

**PUBLIC**

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**Possible prisoner of conscience/ health concern/ legal concern**

**MOLDOVA  
(SELF-PROCLAIMED DNESTR  
MOLDAVIAN REPUBLIC)**

**Valentin Besleag (m), aged 59**

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Valentin Besleag, from Corjova village in the Dubasari region of the self-proclaimed Dnestr Moldavian Republic (DMR), has been detained at the police station in Dubasari since 2 June. He and his family have not been informed of the reasons for his arrest; nor have they been allowed to see the court order for his detention. His family has not been allowed to pass on necessary medication to him via the prison authorities. He may be being detained for legitimately exercising his right to freedom of expression, and thus may be a prisoner of conscience.

Valentin Besleag had been a candidate for mayor of Corjova in local elections which were due to be held on 3 June. Corjova is one of nine villages in the self-governing territory of the DMR which are the focus of an ongoing dispute with Moldova. The nine villages are located geographically in the DMR, but are under the control of the central government of Moldova as the local inhabitants sided with the Moldovan forces during the civil war in 1990 – 1992. The DMR is not internationally recognized. Russia maintains a military presence and deploys peace-keeping forces in the territory. Local elections were held throughout Moldova on 3 June, and in the DMR, they were only held in the villages under the control of the central government.

Valentin Besleag was returning from Moldova with election materials in his car at 11pm on 1 June when traffic police stopped him, confiscated his driving licence and asked him to go to the police station in the town of Dubasari. He refused to go to the police station that night, but went at 8am the following day to reclaim his driving licence. He did not return home and his family were unable to contact him by mobile phone. At 2pm on 2 June, Valentin Besleag's daughter went to the police station to find out what had happened. She saw her father through a half-opened door when she was handed his belt, shoe laces and mobile phone, and was able to see that his hands were tied behind his back. Police officers refused to explain to her why Valentin Besleag was detained. When she asked the officers why his family had not been informed of his detention, she was told she should have asked the judge. Therefore, Valentin Besleag's family believe that he has been formally charged and brought before a judge, in accordance with legal procedure in the DMR. They do not know what he has been charged with, but suspect that it is connected with the fact that he was carrying election materials with him in the car. According to the laws of the DMR, it is illegal to bring election materials from abroad (including Moldova).

Although Valentin Besleag was suffering chest pains before his detention and was taking medication for this condition, his family has been forbidden to take any food or medication to him.

Valentin Besleag's family have tried to hire a lawyer to take on his case, but because of the likely political nature of the charge against him, no one has been willing to take on his case and he remains without legal representation. Lawyers from Moldova who have asked to represent him have been refused.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In Moldova and in the DMR conditions in police detention are extremely poor. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) described conditions in places of detention run by the Ministry of the Interior of Moldova as "disastrous". The CPT stated that in many cases the conditions amounted to inhuman or degrading treatment. The food provided for detainees is of very low quality and for this reason food parcels

from family and friends are essential for the health and wellbeing of those held. Reportedly, the conditions in DMR prisons are similar, if not worse.

DMR police prevented elections from taking place in Corjova on 3 June. Iurie Cotofan, who tried to cast his vote was allegedly beaten by DMR police. He was taken away from the voting station by several DMR police officers who then dragged him behind a car, pushed him face down to the ground and started to beat and kick him. One officer knelt on his back while another held him down with his foot while others beat him. He was then taken to the Dubasari police station, where he was held until midnight on 3 June before being released with no explanation or charge. Iurie Cotofan is currently being treated in the Emergency Hospital in Chisinau for his injuries.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Russian, English or your own language:**

- explaining that Amnesty International takes no position on territorial disputes, and that you are writing to the authorities of the DMR in the light of their *de facto* authority over the area of Moldova under the control of the DMR;
- expressing concern for the health of Valentin Besleag, who has been detained by police in Dubasari since 2 June;
- asking the authorities to immediately allow Valentin Besleag's family to provide him with food and necessary medication;
- reminding the authorities that all detainees must be informed fully of the reasons for their detention, and asking them to inform Valentin Besleag and his family immediately of the reasons for his arrest;
- reminding the DMR authorities that Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the right to freedom of expression, and calling on the authorities to release Valentin Besleag immediately and unconditionally if he is being held solely for the peaceful exercise of this right;
- calling for the authorities of the DMR to ensure that Valentin Besleag's right to legal representation be ensured under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

**APPEALS TO:**

Anatoliy Guretskiy  
Prosecutor General of the Dnestr Moldavian Republic  
25 October Str., 101  
Tiraspol  
Moldova

**Fax: + 373 533 80761 (please say "fax" when the number is answered – it may not be answered after 5pm GMT)**

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

**COPIES TO:**

Moldova General prosecutor  
Valeriu Gurbulea  
Mitropolit Banulescu-Bodoni Str. 26  
MD-2005 Chisinau  
Moldova

**Fax: + 373 22 2120 32 (please say "fax" when the number is answered – it may not be answered after 5pm GMT)**

and to diplomatic representatives of Moldova accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 July 2007.