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7 July 2004

MDA42794.E

Moldova: Information on the treatment of Seventh Day Adventists by authorities and society; whether state protection is available
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

According to the *International Religious Freedom Report 2003*, "[t]he Constitution [of Moldova] provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice" (18 Dec. 2003, Sec. 2).

However, religious groups must be registered with the government and there are reports that minority religions have faced difficulties in obtaining government approval, especially in the separatist region of Transnistria (*International Religious Freedom Report 2003* 18 Dec. 2003, Sec. 2). Seventh Day Adventists are listed as one of a number of minority non-Orthodox religious groups operating in Moldova (*ibid.*, Sec. 1).

Information on societal attitudes towards Seventh Day Adventists was not found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the *International Religious Freedom Report 2003* reported that relations among different religious groups tended to be "generally amicable" (18 Dec. 2003, Sec. 3).

There were several news reports about an incident in which four Seventh Day Adventists were fired from their positions at a railway station after they refused to work on a Saturday, the day of rest for members of their religion (ANN 18 Mar. 2003; ANN 4 Feb. 2003; HRWF 31 Jan. 2003). Two lower courts ordered the railway station to re-hire the workers, but an appeals court overturned the decision (*ibid.*).

Information on police actions either against Seventh Day Adventists or in protection of them was not found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Adventist News Network (ANN). 18 March 2003. "Update on Moldova Court Case." <<http://news.adventist.org/data/2003/02/1048000254/index.html.en?&template=printer.html>> [Accessed 28 June 2004]

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Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF). 31 January 2003. "Appeals Court Rules Adventists Must Work on Saturdays." <http://www.hrwf.net/html/moldova_2003.html> [Accessed 28 June 2004]

International Religious Freedom Report 2003. 18 December 2003. "Moldova." United States Department of State. Washington, DC. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24423.htm>> [Accessed 28 June 2004]

TAGnet. 8 February 2003. "Moldova: Adventist Church to Appeal Court Decision." <<http://www.tagnet.org/adventist.fm/ark/an878.htm>> [Accessed 28 June 2004]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet Sources: Amnesty International, Basa Press News Agency, Freedom House, United Kingdom Home Office, Human Rights Watch, International Christian Concern, Moldova Azi, OneWorld.net, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, REPORTER MD News Agency, seeurope.net.

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