

Republic of Moldova - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Moldova, officially the Republic of Moldova, is a landlocked country located in Eastern Europe. Upon dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic declared independence in 1991, thus becoming Moldova. Soon after independence, war broke out between Moldovan forces and the separatists in the Eastern region of Transnistria. A ceasefire was signed in 1992, but the territory's political status has remained unresolved.

The Moldovan economy is the poorest in Europe in per capita terms, and Moldova is also the least-visited European country.

Official language: Romanian

Ethnic groups: 75.1% Moldovan; 7% Romanian; 6.6% Ukrainian; 4.6% Gagauz; 4.1% Russian; 2.6% Other

Government: Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic

- President: Igor Dodon
- Prime Minister: Pavel Filip
- President of the Parliament: Andrian Candu

Death penalty: Abolitionist for all crimes

Population: 3.3 million

Life expectancy: 68.8 years

Under-5 mortality: 18 per 1000

Adult literacy: 99 percent²



Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)) ³



0.700 – High Human Development ⁴

According to the UNDP, Moldovans enjoyed a gross national income per capita of \$5,554, and could expect to have on average 11.6 years of schooling. Compared to other countries with comparable gross national income per capita, this is a high HDI.

Section 2: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Partially respected ⁵

There are no reports of the government or its agents committing arbitrary or unlawful killings in the past year. That being said, the government has still not held security force officials accountable for their crackdown on demonstrations in 2009, which resulted in three civilian deaths.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected ⁶

There are no reports of disappearances in Moldova.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Largely disrespected ⁷

There are many reports of physical abuse and torture by officials, mostly in detention facilities and psychiatric institutions. Of the 600 complaints of torture and inhumane treatment received yearly, the Prosecutor General's Office has only initiated criminal proceedings in 20% of the cases.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Partially respected ⁸

The constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, and also provides for the right of individuals to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest in court. However, authorities sometimes fail to respect these requirements.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Largely disrespected⁹

Lack of judicial independence remains a problem. There are numerous reports of bribery, intimidation, corruption, and selective justice within the judicial system. The public and the press often do not have access to court proceedings in high-profile cases.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected¹⁰

The constitution prohibits arbitrary interference with family, home, privacy, and correspondence unless it is necessary to do so for purposes of state security. There are no reports of the government failing to respect these prohibitions.

Section 3: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)¹¹



Score: 30.01, Rank: 81 / 180 – Partially controlled, limited or intimidated¹²

Journalistic independence and media ownership transparency remain major challenges. There are many reports of investigative journalists being intimidated after publishing articles on political figures. Furthermore, the law prohibits publishing of literature that “defames the state.”

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹³

There are no government restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Partially respected¹⁴

The government generally respects the right to peaceful assembly, with some exceptions. The constitution provides for freedom of association; however, the government has become increasingly unreceptive of NGOs who are critical of their actions.

Freedom of religion



Partially respected¹⁵

The constitution protects the right of individuals to practice their religion, but also recognizes the “exceptional importance” of Orthodox Christianity within Moldova. It is reported that the government gives preferential treatment to the Moldovan Orthodox Church.

Freedom of movement



Respected¹⁶

Moldovan law provides for freedom of internal movement, repatriation, foreign travel, and emigration. The government generally respects these rights.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Respected¹⁷

The government cooperates with UNHCR and other organizations in providing protection for refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons. Stateless persons and refugees may gain nationality through naturalization.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{18 19}



3 / 7 – Partly free²⁰

Individuals are generally free to engage in discussions of a political nature without fear of retribution. Academic and religious freedoms are both upheld by the constitution and are largely respected. The media environment, however, is highly polarized, often leading to self-censorship.

Section 4: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc.

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)²¹



3 / 7 – Partly free²²

The administration of elections is conducted professionally and impartially. Opposition parties have a reasonable chance in elections, and no minority groups experience barriers to political participation. That being said, economic oligarchs and elites underpin political party structures.

Section 5: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²³



Score: 31%, Rank: 122 / 180 – Highly corrupt²⁴

Officials frequently engage in corruption with impunity. The number of party defections among parliamentarians demonstrates the extent of corruption within the political structure. The National Integrity Authority, set up to deal with corruption, has been largely ineffective.

Section 6: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Partially respected²⁵

Domestic and international human rights groups generally operate without government restrictions. Government officials are largely cooperative and responsive to their findings. However, NGOs in the Transnistrian region do not investigate human rights violations due to fear of reprisal.

Section 7: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)²⁶



Listed – Trans-Dneister Slavs at risk²⁷

According to Minorities Rights Group International, Trans-Dneister Slavs who live in the Transnistrian region are at risk. Individuals in this region tend to be ethnically Ukrainian or Russian, and have called for Russian annexation of the territory.

Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)²⁸



Score: 74.0%, Rank: 30 / 144 – Somewhat unequal rights²⁹

Women are mostly employed in low-paying jobs, earning on average 12% less than men. Furthermore, the legal system in the country does not provide an effective remedy for victims of sexual abuse or harassment.

Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)³⁰



Score: 77.8%, Rank: 64 / 182 – Somewhat protected³¹

Child abuse remains a problem in Moldova. In the first half of the 2016/17 academic year, almost 6,000 cases of violence against children were reported. According to UNICEF, about 10% of children in Moldova are exposed to sexual abuse.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Partially respected³²

Human rights organizations have been highly critical of the country's guardianship system—a person with disabilities who is placed under guardianship loses all standing before the law. Furthermore, many employers fail to accommodate or avoid hiring persons with disabilities.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Largely disrespected³³

The Roma population in Moldova remains the most vulnerable minority group. Roma have lower levels of education, more limited access to healthcare, and higher rates of unemployment than the rest of the population. Anti-Semitism is also common in Moldovan media and discourse.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Largely disrespected^{34 35}

Discriminatory rhetoric is commonplace amongst religious and political leaders. Discrimination and abuse based on sexual orientation is common, and police are often reluctant to open cases against perpetrators. There are many reports of discrimination against transgender individuals.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Partially respected³⁶

The law provides workers the right to strike, bargain collectively, and form unions. However, it does not mandate the reinstatement of workers fired for union activity, nor does it allow for workers in essential services to strike. Employers generally respect freedom of association.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Largely disrespected³⁷

The Moldovan government has failed to effectively enforce laws that prohibit forced or compulsory labor. Inspections and remediation for forced labor have proven to be inadequate. Men and women are subject to labor trafficking to Russia and Turkey.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Partially respected³⁸

Child labor remains a problem due to authorities' inability to adequately enforce legal protections. Parents who work on farms often send their children to work in the fields. Furthermore, children left behind by parents who have emigrated to the EU also tend to be employed.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Largely disrespected³⁹

Government efforts to enforce requirements for minimum wage, work hours, and occupation health and safety standards are ineffective and insufficient.

Right to employment



4.1% - Reasonable unemployment⁴⁰

Moldova's unemployment rate is very low. The country is continuing its transition out of informal labor.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² "Republic of Moldova: Statistics." UNICEF, based on 2012 or the most recent year available. Accessed October 1, 2018.

https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/moldova_statistics.html

³ The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed October 1, 2018. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

⁴ "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, Moldova." UNDP, based on 2017 or the most recent year available. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

⁵ "Moldova 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277439.pdf>.

⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁷ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

⁸ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

⁹ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

¹⁰ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

¹¹ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹² "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2018. Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://rsf.org/en/moldova>.

¹³ "Moldova 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277439.pdf>.

¹⁴ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

¹⁵ "Moldova 2017 International Religious Freedoms Report." U.S. Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/281180.pdf>.

¹⁶ "Moldova 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277439.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

¹⁸ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁹ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²⁰ "Moldova." Freedom in the World 2018: Moldova. January 1, 2018. Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/moldova>.

²¹ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²² "Moldova." Freedom in the World 2018: Moldova. January 1, 2018. Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/moldova>.

²³ Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²⁴ "Moldova." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2018. Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://www.transparency.org/country/MDA>.

²⁵ "Moldova 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277439.pdf>.

²⁶ The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed October 1, 2018. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁷ "Moldova." Peoples under Threat, Minority Rights Group International. 2018, or most recent data. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://peoplesunderthreat.org/countries/moldova-republic-of/#background>.

²⁸ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

²⁹ "The Global Gender Gap Report." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf.

³⁰ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

³¹ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed October 1, 2018. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

³² "Moldova 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277439.pdf>.

³³ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁴ "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2018. Accessed October 1, 2018. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁵ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³⁶ "Moldova 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277439.pdf>.

³⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁴⁰ "Moldova." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2018.

https://www.ilo.org/gateway/faces/home/ctryHome?locale=EN&countryCode=MDA&_adf.ctrl-state=10zs39gufq_9.