conventions would be reflected in the aforementioned draft law, which would expressly establish the right of children born in the Republic of Moldova to stateless persons, and in specific cases to foreign parents, to acquire citizenship. With regard to citizenship through recognition, the Government considered that the draft law would adequately address the cases of the categories of resident mentioned. Studies had been carried out on the impact of the draft law on persons who might be eligible for recognition-based pathways to citizenship.

32. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that not all suspected victims of trafficking accepted State assistance, for reasons such as fear, lack of trust in institutions and stigma. Assistance required the person's consent and an individual needs assessment. Some received informal support without entering the State support system. In some cases, intervention was limited to information, counselling or referral. There were six State-funded shelters for victims of trafficking, run at an average cost of around MDL 400 per beneficiary

per day. Some €900,000 in public resources were allocated annually to the shelters, which also provided protection, counselling and integration services to victims of violence and children at risk.

33. Victims could initially be accommodated for 30 days, extendable for up to six months for the duration of criminal proceedings or where there was a risk to the victim's life or health. Pregnant women could be accommodated for up to one year. Moreover, revised regulations on the management of shelters and updated minimum quality standards had been adopted. In line with a victim-centred approach, emphasis was placed on post-shelter monitoring, to prevent revictimization and support sustainable reintegration. Services included individualized support to facilitate access to vocational training and social integration services.

34. Victims of trafficking in persons also benefited from special employment measures, with a view to strengthening their economic empowerment, reducing the risk of re-trafficking and supporting long-term independence. For example, employers who hired a victim of trafficking were eligible for State subsidies. National guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking had been applied since 2012; they were used by professionals across sectors to facilitate early identification and referral. Cross-sectoral training on combating trafficking in persons was organized for relevant professionals nationwide.

35. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, under Law No. 198/2007, victims of trafficking were expressly designated as beneficiaries of State-guaranteed legal aid. According to the National Legal Aid Council, 72 victims of trafficking had benefited from legal aid in 2025. The Ministry of Justice was preparing a draft law to amend Law No. 137/2016, on the rehabilitation of victims of crimes, to provide for temporary access to psychological support and legal counselling on the basis of self-declaration, in order to address urgent needs and ensure access to protection irrespective of the person's status in criminal proceedings.

36. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, in 2025, 108 victims of trafficking in persons had been identified – 83 adults and 25 children. Of those 25 children, the State had identified 21 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, 3 for labour exploitation and 1 for illegal adoption. To prevent revictimization, child victims were heard by the investigating judge under special conditions. The value of assets traced in financial investigations conducted in cases concerning trafficking in persons, child trafficking, the organization of illegal immigration and related crimes in 2025 amounted to over €795,000. Over the reporting period, the courts had handed down 125 sentences for trafficking in persons, including 1 life sentence and 48 other prison sentences.

37. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the State had taken steps to improve conditions of detention and align penitentiary practice with international human rights standards, including significant investment in new infrastructure and refurbishment. A new methodology for calculating the maximum capacity of detention facilities, awaiting approval, would ensure a more accurate assessment to prevent overcrowding. The detainee population had fallen by 29% from 2015 to 2025, although an 8% increase had been recorded in 2025, attributable primarily to the tightening of parole eligibility for persons concerned by amnesty arrangements, together with a 10% rise in pretrial admissions. The total prison population remained below the ceiling of 6,622, with overcrowding concentrated in two prisons.

38. Adequate staffing remained an important component of improving detention conditions. At the end of 2025, fewer vacant positions had been recorded than in 2023 and 2024. To ensure a more equitable distribution of personnel and strengthen operational capacity and security, the prison authorities had developed a draft staffing standard, which would set objective criteria for determining personnel needs in each facility. Through a strategic partnership with the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, mandatory in-service training, including on the application of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), had been strengthened so as to shift institutional culture from mere surveillance to a rights-based approach.

39. Under Government Decision No. 417 of 2024, clear procedures had been introduced for the release of seriously ill detainees on medical grounds, under which five persons had

been released in 2024. A mental health programme had been rolled out in prisons, ensuring specialized support from the outset of detention. Terminally ill prisoners had access to community-based palliative care. The health personnel coverage rate had reached approximately 82% in 2025. Under Government Decision No. 228 of 2024, updated minimum standards had been established for food and essential hygiene items, setting minimum daily food rations and rules on food substitution to ensure a balanced diet consistent with prisoners' nutritional needs. In 2025, prison medical staff had carried out around 192,000 consultations, and almost 2,000 prisoners had been transferred to public hospitals for specialized care.

40. Combating the influence of the criminal subculture in detention facilities remained a strategic priority. Measures to reduce tension and prevent violence included redistributing detainees to prevent overcrowding, improving detention conditions and providing training for staff. An educational community programme that had been piloted with positive results was to be extended. Complaint mechanisms under the current legal framework included a petitions register managed by the prison authorities and a separate online register managed by the Prosecutor General's Office. In 2025, 3,188 complaints had been filed, of which 1,859 had been admitted by the courts.

41. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that pre-vetting was the evaluation of candidates for the Superior Council of Magistracy and the Superior Council of Prosecutors, while full vetting was the extraordinary evaluation of sitting judges and prosecutors and of candidates for those positions. Those processes were governed by three laws that had been the subject of consultations with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), whose recommendations had been incorporated. The laws had been challenged before the Constitutional Court, which had ruled them constitutional, although certain issues remained pending. There was no question of a lack of safeguards in the process itself.

42. No politician was involved in the pre-vetting or full vetting processes. Two assessment and evaluation commissions carried out that work; they were composed of experts, including judges and prosecutors. The commissions prepared reports recommending either approval or rejection of a candidate, which were then submitted to the Superior Council of Magistracy or the Superior Council of Prosecutors. The councils were not composed of politicians: half of their members were judges or prosecutors and the other half were representatives of civil society. A council could reject a report and refer it back to the relevant commission. Candidates or judges who disagreed with the outcome of the process could apply to the Supreme Court of Justice. Public confidence in the judicial system had increased following the introduction of the pre-vetting and vetting processes.

43. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the bodies authorized to decide on exemption from or deferral of military and civil service were the recruitment and conscription commissions, mixed civil-military commissions designed to balance military and civilian expertise. Members were not appointed directly by the armed forces but by decision of the relevant second-level local authority. Although the commissions included military personnel, independence from the military hierarchy was guaranteed by the fact that their decisions were coordinated by a public administration representative, rather than a military commander, and were based on a multidisciplinary examination covering medical, social and professional aspects. The most important safeguard was the right of appeal: any decision on conscription or exemption could be contested before the relevant commission or directly before a court within 10 days, and execution of the decision was automatically suspended pending a final decision by an independent judge.

44. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that surveillance procedures were regulated by Law No. 179/2023 on counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence activity, which had been drafted in the light of recommendations from the Venice Commission. The Law provided for judicial verification of legality both before and after interception measures had been authorized. Authorization was granted only on the basis of a judicial mandate issued by an appellate court judge, following a request from the Director of the Intelligence and Security Service. The records and materials gathered were transmitted promptly to the same judge, who verified whether the procedure had been conducted lawfully and either confirmed

the legality of the measure by issuing an ordinance or declared the results of the surveillance measure unlawful and referred the case to the Prosecutor General's Office for investigation.

45. Moreover, article 20 of Law No. 179/2023 required the Intelligence and Security Service to inform persons concerned by a surveillance measure, within five days, that the measure had been carried out. The activities of the Service were overseen by a subcommittee of the parliamentary Committee on National Security, Defence and Public Order. No complaints concerning rights violations in the context of surveillance had been received recently. Surveillance could not be conducted in respect of a journalist's sources or information shared in a lawyer-client relationship. The Centre for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation had no power to suspend or withdraw media licences; such measures could be ordered only by the Audiovisual Council.

46. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that article 118 (1) of the Criminal Code had been amended to strengthen sanctions for the intentional obstruction of mass media activity and the intimidation of journalists, so as to align national standards more closely with international press-freedom standards and provide more effective safeguards against pressure and digital interference targeting journalists in connection with their professional duties. The Contravention Code had also been amended to include new provisions on the insulting of journalists and interference with mass media activity. There were plans to adopt a new comprehensive law on mass media in order to replace outdated legislation and modernize the regulatory framework by emphasizing transparency, protection against interference, clear rules for platforms, safeguards for freedom of expression and measures to address disinformation and hybrid threats. The Ministry of Justice was working on a draft law to combat strategic litigation against public participation to ensure the swift examination of manifestly unfounded claims and provide effective remedies against abusive proceedings aimed at suppressing public participation. The authorities were also working on an institutional action plan on journalist security for 2026–2027 to establish a rapid-response mechanism, improve coordination among national institutions responsible for journalist safety, strengthen continuous training of all relevant actors and improve the protection of journalists during public gatherings.

47. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that Law No. 302/2025, on the organization and conduct of public events, had been drawn up by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and would enter into force on 1 July 2026. It addressed matters such as the obligations of event organizers and public authorities. Its purpose was to establish a coherent, predictable and unitary normative framework for public events not regulated by Law No. 26/2008 on assemblies – including cultural, artistic, religious, sporting or commercial events – and it provided for the introduction of a standardized notification mechanism for public events and the classification of such events according to the level of risk that they were estimated to pose: low, medium or high. The role of the police was to maintain public order and ensure that the right of peaceful assembly was exercised in strict accordance with Ministry of Internal Affairs Order No. 626/2025, which related to the planning, organization and conduct of activities to maintain, ensure and restore public order and security.

48. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the principle that the detention of minors should be a measure of last resort and should be imposed for the shortest appropriate period was reflected in the country's legislation. According to figures from November 2025, a total of 29 minors were in detention, with 14 in pretrial detention and 15 serving custodial sentences. Juveniles deprived of liberty were primarily accommodated at Penitentiary No. 10, a specialized detention facility designed for minors and young persons. The separation of minor and adult detainees was ensured. Minors were provided with access to education in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research. Vocational training was made available to them within the institution by a vocational school in Chisinau and NGOs. Detainees participated in structured psychological and behavioural programmes. An individual rehabilitation plan was developed for each juvenile detainee.

49. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he wished to know what steps the State Party was taking to expand mediation opportunities, develop community-based alternatives to detention and child-friendly non-judicial complaint mechanisms and ensure that children in the juvenile justice system had access to legal services and were separated from adults in all places of deprivation of liberty. He would like to know what the State Party was doing to prevent and

prosecute cases of child sexual abuse and to address the child marriages that reportedly continued to take place in Roma communities. It would be helpful to have data on reported cases of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes and any investigations, prosecutions and penalties resulting from such reports.

50. **Mr. Korkelia** said that he would like to know how many requests for alternative civilian service had been denied during the reporting period, what the main reasons for the denials had been, whether any complaints or appeals had been filed as a result and whether alternative civilian service was available to all categories of conscientious objectors.

51. **Mr. Šimonović** asked what steps the State Party was taking to prevent online recruitment for the purposes of trafficking in persons and to protect vulnerable groups in that context, including through cross-border cooperation.

52. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she wished to know why, in the delegation's view, civil society organizations had expressed concerns about Law No. 302/2025 and whether political events were outside the scope of that law and would continue to be governed by Law No. 26/2008. It would be helpful to know what role Kantar Media, the entity responsible for measuring audience share for the period 2024–2029, would play in countering disinformation and propaganda.

53. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that political events were covered by Law No. 26/2008. He was not aware that civil society had expressed any concerns about Law No. 302/2025.

54. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that Law No. 302/2025 did not apply to events regulated by Law No. 26/2008. Under Law No. 26/2008, the police had an obligation to protect participants in peaceful gatherings, including in cases where there was a risk of disruption to public order. The purpose of Law No. 302/2025 was to further clarify the situation, to regulate the involvement of specialized services and to establish the role of security steward.

55. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that national campaigns had been conducted to raise awareness of violence against children. Two centres applying the *barnahus* model were already in operation and a third was to open in 2027. In addition, 200 child protection specialists had been hired at the local level, and violence protection measures would be included in an upcoming national plan for the implementation of the European Child Guarantee.

56. In 2024, labour inspectors had conducted 12 announced and 6 unannounced visits to private employment agencies involved in the placement of Moldovan citizens abroad to verify compliance with the regulatory framework. In 2025, six announced and three unannounced inspections had been conducted to assess compliance with the regulatory framework, and there had been 15 unannounced inspections to verify compliance with licensing conditions. Reports had been issued following the identification of instances of undeclared work.

57. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that there were 12 members of national minorities serving on local councils, and 3 in the national Government. Persons seeking employment in central government bodies must learn Romanian. The Government provided courses in official languages to minorities living in the country and was implementing measures to educate children from minorities, particularly the Gagauz, Russian and Ukrainian minorities, in their own language.

58. The Constitution provided for judicial proceedings to be conducted in Romanian. Persons who did not speak Romanian were entitled to the assistance of an interpreter or a translator. In Gagauzia, proceedings could be conducted in another language at the request of the parties. The number of and budget for mediators in Roma communities, whom the local councils were responsible for hiring, had been increasing.

59. Children were required by law to be separated from adults both in penitentiaries and while in police custody. Alternative sentencing and probation programmes were available to minors in conflict with the law. Separate rooms were available for the taking of statements, with the assistance of a psychologist, from child witnesses.

60. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that amendments to the Criminal Code and Contravention Code had established harsher penalties for bias-motivated crimes relating to race, colour, ethnicity, national or social origin, citizenship, sex, gender, language, religion, political opinion, gender identity, sexual orientation, health, age, disability or marital status. The Prosecutor General's Office had implemented methodological instructions on hate crime investigations and trials. The mechanism provided for under the National Programme on Ensuring Respect for Human Rights to support the efforts of law enforcement authorities in collecting data on incitement to discrimination, hate speech and offences motivated by prejudice would be implemented in 2026. In addition, a new field would be introduced in the automated information system for the recording of contraventions to allow for data on contraventions related to hate speech or incitement to discrimination to be disaggregated.

61. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was the authority with primary responsibility for child protection. In 2025, under a framework for inter-agency cooperation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had made referrals for 1,652 cases involving children in conflict with the law, of whom 1,319 were boys and 333 were girls. A total of 902 children had been placed in foster care institutions following complaints that had been made, and 2,675 home visits had been conducted by multidisciplinary teams comprising representatives of social services and the education and health sectors.

62. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that he wished to thank the Committee for the honest and challenging dialogue. His Government would do its utmost to abide by the requirements of the Covenant and the Committee's recommendations.

63. **The Chair** said that, over the course of the dialogue, the Committee had noted positive developments in the implementation of the Covenant, including ongoing efforts to strengthen the anti-corruption framework, measures to improve oversight of detention conditions and initiatives to strengthen the protection of victims of domestic violence and promote gender equality. It had also raised matters of concern, such as the ongoing human rights challenges in Transnistria and issues relating to freedom of expression and discrimination against vulnerable groups. Any additional information submitted by the delegation within the following two working days would help the Committee make a more comprehensive assessment and would be reflected in its concluding observations.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.