



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

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## Journalists campaign against censorship in Moldova, 2004

March

2004

to: November

2004

**Country:** Moldova

**Location City/State/Province:** Chisinau

**Goals:**

End the overt censorship put in place by the Communist government

### Methods

**Methods in 1st segment:**

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 004. Signed public statements
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast) › Five journalists of Euro TV Chisinau went on hunger strike
- 177. Speak-in

**Methods in 2nd segment:**

**Methods in 3rd segment:**

**Methods in 4th segment:**

**Methods in 5th segment:**

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 162. Sit-in › 5 day sit-in at the national radio headquarters

**Methods in 6th segment:**

### Classifications

**Classification:**

Defense

**Cluster:**

Democracy  
Human Rights

**Group characterization:**

- Journalists

## **Leaders, partners, allies, elites**

**Leaders:**

Antena C - radio station

Euro TV - television station

**Partners:**

Not known

**External allies:**

Independent Journalism Centre

Acces-Info Centre

Committee for the Press Freedom

Association of Independent Press

Association of Electronic Press

Social Liberal Party

Our Moldova Alliance

Christian Democratic Popular Party

**Involvement of social elites:**

Not known

## **Joining/exiting order of social groups**

**Groups in 1st Segment:**

- Acces-Info Centre
- Antena C
- Association of Electronic Press
- Association of Independent Press
- Committee for the Press Freedom
- Euro TV
- Independent Journalism Centre

**Groups in 2nd Segment:**

- Christian Democratic Popular Party
- Our Moldova Alliance

- Social Liberal Party

**Groups in 3rd Segment:**

**Groups in 4th Segment:**

**Groups in 5th Segment:**

**Groups in 6th Segment:**

**Segment Length:** *Approximately 5 weeks*

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

### Opponents:

Communist government

Police forces

### Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

### Campaigner violence:

Not known

### Repressive Violence:

On August 7th, police forces attacked protesters outside the national radio headquarters and intimidated the families of some protesters in their homes. Allegedly, the police forces set fire to one journalist's apartment.

## Success Outcome

### Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

### Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

### Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

### Notes on outcomes:

The campaign exhibited impressive stamina and attracted loads of support, but the communist government made no concessions.

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In 2001, the communist party came to power in Moldova. The communist party would go on to acquire a parliamentary majority. Early in 2004, this parliamentary majority made a request that suspended the licenses of two oppositional media entities: a radio station, Antena C, and a television station, Euro TV. Both media outlets had supported oppositional candidates in the previous election. The government's decision would be met with outrage and resistance from both stations.

Vasile State, director of Antena C, and Arcadie Gherasim, director of Euro TV, requested authorization for a protest from the Chisinau City Hall. The request was made on March 18 for a protest to be held April 4th. Eleven days after the request, five members of Euro TV began a hunger strike in protest of the overt censorship. The strikers released a statement calling for the reinstatement of the two stations. This statement was signed by Dina Clapco-Pripa, Tatiana Turcanu, Giulia Ostapova, Aurel Iesanu, and Valeriu Clapco. The five also indicated to the media that others would be joining them shortly.

Meanwhile, employees of Antena C were organizing in the streets. They gathered in the streets carrying signs that read "Down

with censorship!" and "We want to work!" On April 1, an employee of Antenna C announced that he would begin a hunger strike and nine other employees of Euro TV joined in a hunger strike. On April 2, two of the original five hunger strikers fainted and needed to receive immediate medical attention. The two later ended their hunger strikes due to cautionary advice from the doctor that treated them. That same day, Gherasim announced that more journalists had pledged to join the hunger strikes. As the campaign gained momentum and media coverage, organizations began to speak out in support of their cause; the Independent Journalism Centre, Acces-Info Centre, Committee for the Press Freedom, Association of Independent Press and Association of Electronic Press APEL also issued statements voicing support for the campaign.

The long-awaited protest scheduled for April 4 attracted hundreds of people to participate in a rally in Chisinau. This day marked the fifth day of the hunger strike and twenty one protesters remained on strike while five others had to quit due to serious health concerns. Protesters at the rally held signs that read "Antena C and Euro TV are under house arrest!" and "We experience information hunger!" Representatives from the opposition parties, including the Christian Democratic Popular Party, the Social Liberal Party, and the Our Moldova Alliance, were present at the rally.

Two days after the rally, the government's decision to suspend the licenses of the two media outlets was confirmed by the Audio Visual Council, an agency dealing with media licenses. Eight of the nine members of the council voted in favor of the government's decision. Employees of both media outlets attended the meeting and chanted, "We demand the right to information." Before leaving, they also assured the council that there would be further demonstrations. The following day, street protests resumed; protesting journalists picketed outside the offices of the Audio Visual Council for an hour.

The next dramatic action taken occurred at the end of July when a group of journalists sat-in at the national radio headquarters for five days. The journalists were forced to end their sit-in when a bomb threat was called into the building, leading to a complete evacuation of the building. Hundreds gathered outside the building to continue the protest. Opposition leaders were present once again, waving anti-communist posters. The protests persevered and on August 6, they began to attract support from musicians who would come and voice their support through music.

The continued presence of the journalists prompted a violent response from the Moldovan police forces. Those who were gathered outside the national radio headquarters were attacked during the early hours of the morning on August 7. Other news surfaced reporting that the families of some protesters were also intimidated in their homes. Allegedly, the police set fire to the door of one protester's apartment.

Protests continued after the assault, but the communist government responded by firing hundreds of journalists that sympathized with the cause in November. The communist president was then reelected in 2005, which confirmed that nothing would change. The campaign failed to make any progress.

## Research Notes

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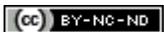
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**A project of Swarthmore College, including Peace and Conflict Studies, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.**

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**Source URL (retrieved on 02/17/2020 - 14:30):** <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/journalists-campaign-against-censorship-moldova-2004>