



Republic of Moldova: Prevent Violence and Address Short and Long-Term Impact of Recent Events

The protests in the Republic of Moldova following Parliamentary elections on 5 April 2009 have led to increasing confrontations and have escalated into violence with multiple people injured and physical destruction of state buildings and property. Further violence will have negative immediate and long-term consequences for all actors within Republic of Moldova and in the region, as well as to the democratic development of the country. Ensuring that the legitimate needs and issues of all actors and citizens of Moldova and fundamental rights and freedoms, human security, and the democratic process are respected and upheld, should be central to all stakeholders.

The Department of Peace Operations calls for effective steps to be taken by all concerned actors to support the integrity of the democratic process in the Republic of Moldova. This includes preventing further violence and upholding citizens' rights to democratic public expression, to peaceful public assembly and to transparent and fair elections. This also includes working to ensure that the legitimate concerns and issues of all citizens and participants to the elections are properly respected and addressed. It is encouraging and praiseworthy that leading civil society organizations, political figures, analysts and media in Moldova and international organizations such as the OSCE, UN, Council of Europe and EU have taken important and positive steps in calling for this, while citizens' organizations on the ground are working to re-assert a public space free from all forms of violence. We also recognize and appreciate the important and difficult role of the police in maintaining public security, their responsibility for respecting and supporting the legitimate right to peaceful assembly, and the restraint shown by the police at several points during the demonstrations in recent days. Protection of human security, prevention of violence both to property and to people, and support for peaceful and active engagement by citizens and responsible steps by all stakeholders to address the current situation are priorities.

The Department of Peace Operations proposes the following practical steps to de-escalate the situation and support the democratic process in the Republic of Moldova:

1. All stakeholders including protesters, political parties and police to proactively refrain from violence – ensure that a safe, pluralistic and democratic space is provided for all actors and citizens wishing to exercise their democratic rights including the right to peaceful public assembly
2. For the Government and Political Parties of the Republic of Moldova with the active participation of civil society and the support of the International Community to take steps to address legitimate issues and needs expressed by its citizens and to ensure the utmost respect for human rights and the democratic process
3. Government and International Agencies present in Moldova to provide support for civil society groups on the ground, citizens, media, analysts and others working to ensure the prevention of further violence
4. Diplomatic Missions present in Chisinau to make themselves available to engage in the capacity of mediators with all sides of the current confrontation if this is seen as relevant and appropriate by the parties themselves
5. Citizens and civil society organizations to work to ensure that the issues surrounding the elections and the democratic process in Moldova are dealt with through broad-based and peaceful citizens engagement and respect for the rights and perspectives of all the citizens of Moldova – working to ensure a pluralistic, open and democratic space for political participation
6. That freedom of movement of ordinary citizens be respected, both within Moldova and across its international borders
7. That due time and consideration, as well as a proper legal process be given to the cases which have been initiated by the office of the Prosecutor General of Moldova in relation to the events of 7 April 2009, and to take all necessary measures to ensure that full transparency and due process are followed in cases of arrest of citizens;
8. Governments of Neighbour States of Moldova to refrain from taking actions or making statements which may further escalate the situation, and to take all steps necessary to ensure this situation does not turn into an international misunderstanding and/or diplomatic confrontation;
9. A multi-stakeholder commission to be formed which will investigate allegations of electoral inconsistencies - which would include representatives of all Political Parties, and key Civil Society Organisations, and be coordinated by the Central Electoral Commission, with the full engagement of international electoral observers
10. All stakeholders recognize that there are a range of perspectives and support for different political parties in the Republic of Moldova, and that respect for this diversity and the political opinions of all citizens is central to an authentic democratic process. Efforts should be made by all actors not to demonize or delegitimize any parties or actors, but to support and sustain a broad-based democratic dialogue and active engagement by citizens and parties to address the key issues and challenges facing the country.

Government officials and spokespersons, the Presidency, Opposition parties and Youth organisers as well as broader Civil society and their allies internationally can affirm their commitment to democracy in Moldova by ensuring that the needs, concerns and issues of all Moldovan citizens are respectfully heard and addressed, that citizens' democratic participation and public democratic dialogue is encouraged and by refraining from aggressive or violent language threatening retribution or escalating the situation further.

The Department of Peace Operations suggests the following steps for dealing with the medium to longer-term impacts of current events:

- Civil Society, Political Parties and Government of the Republic of Moldova, should make active efforts to provide safe public space for all citizens and residents of Moldova, belonging to all ethnic groups and cultural orientations to voice their civic and political concerns, and their visions for a democratic, prosperous and equitable Moldova. The human security of all citizens and their opportunity to participate in the democratic life of the country are essential;
- Journalists and Mass Media in Republic of Moldova – including mainstream, alternative, and citizens journalism – and regionally should make all efforts to uphold their professional responsibilities for balanced, fair and non-partisan reporting on the facts and consequences of the events as well as possible solutions and constructive ways forward. Media plays an essential role in enabling accurate, transparent, and public discussion of the issues and challenges facing the country and should uphold this role responsibly;
- Political Parties and Government, in partnership with and accountable to Civil Society and citizens, should use this moment to stimulate efforts to further develop a democratic, rights-based, meritocratic society, with equal opportunity for all to participate in democratic processes, with a focus on reducing poverty and building equitable prosperity - a Moldova free of the fear of economic, political and cultural insecurity, and respecting and enabling the rights of all its citizens.

Department of Peace Operations Communiqué

Republic of Moldova: Prevent Violence and Address Short and Long-Term Impact of Recent Events

For further information or to speak to members of the Department of Peace Operations please contact:

- **Kai Brand-Jacobsen**
Director – Department of Peace Operations (DPO)
Telephone: +40742079716
E-mail: jacobsen@patrir.ro
- **Denis Matveev**
Director, Black Sea Regional Program, Department of Peace Operations (DPO)
Telephone: +40741610170
E-mail: denism@patrir.ro