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## **Amnesty International and other NGOs under scrutiny of Moldovan authorities**

The authorities of Moldova appear to be punishing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for carrying out their duties as human rights defenders, Amnesty International said today.

In a letter to the Prime Minister of Moldova, Amnesty International expressed its concern that selected NGOs in Moldova, which were active in the election monitoring process and/or in documenting reported human rights violations by the authorities following the violent demonstrations on 7 April, are facing unprecedented enquiries from the Ministry of Justice and stringent controls from the tax authorities.

“Human rights defenders are a source of inspiration and deserve support and protection from the state in their struggle for human rights protection,” said Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director.

“The Moldovan authorities are failing in their duty to ensure that human rights activists are able to carry out their work unhindered and to protect them against any violations of their rights, as stated in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.”

Amnesty International has received reports that at least seven NGOs, including the local Amnesty International structure, received letters from the Ministry of Justice dated 16 April. Each organization was asked to explain its position on the riots and any measures taken by them to prevent and stop the violence. These seven organizations and four others received subpoenas from their local tax inspectorates dated 24 April asking them to submit financial reports for 2008 and 2009, and identify their sources of income and expenditure up to 28 April.

On 28 April, representatives from the local tax inspectorate visited the Amnesty International office in Moldova. They requested that the organization provide a copy of the list of paid members in addition to other documents.

Amnesty International is seeking clarification about these actions by state authorities.

The organization is urging the Moldovan government to ensure that the human rights organizations and other civil society activists can carry out their activities in an environment free from harassment, obstruction and intimidation.