13 Sep 2016 ⚠ Lvl. 1

Resolved

Republic of Moldova

Alert created on: 02 Apr 2015

Journalist Sergei Ilchenko Jailed on Extremism Charges in Moldova's Transdniester Region

SOURCE OF THREAT ▸ **State**

CATEGORY ⓘ ▸ **Detention and imprisonment of journalists**

PARTNER: **Article 19**

On Saturday, 18 March 2015, a regional court in Transdniester ordered Sergei Ilchenko, a freelance contributor to local and regional media, to be imprisoned for two months pending an investigation into alleged extremism activities. He has been charged with extremism and, if convicted, faces a prison term of up to five years, reports said. Ilchenko has often criticized Transdniester authorities and the regional security service known as the KGB in his commentary for the independent regional news websites Dniestr and Ava. The journalist was detained on March 18 when KGB agents came to his home and confiscated his computer and reporting equipment, according to regional and international press reports. The agents also accused Ilchenko of making public calls to extremism in connection with an article that was published on a local online forum that called on residents to pick up arms and start a revolution against the pro-Russia Transdniester authorities, reports said. The article was later deleted from the forum but was available until recently on Google cache. Ilchenko denies writing the article. Nikolai Ilchenko, the journalist's son, released a statement in which he denied his father's involvement with the article and said the journalist's Skype account had been hacked before his arrest. Nikolai said the KGB also came to his own apartment on March 18 and confiscated computers and cameras. According to his statement, the KGB said the article posted on the online forum was published from Nikolai's IP address. Nikolai denied any involvement with the article.

RESOLVED

13 Sep 2016: On 13 September 2016, following the release of Sergei Ilchenko and the measures taken by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, the partner organisations of the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding that it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

UPDATES

28 Jul 2015: Sergei Ilchenko was released from prison on 18 July 2015, although the circumstances of his release remain unclear. Some media outlets have reported that he received an amnesty, while others reported that he was released further to a full confession. Ilchenko is believed to have been suffering from ill health at the time of his release.

⊙ Article published on media-azi.md: "Journalist Sergey Ilchenko Released from Detention"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ▾

⊙ Article on "Journalist jailed on extremism charges in Moldova's Transdniester region"

⊙ Article on the News Maker website (in Russian)

STATE REPLIES ▾

13 Jul 2016 | Reply from the authorities of the Republic of Moldova

⊙ Letter from the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Moldova to the Council of Europe

03 Aug 2015 | Response of the Government of the Republic of Moldova

⊙ Letter from the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Moldova to the Council of Europe