

## UNICEF Moldova media release

CHISINAU, April 16, 2009 - UNICEF representative Alexandra Yuster met the Moldovan deputy Minister of Interior Valentin Zubic today to express concern about the situation of children detained or sought in connection with demonstrations in the centre of the capital, Chisinau, on Tuesday, April 7. Yesterday UNICEF shared these concerns with the deputy Minister of Justice Nicolae Eșanu.

UNICEF has monitored the situation closely, seeking updated information from government sources on a regular basis. UNICEF has had a series of meetings with human rights activists, lawyers and a parliamentary ombudsman. According to the information they shared with UNICEF, there are concerns that children have been maltreated.

UNICEF requested that children detained in relation to the protests are accorded their full rights under the law and reiterates its further commitment to assist the country in reforming the juvenile justice system.

*Informative Note: International juvenile justice norms recognize that children can be held responsible if there is evidence that they have broken the law, but their treatment should be in accordance with the Convention of Rights of the Child. The Republic of Moldova has ratified the Convention, which defines a child as a person less than 18 years of age. This convention sets out how all actions of courts of law, and authorities, must put the best interests of the child first.*

*According to the Convention, no child should be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. For juveniles, imprisonment should be only be used as a measure of last resort. Every child deprived of liberty should be separated from adults. He or she has the right to maintain contact with the family through correspondence and visits.*

*According to Moldova's laws, children should be released or charged within 24 hours of being detained. Their parents should be informed immediately about the fact of detention, and a lawyer should be present when a child is questioned.*

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### Contacts:

Angela Munteanu, program coordinator, UNICEF Moldova, + 373 22 269153 [amunteanu@unicef.org](mailto:amunteanu@unicef.org)  
Lina Botnaru, Media officer, +373 22 269235 [lbotnaru@unicef.org](mailto:lbotnaru@unicef.org)

United Nations Children's Fund  
Moldova Country Office  
131, "31 August 1989" Street,  
UN House, Chisinau, Moldova

Telephone: + 373-22 22 00 34  
+373-22 22 82 82  
Facsimile: +373-22 22 02 44  
[chisinau@unicef.org](mailto:chisinau@unicef.org)