



Moldova - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 29 June 2009

Information on the extent of power of criminal gangs in Moldova and extent of problems for police regarding criminal gangs in Moldova.

A *UK Home Office* operational guidance note on Moldova, in a section titled “Organised crime and corruption” (paragraph 3.9.2), states:

“Organised crime and corruption are particularly problematic. The shadow economy, dominated by extensive organised crime networks, accounts for between 30 and 70% of all economic activity.²⁹ According to Transparency International (TI), in 2002 there were some 300 criminal groups in Moldova, most of which belonged to one of 35 criminal clans. Though a lack of State power has also resulted in increases in tax evasion, drug trafficking, illegal import/export operations and contract murders, the creation of the Centre for Combating Economic Crimes and Corruption (CCECC) in June 2002 improved the government’s record in combating fraud and corruption.” (UK Home Office Border and Immigration Agency (4 April 2007) *Operational Guidance Note – Moldova*, p.9)

An *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response to an information request, in a section titled “Organized Crime in Moldova”, states:

“There have been a number of reports in 2005 and 2006 on the presence of organized crime in Moldova, and in the country's 'breakaway territory' of Transdnier in particular.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (17 February 2006) *MDA100694.E – Moldova: Victims of organized crime and state protection available to them; corrupt police in organized crime and reports of organized crime targeting police; state protection available to former organized crime members who leave the organized crime 'ring' (2000 - 2006)*)

This section also states:

“Moldova is recognized as a major source country for trafficking in persons. Trafficking in persons is generally linked to sexual exploitation; however there have been reports of trafficking in persons for the purposes of labour exploitation, as well as organ trafficking which has become a ‘hugely profitable business for organized crime’” (ibid)

The recently published *US Department of State* report on trafficking in Moldova states:

“The Government of Moldova does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Despite initial efforts to combat trafficking-related complicity since the government’s reassessment on the Tier 2 Watch List in September 2008, and increased victim assistance, the government did not demonstrate sufficiently meaningful efforts to curb trafficking-related corruption, which is a government-acknowledged problem in Moldova; therefore, Moldova is placed on Tier 2 Watch List. While some of Moldova’s anti-trafficking activities remained dependent on international donor funding, the government improved victim protection efforts, deployed more law-enforcement officers in the effort and contributed direct financial assistance toward victim protection and assistance for the first time.” (US Department of State (16 June 2009) *Trafficking in Persons Report 2009 – Moldova*)

In a paragraph titled “Smuggling” a *BBC News* report states:

“The rebel republic, which is not recognised internationally, has a reputation for being a haven for organised crime. ‘The Trans-Dniester region is the centre of an international network of organised crime, first of all smuggling, illegal trafficking of human beings and it’s a centre for illegal arms trafficking,’ says Oazu Nantoi, a political analyst from Moldova.” (BBC News (7 April 2006) *EU targets Moldova smugglers*)

In a section titled “Overall Crime and Safety Situation” a document published by the Overseas Security Advisory Council states:

“Criminal activity in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, remains similar to that of a mid-sized American city, with slightly lower violent crime. Street crimes and residential burglaries occur, with property crimes and crimes of opportunity accounting for the majority of incidents. Poor or non-existent street lighting and limitations on police resources create a favorable environment for criminal elements.” (Overseas Security Advisory Council (Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State) (11 June 2008) *Moldova 2008 Crime & Safety Report*)

This document also states:

“Organized criminal (OC) activity, both local and transnational in nature, exists in Moldova but is limited. Most casinos and ‘strip/adult clubs’ are operated by OC elements. However, street-level OC violence is rare and does not affect expatriate areas. In the rural Moldovan countryside, criminal activity is limited. In large towns outside the capital, criminal activity is similar to the levels in Chisinau.” (ibid)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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