



CENTRUL DE DREPT
AL FEMEILOR



Republic of Moldova's Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Gender-Based Violence against Women

Shadow Report

Submitted by **The Advocates for Human Rights**

a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996
and

Centrul de Drept al Femeilor (CDF)

for the 145th Session of the Human Rights Committee

2 March–19 March 2026

Submitted 2 February 2026

The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact-finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. The Advocates works to end violence against women by changing laws and their implementation, as well as through monitoring and documentation, trainings, and advocacy.

Centrul de Drept al Femeilor (CDF; Women's Law Center) is a non-governmental organization registered in 2009 and established by a group of women lawyers from the Republic of Moldova to ensure that a gender perspective is present both during the process of drafting and applying the law. CDF advocates for equal status for women and men in public life and within the family. CDF's mission is to contribute to the promotion of gender equality and to the prevention and combating of gender-based violence in the Republic of Moldova by raising awareness of public opinion, strengthening the capacities of actors in the field, offering holistic services for assistance and protection of women, research and analysis, monitoring of legislation and its alignment with international standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report delineates critical concerns regarding the Republic of Moldova’s compliance with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Limitations in the legislative framework pertaining to various forms of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) not only fail to offer sufficient legal protection, but create compounding and ever-expanding gaps in equal access to rights under the ICCPR for women and girls in all their diversity throughout the State Party. Access to justice and support services remain particularly vulnerable to institutional weaknesses and to insufficient allocation of resources to ensure the right to substantive gender equality. Social barriers, gender stereotypes, and insufficient data collection on the part of the State Party exacerbate women’s exposure to GBVAW as well as the capacity to take targeted preventative and responsive actions.
2. Building on experience from CDF, its partners, and its beneficiaries, this report provides concrete evidence of these shortcomings and respectfully implores the Human Rights Committee (“the Committee”) to issue robust and comprehensive recommendations to the Republic of Moldova to ensure victim-centered, gender-sensitive implementation of its obligations under the ICCPR.

Moldova fails to uphold its obligations under the ICCPR

I. Definition of and protection against domestic violence, sexual violence, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence in existing legislation

3. In its Fourth Periodic Report, the State Party delineated legislative progress to combat and punish “violence in the family,” emphasizing attention to psychological violence and complementary measures for law enforcement intervention in domestic violence cases.¹ It also explained improvements achieved under the National Strategy for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.² In addition, the State Party noted alignment of the domestic legal framework with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.³
4. GBVAW protections remain insufficient in the existing legal framework with significant gaps related to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) and trauma-informed, victim-informed protection and prevention measures related to GBVAW. Moreover, the Criminal Code⁴ and Contravention Code⁵ provide different legal standards in terms of severity, legal safeguards, and due diligence expectations, which often results

¹ Human Rights Committee, Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶58-62, 69.

² Human Rights Committee, Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶63.

³ Human Rights Committee, Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶237.

⁴ Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova, No. 985 of Apr. 18, 2002, as amended, §§ 145(2)(3), 201¹(1)–(3).

⁵ Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova, No. 218 of Oct. 24, 2008, as amended, §§ 78¹, 781.

in the misclassification of offenses,⁶ particularly for psychological abuse or minor physical harm.⁷ In 2024, there were 21 cases of women killed as a consequence of domestic violence; in none of these cases has the gender motive been identified or qualified as an aggravating factor.⁸

A. Technology-Facilitated Gender Based Violence

5. Recent legislative amendments partially acknowledge the use of technology in the commission of violence. The Law No. 45/2007, as amended in 2024, explicitly recognizes the digital dimension of violence, as ‘acts of violence may be committed by means of information technology and electronic communication’ as well as psychological violence committed “through the use of information technology and/or electronic communications.”⁹ Also, the 2025 revisions to Law no.45/2007 and the Criminal Code, which introduced a new offence of Stalking (Art. 169¹), and the Criminal Procedure Code, introduced new protection measures. Art. 215¹ establishes the obligation to remove the harmful content, and Art. 215² establishes the provisional barring of access to abusive data. The 2025 amended provisions will enter into force in February 2026 and their effective implementation is yet to be assessed. These provisions do not seem to provide a comprehensive, gender-sensitive framework addressing the specific dynamics, cumulative harm, and victim-centered protection needs associated with TFGBV. As a result, legal protection against TFGBV remains fragmented and dependent on indirect legal qualification.¹⁰ Victim-survivors are also dependent on the legal argument of their attorney and the judicial discretion of the court to obtain justice, protection, and remedies.¹¹

⁶ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶¶191-194.

⁷ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024), 13-16.

⁸ Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim’s Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2024*, by team of national experts (Chişinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, 2025),

⁹ Law No. 45 of 01.03.2007 on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Republic of Moldova), as amended by Law No. 231 of 31.07.2024, Art. 2: “psychological violence – causing mental suffering and/or tension, imposing will or control, intimidation, including through the use of information technology and/or electronic communications, manifested by acts of: swearing; insult; mockery; nickname; blackmail; demonstrative destruction of objects; involvement in personal life; jealousy; solitary confinement, including in the family home; isolation from friends, community; prohibition of contacting other family members, including creating impediments to the meeting of parents and children; deprivation of access to information; banning, creating impediments or controlling access to social networks; prohibition and/or creation of impediments in professional achievement or following the study program/professional training program; threat of death or bodily harm; threat of spreading, without consent, information about intimate, private and/or family life; persecution; deprivation of identity documents; ostentatious display of weapons or hitting of domestic animals; other acts with similar effect”; Art. 2. “digital dimension of violence - acts of violence may be committed by means of information technology and electronic communication”.

¹⁰ Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ştefan Vodă districts and Chişinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024).

¹¹ Republic of Moldova, Parliament, Law No. 45 of Mar. 1, 2007, on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Official Gazette No. 55–56 art. 178, as amended by LP231 of Aug. 15, 2024, MO355–357/15.08.24 art. 561, Art. 13(2¹).

B. Victim-centered, trauma-informed GBV prevention and response

6. Although Law No. 45/2007 is intended to capture the experiences of victim-survivors, its interpretation and application insufficiently protect and often creates loopholes that facilitate the perpetuation of violence. Despite the law defining family members as people living together and separately,¹² the *Vieru Case* illustrated how the removal of a perpetrator from a shared accommodation affects the consideration of the severity of the offense.¹³ Since the perpetrator was no longer living with the victim-survivor when the crime was committed, those violent acts were requalified as administrative offenses instead of criminal charges.¹⁴ Consequently, this case illustrates how the current application of the law weakens protection for victim-survivors by allowing acts of violence committed after the removal of a perpetrator to be treated as lesser offenses.¹⁵
7. The short validity period, lack of monitoring, and weak sanctions for the violations of protection orders and emergency restraining orders limit their effectiveness as protective measures.¹⁶ For example, in the district of Făleşti in 2023, despite an increase in domestic violence reports, the number of emergency restraining orders applied was relatively low in comparison to the number of registered cases,¹⁷ demonstrating a gap between formal legal provisions and actual protective measures. Interviews with law enforcement officials reveal that imposing restrictions on perpetrators is particularly challenging due to the lack of alternative housing or available perpetrator programs.¹⁸ As a result, police is unable to enforce protective orders effectively, as there are insufficient services to support the removal of perpetrators from the home.¹⁹ Given their awareness of the limited enforcement

¹² Law No. 45 of 01.03.2007 on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Republic of Moldova), as amended by Law No. 231 of 31.07.2024, Art. 3(2): “Family members, in the sense of this law, are: a) in the condition of cohabitation: persons in marriage, in divorce, under guardianship and conservatorship, in respect of whom a judicial protection measure has been instituted, their relatives, relatives, spouses of relatives, persons in relationships similar to those between spouses (cohabitation) or between parents and children; b) in the condition of living separately: persons who are married, divorced, their relatives, relatives, adopted children, persons under guardianship, in respect of whom a judicial protection measure has been instituted, persons who are or have been in relationships similar to those between spouses (cohabitation).” This Article was not affected by or introduced in the 2024 amendments to the Law.

¹³ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

¹⁴ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

¹⁵ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024), ¶¶ 85–88.

¹⁶ Council of Europe, Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 19-20; 32.

¹⁷ Council of Europe, Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), p.11.

¹⁸ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶95.

¹⁹ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶270.

and minimal and delayed punitive consequences, violators consciously breach protective orders, despite the use of electronic monitoring.²⁰

8. Legal provisions insufficiently address the continuum of violence,²¹ thereby granting judges broad discretion to dismiss or minimize GBVAW-related cases. When protection orders are violated, victim-survivors often face significant obstacles in pressing charges against perpetrators.²² Even when GBVAW cases proceed to criminal adjudication, charges are frequently reduced to lesser offenses or dropped altogether.²³
9. Evidentiary and procedural practices inadequately capture the cumulative nature of GBVAW, undermining accountability and access to justice for victim-survivors. Judicial authorities frequently treat incidents of violence as isolated events rather than as part of an ongoing pattern of abuse. Limitations in evidence collection further weaken judicial proceedings, as psychological abuse, stalking, harassment, and less severe bodily injury are frequently under-documented, while prior patterns of abuse are often disregarded. Courts rarely recognize repeated domestic violence or cumulative psychological harm as factors that heighten risk and warrant extended protective measures.²⁴ These shortcomings are exacerbated by investigative gaps, procedural barriers, the lack of free legal representation,²⁵ and an overreliance on forensic evidence, further limiting victim-survivors' access to justice.²⁶

10. Suggested recommendations:

- Align the legal standards found in the Criminal Code and Contravention Code in matters concerning GBVAW-related offenses.
- Ensure effective implementation of the new legislation that introduces the definition for TGFGV and measures aimed at removing harmful content.
- Strengthen the implementation of existing provisions on the Criminal Code and other related legislation regarding the charging and sentencing criteria for GBVAW-related offenses, and undertake legislative and other targeted measures to ensure that

²⁰ Council of Europe, Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 38-39.

²¹ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶217.

²² Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶247.

²³ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶217.

²⁴ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

²⁵ Written input to The Advocates for Human Rights, information on file with the authors (2025).

²⁶ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 14, 2023), ¶¶239–244

GBVAW-related offenses, especially domestic violence, are considered as serious offenses within the criminal justice system.

- Establish and implement training programs on GBVAW and gender stereotypes for frontline actors, including but not limited to law enforcement, judiciary, healthcare, and other social services on what constitutes GBVAW, its effects, and how to take a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to support victim-survivors.
- Revise evidentiary standards and judicial guidance to ensure recognition of repeated violence and cumulative harm in GBVAW-related cases and remove procedural barriers that restrict victim-survivors' access to justice.

II. Access to justice for victim-survivors of gender-based violence (List of Issues para. 10)

11. In its 2023 LOIPR, the Committee requested comprehensive information on the State Party's efforts to guarantee effective access to justice for individuals facing discrimination and violence, including minorities, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, refugees, and persons with disabilities.²⁷ This follows earlier recommendations urging the State Party to strengthen judicial independence, prevent interference with the administration of justice, and ensure equality before courts.²⁸ The Committee requested updates on efforts to guarantee prompt and impartial investigations into misogynistic attacks and domestic and sexual violence; to address barriers to reporting such abuses; and to ensure victim-survivors receive adequate remedies, protection measures, and information on their rights.²⁹
12. In its Fourth Periodic Report, the State Party noted various steps to strengthen justice-sector responses to domestic violence, including prosecutorial efforts to improve the quality and consistency of investigations and prosecutions of family violence, particularly psychological violence.³⁰ However, the report offers little detail on how courts ensure timely adjudication, enforcement of protection orders, or victim-sensitive procedures, despite acknowledging persistent challenges such as non-enforcement of judicial measures and insufficient specialist services for survivors.³¹ Overall, the information provided reflects ongoing gaps in ensuring effective judicial remedies and equitable access to justice for victim-survivors of domestic violence and violence against women (VAW).

A. Access to courts and judicial processes

13. The Moldovan judicial system faces profound and persistent challenges in ensuring timely and effective access to justice for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. Significant delays in processing cases, inconsistent enforcement of Protection Orders, and

²⁷ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to submission of the fourth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/QPR/4 (Aug. 30, 2023), ¶7.

²⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the third periodic report of the Republic of Moldova*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/CO/3 (Nov. 18, 2016), ¶30.

²⁹ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to submission of the fourth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/QPR/4 (Aug. 30, 2023), ¶¶7,10,14.

³⁰ Human Rights Committee, Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶59.

³¹ Human Rights Committee, Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶¶62-63.

procedural gaps severely undermine victim-survivors' rights to judicial remedies.³² Data indicates that only around 40% of criminal cases related to domestic violence were referred to courts at the beginning of 2024, highlighting systematic inefficiencies.³³ These delays are further aggravated in cases involving repeat offenses or prior complaints, leaving victim-survivors exposed to repeated incidents of violence while awaiting judicial intervention.³⁴

14. Victim-survivors' inability to access timely hearings contributes to continued victimization and diminishes public trust in judicial institutions. Reports from civil society indicate that judicial authorities often fail to proactively enforce protection orders and frequently issue them for short periods, up to 90 days prior to the recent amendment, even in cases of repeated breaches.³⁵ In 2025, a legislative amendment extended protection orders up to six months; the amendment will enter into force in February 2026. In the *Vieru* case, the perpetrator repeatedly committed violence against the victim-survivor despite multiple protection orders.³⁶ Courts issued fines as low as EUR 50 and considered the perpetrator's violations as administrative offenses rather than criminal acts, effectively enabling ongoing abuse.³⁷ Such patterns of reclassifying criminal charges to administrative offenses are indicative of a broader trend in Moldova where protective mechanisms are applied in a disconnected and non-cumulative manner, failing to reflect the severity and continuity of domestic violence.³⁸

B. Accountability, Enforcement, and Sanctions

15. Sentencing for domestic violence is often lenient, failing to reflect the severity of the offense. In many cases, perpetrators receive fines, or community work instead of custodial sentences, creating economic burdens without preventing recurrence of violence.³⁹ Despite legislative prohibition on imposing fines in domestic violence cases, fines are imposed in practice when police qualify a domestic violence case as verbal violence under the Contravention Code.⁴⁰ The *Vieru* case illustrates the systemic failures as the perpetrator repeatedly violated multiple protection orders over several years, and courts continuously

³² Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 14, 2023), ¶¶ 247, 250; 238

³³ Ministry of the Interior and Women's Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim's Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chişinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women's Law Centre, 2024), ¶15.

³⁴ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

³⁵ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024); Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ştefan Vodă districts and Chişinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Ţurcan-Donţu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 36.

³⁶ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

³⁷ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

³⁸ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶192.

³⁹ Sociopolis Consultancy and Women's Law Centre, *Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova*, by Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, Eleonora Grosu, and Igor Andrei (Chişinău: Bons Offices, 2024), 137.

⁴⁰ Information in file with the authors (2025).

treated these offenses as administrative violations with minimal fines, disregarding recidivism and prior patterns of abuse.⁴¹

16. Judicial handling of GBVAW-related cases is fragmented and marked by inconsistent approaches to investigation, prosecution, and punishment. Reporting, investigative, and prosecutorial processes are frequently influenced by patriarchal stereotypes, prejudice, and underestimation of psychological abuse.⁴² Despite reported improvements in legislation and institutional response to GBVAW, shortcomings contribute to re-victimization, harassment, and retraumatization of victim-survivors throughout judicial proceedings,⁴³ leading many to withdraw from formal proceedings as a means of avoiding further harm by the justice system.⁴⁴ Consequently, such procedures often result in reduced sentences for perpetrators without delivering adequate benefits or remedies to victim-survivors.⁴⁵
17. Monitoring mechanisms for offenders under probation or mandated counseling are limited,⁴⁶ particularly in rural areas where services are scarce.⁴⁷ Even when perpetrators are identified and court-ordered intervention measures are in place, follow-up is inconsistent.⁴⁸ The lack of offender rehabilitation programs further undermines accountability.⁴⁹ According to civil society, while courts can order offenders to attend rehabilitation programs, in practice, there is currently only one program located in northern Moldova.⁵⁰ Although the State has recognized the importance of such programs and has taken steps to introduce mandatory participation as part of probation and sentencing, only a very small proportion of offenders are actually referred to rehabilitative interventions.⁵¹ For example, in 2023 just about 4% of perpetrators on probation were directed towards

⁴¹ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024).

⁴² Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶57.

⁴³ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024), 15.

⁴⁴ United Nations Moldova, “Violence survivors’ lawyer: No woman should suffer in silence. Everyone deserves support and the chance to live a life of dignity and without fear,” accessed Jan. 8, 2026, <https://moldova.un.org/en/301601-violence-survivors%E2%80%99-lawyer-%E2%80%9Cno-woman-should-suffer-silence-everyone-deserves-support-and>

⁴⁵ Women’s Law Centre, National Analytical Study on Femicide, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 36-37.

⁴⁶ *Supra* ¶ 15.

⁴⁷ Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim’s Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chișinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, 2024), 46.

⁴⁸ Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim’s Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chișinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, 2024), 32.

⁴⁹ Sociopolis Consultancy and Women’s Law Centre, *Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova*, by Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, Eleonora Grosu, and Igor Andrei (Chișinău: Bons Offices, 2024), 137.

⁵⁰ Information on file with the authors (2025)

⁵¹ UNFPA Moldova, “Perpetrator Programmes Are an Important Element in Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence, ” accessed Jan. 10, 2026, https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Analysis%20of%20perpetrator%20programmes%20in%20Moldova_FIN.pdf

behavioral programs,⁵² highlighting a significant gap between legal frameworks and practical implementation. Additionally, probation services face capacity constraints, high staff turnover, and a limited number of available programs, often relying on scarce NGO services and with insufficient monitoring of participants' progress.⁵³ In the absence of effective and structured programs addressing violent behavior, non-custodial measures are less effective in reducing recidivism, allowing cycles of violence to persist.⁵⁴ Studies in multiple districts of Moldova demonstrate that even when psychological assessments are conducted—revealing for instance that a perpetrator is likely to re-offend—authorities rarely integrate the results into enforcement measures, resulting in minimal deterrence.⁵⁵

18. Existing legal and procedural frameworks fail to ensure effective access to compensation and restitution for victim-survivors. A survey revealed that men were willing to contribute to child upkeep (88%) and cover damages caused by violence (87%); however, these commitments are frequently not fulfilled.⁵⁶ While the legal framework allows for financial redress,⁵⁷ no effective mechanisms exist to monitor or ensure perpetrators fulfill court-ordered payment obligations.⁵⁸ This lack of accountability allows offenders to evade financial responsibility, leaving survivors without redress for damages or losses caused by violence.⁵⁹

C. Systemic and Institutional Barriers

19. Weak institutional infrastructure concerning GBVAW-related cases undermines the justice system's ability to prevent violence and protect victim-survivors. Data shows that police, courts, and social services often fail to maintain accurate records of domestic violence incidents or consistently monitor repeat offenders.⁶⁰ Investigations frequently ignore the cumulative nature of abuse, particularly psychological violence, stalking, or harassment, treating individual acts in isolation rather than as part of a broader pattern.⁶¹ This approach

⁵² UNFPA Moldova, "Perpetrator Programmes Are an Important Element in Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence," accessed Jan. 10, 2026, https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Analysis%20of%20perpetrator%20programmes%20in%20Moldova_FIN.pdf

⁵³ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶¶16-17.

⁵⁴ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024), 32.

⁵⁵ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024), 16.

⁵⁶ Sociopolis Consultancy and Women's Law Centre, *Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova*, by Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Angelina Zaporozjan-Pîrgari, Eleonora Grosu, and Igor Andrei (Chişinău: Bons Offices, 2024), p.25.

⁵⁷ Law No. 137/2016 on the *Rehabilitation of Victims of Crime* (Republic of Moldova, July 29, 2016), available at [Legis.md, https://antiviolența.md/en/legislation/](https://antiviolența.md/en/legislation/)

⁵⁸ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), .42.

⁵⁹ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), 16-17.

⁶⁰ Ministry of the Interior and Women's Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim's Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chişinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women's Law Centre, 2024), 32.

⁶¹ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶13.

diminishes judicial awareness of gendered patterns of violence, prevents risk assessments from informing protective measures, and allows systematic impunity to persist.

20. Protection of and access to children affected by domestic violence further increases vulnerability of women and their dependents through continued exposure to perpetrators. Legal requirements for extension of protection orders to children—particularly for child psychological assessment reports—are prohibitively costly and very time consuming to obtain, difficulties that are even greater in rural areas.⁶² This reduces access to comprehensive protection in cases of domestic violence.⁶³ Children are also required to continue visitation with abusive parents (most frequently, fathers), although no designated oversight or spaces are provided for in the law, effectively mandating maintained access for perpetrators to continue harming victim-survivors.⁶⁴
21. The absence of effective interagency coordination across prevention, investigation, and protection undermines comprehensive responses to violence. Despite mandated multidisciplinary mechanisms, these actors often operate independently, leading to inconsistent application of procedures, gaps in communication, and failure to share information.⁶⁵ A common example of these shortcomings is that, even when victim-survivors may report repeated incidents of violence, yet police and social workers frequently fail to conduct coordinated risk assessments or implement safety plans, leaving them exposed to escalating violence.⁶⁶
22. Social norms and discriminatory attitudes permeate institutions, shaping responses to GBVAW, and creating systemic barriers for marginalized groups. Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges frequently minimize domestic violence, discourage complaints, or frame incidents as family disputes rather than criminal acts.⁶⁷ This institutional bias is particularly pronounced against Roma women and other marginalized groups, who frequently encounter dismissive or culturally biased responses.⁶⁸ Many Roma women also lack official documentation, preventing them from accessing legal aid, filing

⁶² *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024); Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 33.

⁶³ Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 33.

⁶⁴ Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim’s Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chișinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, 2024), 21.

⁶⁵ Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim’s Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chișinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, 2024), 41.

⁶⁶ Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, *Fatality Review Report of Cases Examined by the Commission in Charge of Monitoring and Analysing of Domestic Violence Cases Resulting in Victim’s Death or Serious Bodily Integrity in 2023*, by team of national experts (Chișinău: Ministry of the Interior and Women’s Law Centre, 2024), 51-52.

⁶⁷ *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, App. No. 17106/18, Eur. Ct. H.R. (Nov. 19, 2024), p.12-13.

⁶⁸ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶¶ 13-14.

complaints, or receiving social protection.⁶⁹ These inequalities are further exacerbated by the geographic isolation of Roma settlements, inadequate transportation, and sparse judicial and social services.⁷⁰ Women with disabilities, elderly women, and refugees face comparable barriers, including inaccessible facilities, lack of interpreters, and assumptions that minimize or pathologize their complaints.⁷¹

23. Suggested recommendations:

- Strengthen the capacity and efficiency of the judicial system to ensure timely and effective access to justice for GBVAW victim-survivors. This should include measures to accelerate the processing of cases and prioritize cases involving repeat offenses.
- Ensure consistent enforcement of protection orders with violations prosecuted as criminal offenses rather than administrative matters. Extend the validity period of protection orders in accordance with the existing risks based on individual risk assessment and enhance the use of robust monitoring mechanisms to guarantee compliance.
- Ensure that sentencing GBVAW reflects the severity of the offense, taking into account recidivism and prior patterns of abuse. Sentencing guidelines should be revised to prevent leniency that perpetuates cycles of violence.
- Conduct comprehensive training for judges, prosecutors, and investigators on the dynamics of GBVAW, including psychological abuse, repeated offenses, and cumulative abuse.
- Establish and ensure sustainability of comprehensive monitoring and rehabilitation programs for offenders nationwide, with particular attention to rural areas. Authorities should ensure consistent follow-up, integrate psychological assessments into enforcement measures, and implement structured interventions that address violent behavior.
- Ensure that victim-survivors of GBVAW have effective access to compensation and restitution by establishing mechanisms to monitor and enforce court-order financial obligations and holding perpetrators accountable for non-payment.
- Strengthen institutional capacity to respond to GBVAW by improving record-keeping, monitoring repeat offenders, and ensuring that investigations and judicial processes recognize the cumulative and psychological dimensions of abuse.
- Ensure the best interests and safety of the child and the non-abusive parent is prioritized over parental contact where there is a risk of continued exposure of violence.

⁶⁹ VOICE & HIAS, *Gender-based violence in the Republic of Moldova in the context of the humanitarian crisis produced by the war in Ukraine: Assessment Report* (Chişinău: VOICE & HIAS, Sept. 2023), 6–7.

⁷⁰ Millennium DPI Partners, *Good Practices in Facilitating Access to Justice in Moldova* (Chişinău: Council of Europe, 2022) by Arina Țurcan-Donțu, 13.

⁷¹ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶¶13-14.

- Establish effective interagency coordination mechanisms for the prevention, investigation, and protection of GBVAW. This should include clear protocols for information sharing, joint risk assessments, and the implementation of safety plans.
- Address systemic discrimination and barriers faced by marginalized groups in accessing justice and protection from GBVAW. Special attention should be given to Roma women, women with disabilities, elderly women, and refugees.

III. Access to services for victim-survivors of gender-based violence

24. In the 2023 LOIPR, the Committee requested information from the State Party regarding the availability of protective means, including shelters and support services, for victim-survivors of violence against women.⁷² This builds on the Committee’s recommendation for the State Party to establish and roll out effective means of protection as part of a comprehensive strategy addressing violence against women.⁷³
25. In its Fourth Period Report, the State Party elaborated on the extensive training implemented with authorities and increased efforts at prosecution and punishment of violence in the family.⁷⁴ However, information on extension of service provision was limited, only describing protection assistance available in Chişinău.⁷⁵ The State Party acknowledged that gaps remain due to insufficient funding and scarcity in specialized services.⁷⁶ The data provided on assistance and protection of victim-survivors of domestic violence notably lacked disaggregation on location, the victim-survivor’s age and gender, and the relation between perpetrator and victim-survivor.⁷⁷

A. Legal Services

26. Geographic and infrastructural barriers exacerbate the challenges victim-survivors face when seeking justice and services. Throughout the country, courts and specialized GBV services are concentrated in urban centers, leaving rural populations with limited access to justice.⁷⁸ Women in rural areas often cannot travel to courts for hearings due to financial dependence on their abuser, lack of transportation, or family responsibilities, further restricting access to protective measures.⁷⁹ These gaps are compounded by patriarchal

⁷² Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to submission of the fourth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/QPR/4 (Aug. 30, 2023), ¶10.

⁷³ Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the third periodic report of the Republic of Moldova*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/CO/3 (Nov. 18, 2016), ¶16.

⁷⁴ Human Rights Committee, *Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶59.

⁷⁵ Human Rights Committee, *Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶61.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Committee, *Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶63.

⁷⁷ Human Rights Committee, *Fourth periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2024*, UN. Doc. CCPR/C/MDA/4 (Apr. 28, 2025), ¶65.

⁷⁸ Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Făleşti, Ştefan Vodă districts and Chişinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Ţurcan-Donţu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 22.

⁷⁹ Women’s Law Centre, *National Analytical Study on Femicide*, by Arina Ţurcan-Donţu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chişinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 23.

social norms that discourage reporting and normalize domestic violence, particularly in rural communities where gender stereotypes continue to dictate power dynamics.⁸⁰

27. Public awareness of the right to access legal support and how to obtain the assistance of an attorney remains scarce,⁸¹ particularly in rural areas. These knowledge gaps are compounded by the absence of specialists capable of offering primary legal counseling outside urban centers.⁸² These structural deficiencies contribute to the heightened vulnerability, as reflected in recent data indicating that approximately 80% of femicide cases occur in rural areas.⁸³ This trend suggests that underdeveloped legal infrastructure and limited access to legal remedies foster conditions of impunity that enable continued violence against women.
28. Fear of retaliation and social stigma—combined with knowledge gaps and lack of legal literacy—significantly restrict women’s access to formal legal remedies.⁸⁴ Gender stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes are widespread, contributing to underreporting and inconsistent compliance with judicial measures.⁸⁵ Surveys indicate some improvement in attitudes toward compliance with family-related orders—such as willingness to participate in counseling (73% in 2024 vs. 65% in 2015) and respect for visitation rights (85% in 2024 vs. 76% in 2015)—yet these changes are not consistently implemented at the practical level, limiting their protective effect.⁸⁶

B. Specialized Services for Domestic Violence and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence

29. Frequently, due to high tolerance towards GBVAW within society,⁸⁷ victim-survivors do not report incidents of domestic violence to local social welfare services or local authorities as part of seeking protective services, instead focusing primarily if not exclusively on criminal proceedings.⁸⁸ Police prioritization of only physical forms of violence deters victim-survivors from additional reporting and seeking specialized support, including

⁸⁰ Women’s Law Centre, National Analytical Study on Femicide, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 23.

⁸¹ Women’s Law Centre, National Analytical Study on Femicide, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 36.

⁸² Women’s Law Centre, National Analytical Study on Femicide, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 17.

⁸³ Women’s Law Centre, *National Analytical Study on Femicide*, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 23.

⁸⁴ Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Fălești, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), p.22; Women’s Law Centre, National Analytical Study on Femicide, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women’s Law Centre, March 2022), 32.

⁸⁵ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶57.

⁸⁶ Sociopolis Consultancy and Women’s Law Centre, *Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova*, by Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, Eleonora Grosu, and Igor Andrei (Chișinău: Bons Offices, 2024), 25.

⁸⁷ In 2024, 23% of men consider that there are moments when a woman should be beaten, compared to 41% in 2015, Sociopolis Consultancy and Women’s Law Centre, *Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova*, by Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, Eleonora Grosu, and Igor Andrei (Chișinău: Bons Offices, 2024), 45.

⁸⁸ Council of Europe, *Evaluating the response of the criminal justice system to cases of domestic violence in Cahul, Fălești, Ștefan Vodă districts and Chișinău municipality*, by Iurie Perevoznic & Arina Țurcan-Donțu (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Nov. 2024), 12.

beyond what is available through law enforcement agencies.⁸⁹ These patterns demonstrate how State treatment of GBVAW negatively impacts protection seeking behavior beyond prosecutorial means.

30. Insufficient access to continuous psychological, economic, or social services leaves many victim-survivors dependent on their abuser. Although support centers and hotlines exist in some parts of Moldova, they are often inadequately promoted and not disseminated through widely used information channels.⁹⁰ Limited access to specialized services, particularly in rural areas, significantly increases the risk and severity of GBVAW.⁹¹ Whether this dependence is financial or emotional, the absence of timely and effective State-provided intervention and assistance measures makes it increasingly difficult for victim-survivors' abusive households or safely separate from their perpetrator.⁹² This gap reflects the State's failure to provide enforceable, effective support measures that enable victim-survivors to achieve safety and independence.
31. Women belonging to certain groups face barriers in accessing shelters, including women with disabilities—particularly those with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities—as well as women with substance use disorders, who often encounter difficulties in admission due to the absence of shelter facilities adequately adapted to meet their needs.⁹³

32. Suggested recommendations:

- Harmonize data collection practices across State entities to ensure disaggregation of case information by location, age, gender, and relation between perpetrator and victim.
- Ensure equitable access to justice for rural and geographically isolated communities by expanding the presence of courts, specialized GBV services, and legal aid outside urban centers. Measures include providing transportation support and remote or mobile hearings.
- Design and conduct social and awareness raising campaigns that improve understanding of rights to access support and services for victim-survivors of GBV regardless of if criminal proceedings have been initiated.
- Implement awareness-raising campaigns targeting the public, community leaders, and judicial and law enforcement personnel to challenge gender stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes, and to promote respectful and rights-based responses to GBVAW.

⁸⁹ Women's Law Centre, *National Analytical Study on Femicide*, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women's Law Centre, March 2022), 27.

⁹⁰ Sociopolis Consultancy and Women's Law Centre, *Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova*, by Diana Cheianu-Andre, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, Eleonora Grosu, and Igor Andrei (Chișinău: Bons Offices, 2024), 137.

⁹¹ Women's Law Centre, *National Analytical Study on Femicide*, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women's Law Centre, March 2022), 23.

⁹² Women's Law Centre, *National Analytical Study on Femicide*, by Arina Țurcan-Donțu and Diana Cheianu-Andre (Chișinău, Moldova: Women's Law Centre, March 2022), 23.

⁹³ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report: Republic of Moldova* (GREVIO/Inf(2023)26) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 14 Nov. 2023), ¶140.

- Develop and implement accessible legal education programs, including for marginalized and rural women, to ensure all women understand their rights regarding GBVAW and the justice system. Programs should be designed to overcome linguistic, geographic, and social barriers.
- Ensure sustainable and adequately resourced funding to specialist support services, including across geographic regions, that provide continuous and accessible psychological, economic, and social support to victim-survivors of GBVAW, enabling them to leave abusive situations, including those facing multiple vulnerabilities, such as women with disabilities (including psychosocial and intellectual disabilities) and women with substance use disorders.
- Support and widely promote free hotlines for victim-survivors of GBV to inquire about and be referred to specialized protective services.