FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ILLEGAL ABORTIONS AMONG MINORS

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Abstract

Abortions in the Republic of Moldova is a national problem and causes an irreparable harm to the reproductive health of population. However, illegal abortions are one of the causes of death for pregnant women.

Our work is based on studying the social factors, which determine the illegal abortions among young minors. The studies show that a growing number of young minors remain accidentally pregnant, which leads them to resort to the easiest solution for such an unfavorable situation: criminal abortion.

The most important problem of the sexual behavior of adolescents presents the unwanted pregnancy, being an important and complex problem that associates with multiple consequences on the health and wellbeing of the population, particularly on adolescent girls.

Currently, there is a tendency to see the phenomenon of childbirth in a teenager period mainly from the perspective of a problematic or risky sexual behavior, or the sexual behavior presents itself a result of the exposure of women to multiple risk factors during childhood and adolescence. However, teen pregnancy is not only the result of sexual risk-taking, but is also strongly influenced by the social and economic environment, the educational potential of the family, the awareness about the modern contraceptive methods etc.

The work proposed for research examines both the demographic dimension of the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and social factors that favor the production of illegal abortions among young minors.

Key Words: criminological factors, causes of criminality, conditions of criminality, crime prevention, illegal abortion, minor.

JEL Classification: [K 14]

1. Introduction

The criminality has been and continues to be the most dangerous phenomenon in the society. Therefore, it remains one of the most important issues in both the fields of criminology investigations, and other social and legal sciences.

A serious problem both for the Republic of Moldova and for the international community is the illegal interruption of pregnancy among teenage girls. One of the factors contributing to the high rate of illegal abortions is the low use of modern contraceptives, especially among teenage girls. The population use traditional methods of birth control, which increases the number of unplanned pregnancies.

Unfortunately, in the Republic of Moldova, the illegal abortion, committed among teenagers continues to be used as a method of birth control, which in

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reality should not persist. The prejudicial degree, the caused criminal damage and social dangers that presents this offense requires an immediate reaction of the society against these illegal acts both an immediate reaction of the society against these illegal acts both on legal plan and a set of criminological measures that would help prevent them effectively.

A correct and appropriate approach in terms of prevention of a particular type of crime, default and of that related to committing illegal abortions is virtually impossible without being identified and investigated the causes and conditions that favor committing of offenses that make up this type of criminality, and their systemic analysis with other relevant criminological particularities.

2. Methods and materials applied

In the study process, we used the following methods: analysis, synthesis, comparison, scientific inquiry. As materials have served the domestic researchers works and from other states.

3. Basic content

Criminality as a social phenomenon, presents several sides and aspects that the criminological science must pursue and investigate. We support the opinion of the author Ig. Ciobanu who is mentioning that in studying the phenomenon of criminality a special has the examination of the social reaction against criminality; prophylaxis problematic and social therapeutics of the criminality; methods and procedures to prevent and combat criminality and social defense against crime (Ciobanu, 2003: 10). The author I. Oancea believes that the first aspect of the criminological research is that of general criminality that is about the criminality status, its existence and volume (Oancea, 1998: 27).

We believe that the systemic approach of these criminological peculiarities will not highlight all the necessary measures to prevent the criminality unless the research of the criminal phenomenon will also contain the identification of the determinant factors favoring it and taking all the necessary measures to fully eliminate them.

We therefore believe as priority the highlighting the determinants of this type of criminal behavior, which will facilitate the finding of ways to improve the system of preventive measures that could counteract the further growth of this type of criminality, and may even decrease thereof in terms of quantity.

Currently, there is a diverse range of literature dedicated to the investigation and examination of the causes and conditions of different kind of criminality, the factors contributing to its development, and which proposes a number of prevention methods used for the effective prevention of various types of criminality. But it is noteworthy that in no scientific paper is not made a detailed criminological analysis of the crime of illegal causing of the abortion, but in these
sources we find valuable information that addresses the criminological issues and peculiarities of the crime of which an imposing part constitute the offenses threatening the life and health of the person.

The author Gh. Nistoreanu claims that the immediate purpose of a scientific research in criminology is to identify, analyze and explain the causes of criminality, so as to create the necessary prerequisites for achieving the overall goal of this discipline – that to contribute to the substantiation of a criminal effective policy, able to determine the prevention and combating of the criminal phenomenon (Nistoreanu, 1995: 137).

The determinant factors or determinants of criminality, merge into a common term the causes and conditions that contribute to the committing of criminal offenses under a closely related objective of causality of other phenomena of nature and society.

In its turn, the causality, as it is known, is the objective-existing connection, the dependency between two or several phenomena, in which a phenomenon born with obligativity and necessity another phenomenon. The cause is the phenomenon that precedes and determines or generates another phenomenon - the effect, acting in circumstances that favor or hinder the production of the effect, (Nistoreanu, 1995: 178).

In their turn, the circumstances representing the circumstances which influence by their presence the cause (favoring or stagnating it) are called conditions.

As we mentioned, the causality is the link between the phenomena where the first necessarily generates another phenomenon. The necessity in the given situation is a way of existence or manifestation of certain states, properties, relationships or trends of the systems, resulting from their internal nature, which is, under constant conditions, determining their inevitable orientation in a certain sense.

Sometimes a particular phenomenon can cause accidently another phenomenon, each constituting itself as a causal link. In this situation, the chance will be also a way of existence or of manifestation of some states, properties, relationships or trends of the systems, however arising from or peripheral external factors, which prints them variability and inconsistency (Nistoreanu, 1995: 178-179).

In the concrete conditions of life, in the combination of necessity and casualty the percentage can be of either of necessity or occurrence. The necessity, deriving from the essentially allows configuring how should produce a certain phenomenon, while occurrence expresses the specific way in which it occurs.

Thus, the totality of causes and conditions that determine and favor the commission of offenses can be classified into necessary causes and conditions and accidental causes and conditions.

Therefore, in the scientific research process it is necessary to eliminate those phenomena that have too distant and uncertain links with effect to be able to exercise significant influence over its production that constitute the casual causes and conditions but there must not be neglected their role in identifying preventive
measures aimed at effectively preventing the criminal phenomenon (Nistoreanu, 1995: 178-179).

Following these deletions will remain under review only those phenomena without which the effect would not have occurred. From their range, along with cause, there took place the necessary and sufficient conditions as well as necessary conditions. In the necessary condition the effect will not necessarily cause, chance having an important role. The necessary and sufficient condition, in its turn, creates the possibility of producing specific effects, the role of chance being reduced (Nistoreanu, 1995: 129).

However, the systemic analysis of criminality involves the separation of the individual case and the identification of processes and conjunctures which, by their social impact and by their statistical repeatability for long periods of time, constitute the causes and conditions both necessary and sufficient for the production of the criminal act.

We fully agree with the opinion of the author V. Bujor, who claims that the necessary prerequisite of the effectiveness of control measures on criminality is the fair resolution of issues relating to the essence of the phenomenon of crime, assessment of the status and trends of criminality in the state; the discovery of the determinants of the given phenomenon, factors and circumstances favoring the commission of offenses; forecasting of criminality and modeling new social realities in co-report with the economic, cultural process; developing the concept, strategy for combating criminality and creating an effective system to combat the crime. Hence appears one of the purposes of criminology, which would be the development and proposing measures to control the criminality based on the knowledge of essence and manifestations of the phenomenon of crime (Bujor, 2002: 103-106).

After conducting the research, we find that during the study of the determinants of the crime of illegally causing the abortion among young minor girls includes the following categories:

**Weak financial situation of the family and parents' migration abroad**

*Republic of Moldova in search of a better-paid job.*

According to the opinion of the author O. Gagauz, the young age of the minor girls who become mothers is not the decisive condition in this process, but rather the environment in which they grow and it becomes the determinant of this situation (Gagauz, 2015: 38). The cross-national researches show that the level of national wealth, as well as the pace of economic development, and the extent of income inequality are associated with differences in adolescent fertility rates (Santelli. 2013). The level of acceptance of sexuality of adolescents and the social expectations that the adolescents will use contraceptive with responsibility have determined the teenage pregnancy rate. The recent data from Europe indicates that the provision of free or subsidized contraceptives is associated with relatively low rates of teenage pregnancy and fertility age (Part, 2013: 1395–1406).
We support the opinion of the author O. Gagauz that in the Republic of Moldova, the social disadvantages such as weak socio-economic status of the family, residence in rural areas, lack of socio-economic opportunities at the local level, lack of the necessary support in difficult situations from family, school, community, access to information on the sexual and reproductive health associate or causes the challenge of illegal abortions among young minors.

The law financial situation is one of the factors determined to challenge the illegal abortions among young minor because parents are either unemployed or do not have a stable job, a situation which is more specific for the rural area where in order to be able to support their family the parents are mainly engaged in the agricultural sector, which requires more time and effort, the children remaining on the second place or they are involved in the activities of the parents. There are cases when the lower socio-economic level correlates with various addictions, usually alcohol, domestic violence, child neglect. This increases the vulnerability of the family, characterizing not only the economic status, but also a lower social status. Financial difficulties in the family lead to an early maturity, children are forced to work for surviving, for them the work and not the play and education is an everyday concern, they often face violence and cruelty from adults, are marginalized in society, and the life prospects for them are very limited.

Also in our country, an unplanned pregnancy can serve as an argument for a future marriage. The desire to be pregnant to these young minors can certainly aware, solely in order “to obligate the man,” most often happens in the cases when a teenager comes from a socially vulnerable family. And if the relationship with the potential husband ends with a fast and irrevocable break and the term of the pregnancy did not allow to provoke a legal abortion and the loner teenage has no power, nor material, nor moral forces to educate the child alone, then the minor adopt a decision according to her opinion is the only possible and correct solution to solve the problem – to only leave the child in maternity, to deny this child and to know that the child grows in a certain state institution for charity. This is best-case scenario. Nevertheless, in most and unwanted cases, the minor young girl decides to resort to illegal abortion or infanticide.

Involving parents in the migration abroad the Republic of Moldova in search of better paid job for a lengthy period also is a risk factor for teenage pregnancy that result in most cases in illegal abortions. The domestic researches demonstrate also the negative impact of labor migration on children's behavior, socio-economic and long-term cultural implications. Labour migration in mass brought its contributions both to changing family structures and in changing the relations parents - children, the decrease of social control, which facilitated the development of a state of valuable anomy caused by the formation in adolescents of a system of inconsistent values. This is a direct result of the lack of parents in this period and that the lack of psycho-affective relationship between parents and children, and the intergenerational break between grandparents and grandchildren
is too high and does not allow establishing a relationship similar to that of parents, or namely in the care of grandparents still remain most teenagers, so all those communicated by the grandparents are viewed in most cases as outdated and outmoded things.

An important issue is caused by the absence of the parents due to their migration outside the Republic of Moldova in search of money, this is also the lack of a systematic monitoring of adolescent girls and namely this period of life is characterized by a willingness to try everything and thus is closely correlated with different risks both for the physical integrity of adolescents and for the emotional one. Namely at this stage of life the presence of parents as overseers and supervisors is very necessary.

In this context, we conclude that the family has a huge influence on teenage girl behavior. Thus, all the risky behavioral patterns promoted in one way or another by the family form an increased risk factor in the development of socially disapproved behaviors, which are valid in case of an early onset of the sexual life.

In other order of ideas, we note the socio-cultural factors which caused significant changes in the population behavior, especially community increased tolerance towards different behaviors and decreased social control of the community, degradation of moral norms, anomy (the former regulations and specific hierarchies of traditional society do no longer works, and new ones have still not been represented), as well as the spread of deviant behaviors (alcoholism, drug abuse, violence).

Currently the teenage girls support the sexual relationships on the ground that this is a kind of fashion. It is taken only a small part of relationships; the focus is not on the sentimental or the formation of a family problem and therefore based on the maintained relations the minor girls resort to the easiest and incorrect way - illegal abortion.

As mentioned above one of the basic factors that cause illegal abortions challenge is determined by the active involvement in the young age of teenage girls in the sexual life that leads to the presence of an unwanted pregnancy from their part. Thus, the main factors in forming adolescent sexual culture are the mass media, the internet and the immediate environment, especially the friends. We find that mass media promotes sexuality and irresponsible behavior. Many video-clips do not show anything but suggestive dance moves and the lyrics suggest that the main destiny of women is to satisfy men's sexual desires. Some movies, soap operas rarely present a married couple having a healthy family relationship based on love and mutual support. In contrast, single people are portrayed “in times of happiness in bed”, engaged in adulterous affairs and having children outside the marriage, etc. The people seen on the screen, especially by young people, are as role models, contributing to the formation of the relevant perceptions. If a star or your favorite character shows such a behavior, then it must be okay and can serve as a model that can be followed.
The increase of the access to information, especially the internet plays an important role in the socialization of adolescents and young people, offering a broad range of topics that often have contradictory character, having multiple effects on knowledge, attitudes and sexual practices of adolescents, on their social relations. The experts have pointed out this paradox of unlimited access to information, which does not necessarily lead to increased awareness of adolescent girls about sexuality, but conversely, leads to misperceptions and contribute to risky behavior.

We cannot omit another important factor that determines young minor recourse to the challenge of illegal abortion, it is the problem of keeping the secret of medical confidentiality by doctors afraid to make public about a possible pregnancy or being afraid that their parents will find about the sexual relationship developed already at early stage and even more about the existence of pregnancy. This impedes to address to women's consultation at the permanent place of residence and impose the young minor girl to choose between legal abortions or anonymously, but illegal.

In the legal Russian literature personal secrets are divided into real personal secrets, namely those that are not assigned to anyone and professional secrets that are entrusted to representatives of certain professions for the defense of the rights and legal interests - lawyers, medical workers, notaries, church ministers, etc. (Петрухин, 1998: 15). In the explanatory dictionary, the word secret is defined as “a thing which is unknown, misunderstood, untapped, impenetrable by the human mind; mystery”.

The concept of “medical secret” emerged in ancient times and still exists in medicine about 2500 years. In addition, the Oath of Hippocrates reflects the essence of medical confidentiality “Whatever I see or hear during working life or beyond in relation to people's lives - things that should not be discussed outside - I will not disclose accepting that this must be kept secret” (Рудбнеева, 1998: 11).

Medical secret with the right to autonomy of the patient initiates a new category - that of privacy - which causes many ethical and legal dilemmas in contemporary medical practice.

The confidentiality or professional secrecy represents the obligation of the professionals to keep secret the information about people when such information is obtained in exercising the profession. This information (including those related to health or social situation) cannot be disclosed to any other person without the consent of the beneficiary / client or, in the case of children with the consent of their legal representatives.

In the view of A. Krasikov, disclosure of true information but that cause damage to the person, should be considered violation of the inviolability of private life provided that spreading of defamatory information causes damage to the victim’s legal rights and interests (Красиков, 2000: 44).
One of the socio-cultural factors causing the breach term, which is allowing legal abortion are psychological reasons that are present because of the major changes that occur in the psyche of women during fetal development.

In the development process of even the most desirable and conscious pregnancies at the teenage girls persist conditions to appear a number of changes in the emotional sphere. At the physiological level, these trends are present in connection with the delivery of a series of psychophysical, endocrine - somatic changes in the body of the pregnant woman. At the level of their consciousness there are present a number of negative trends. Such as anxiety and fear related to the childbirth, which sometimes reach panic: “I will support the childbirth?” and distrust in the ability to give birth and to become mother, afraid for his health and finally fear for body metamorphoses that will take place in connection with the pregnancy” (Brutman, 1995: 33-40).

The reasons that push the young minor to the challenge of illegal abortion are multiple, they can be defined in subjective, which is characterized by socio-biological qualities of the person and objectives, which are manifested by the lifestyle, and these reasons are present from the ancient times with the advent of humankind. Still in 1906 Dr. Heinrich von Fabrice showed in his monograph such data “Magomets do not want to see illegal children and the woman who give birth to illegal children; she will not escape from death. Therefore they tend to defend from execution” (Fabrice, 1906: 33-40).

The objective reason for delaying the deadline of pregnancy for the legal challenge of abortion is decreasing the sensitivity of body condition, ignorance of the pregnancy term. Often women, but in most cases the adolescent girls do not suspect that they are pregnant. This has an explanation, namely: emotional reactions and symptoms of the body of the woman bearing an unwanted pregnancy significantly differ from the woman whose pregnancy is wanted. With all the variety of individual characteristics, the specialists distinguish two main situations of psychological state in the case of unwanted pregnancy.

In the first case, the woman feels good during the whole period of pregnancy. With much, different than in the case of desired pregnancy, at her takes place the early appearance of toxicosis. The same low sensitivity is maintained concerning the fetal movement. It is attested a poor emotional reaction to the fact of pregnancy and there is a vague pregnancy term presentation (Brutman, 1997: 40). Therefore, there are included the mechanisms of inhibition induced by the psychological state of the woman, an indifferent attitude toward pregnancy. At the beginning of term, this type of evolution of physiological changes in a woman's body is conditioned by the delay to address to medical institutions for abortion within the time limit set by law.

The second variant, the psychological state that occurs in the case of an unwanted pregnancy it is characterized by hypaesthesia of the bodily symptoms manifested by stiffness of the adversely affect - fear, depression. Fetal movements
in these women even in the first period of pregnancy are accompanied by a sudden negative feeling. Women's conscience sometimes even before birth is full of ways for the liquidation of the fetus. At some women the unwanted pregnancy it is accompanied throughout pregnancy by a state of disgust and even hater for the future child, what arouses some excruciating infantile fantasies where she even kills her future child (Brutman, 1997: 43).

It follows from here that during an unwanted pregnancy the woman emotional manifestations are polarized. In some cases - it is supported by a negative depressant mood, in other cases - indifference and even a certain euphoria (Brutman, 1997: 44).

The Russian criminologist, B. Ovchinnikov, estimating the psychophysiological characteristics, concluded the following: The role of psychophysiological characteristics became essential in the case of their deviation from the norm and the decrease of positive social factors influence when the social man is not defended (Ovchinnikov, 1982).

Considering the above, it becomes clear why the teenager girl did not abort officially and sometimes for unknown reasons and paradoxically decides on actions of illegal challenge of the pregnancy, sometimes understanding the danger that confronts the health and in some cases even her life, but hanging with indifference to it.

A third category of factors that we want to analyze is: **Low awareness level of adolescent girls and the lack of modern contraceptives**

According to the opinion of the author O. Gagauz, the completed sexual education, age-appropriate, evidence-based, scientifically accurate, quality family planning services and access to contraception help to prevent unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, reduce the need to resort to illegal abortions and help to prevent sexually transmitted infections as this teach young girls to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive health, have long term positive effects on throughout their lives, and a positive impact on society (Gagauz, 2015: 43).

Recent studies carried out in our scientific field demonstrated that the introducing of some long term nationwide sexual education programs contribute to the reduction of teenage pregnancy rates of illegal abortions and sexually transmitted infections among young people aged 15-24 years. By increasing the confidence and strengthening the skills to cope with different challenges, sex education helps young people to develop stronger and significant interpersonal relationships (Apter, 2012: 351).

The early pregnancy which is subsequently removed by inducing an illegal abortion, it is always the result of 7 years of home education. Other reasons which may be mentioned: the negligence of parents, lack of a fair education and qualitative communication, the lack of capacity of parents to discuss with their children on sensitive topics such as sex education, lack of love in the family,
children are afraid of mother, father, the child never felt the love of family and parent-child relationship.

Currently, in the Republic of Moldova just biology lessons include some issues related to the reproductive system or puberty, information of the pupils is a fragmented, inadequate one and only in very rare cases, there are held discussions on sexuality, their moral aspects and the responsible behavior.

The study carried out by the author O. Gagauz showed that the adults (parents and teachers) practice a position of alienation or negligence in relation to the sexual education of adolescents, on the other hand, girls are oriented to avoid such discussions, or show a not depth attitude to the information obtained (Gagauz, 2015: 55).

Contraception represents the assembly of processes designed to prevent fertilization in a temporary and reversible manner, including “multiple forms of human behavior, in relation to the deliberate and planned insurance of successions”. For sexually active women not using contraception the annual fertility rate is around 90%.

Some international studies have confirmed the low level of contraceptive use among adolescents in the Republic of Moldova: one third of all sexually active teenagers use at least one modern method of contraception1. Although there is evidence that young people tend daily to have better access to information about contraception than older generations, the overall use of modern contraceptives is very low for both young and adult.

Another factor favoring the production of illegal abortions among minors is sexual abuse and violence.

Sexual abuse is one of the causes of teenage pregnancy, which is removed, by causing unconditionally illegal abortions; many of them started their sexual life not having their own will and did not communicate about these illegalities to the law enforcement bodies. Therefore, in order to avoid the possibility of leakage of information that they became pregnant after incest or rape, teenage avoid doctor and only resort to illegal abortions. Although the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova (Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova) lays down penalties for maintaining sexual relations with a person under the age of 16, and delimits the cases of sexual violence and relative penalties, however in many cases people who committed these crimes escapes from the punishment. It is estimated that 40-60% of global sexual abuse are against girls aged up to 16 years. Young, married and unmarried, often have no power over nature and timing of sexual intercourse, sexual coercion and rape are common experiences for many of them. The studies in the field have shown that in the world the proportion of girls who reported that their first sexual experience was in constraint conditions ranges from 15% to 30%. In

some highly developed countries, there has been a strong correlation between adolescent sexual violation and subsequent pregnancy resulted in illegal abortions\(^2\).

After studying the criminal practice, it has been found that in many cases of sexual abuse, against an amount of money, the parents agree to reconcile with that person who abused their child and so he acts with impunity. Reconciliation is accepted, sometimes even before the announcement of law enforcement bodies, but unfortunately there are situations of preventive research at the level of the local police station.

A negative role as we have mentioned above have the traditional attitudes, prejudices, fear of being blamed by the community, what motivates parents to hide what happened and to not address to the relevant institutions. In addition, in vulnerable families, or where the mother had previously caused also at an early age an illegal abortion, the incident is not considered as serious and they do not submit applications, everything is solved in the family.

Sexual abuse of adolescent girls has an impact, which is hard to be determined. The recent research in this area show that in the European region are recorded similar characteristics with regard to sexual violence on teenage girls, being identified a high percentage of girls who reported about abusive sexual contact - about 10\(^3\%). In addition, it was found that unwanted sexual experiences are part of teenage relationships, being evidenced male domination trend in relation to young girls\(^4\).

**Conclusion**

Following those examined above we conclude that the factors favoring the commission of the offense of illegal challenge of abortion among young minor girls is primarily the low cultural - health level of the population: the unwillingness and lack of knowledge of using contraceptives to plan pregnancy, the trend to keep the man in case of pregnancy outside marriage, the use factor of occurrence of the pregnancy in order to change their family situation, namely the pregnancy itself by these women is used only as a measure of action against the man to call potential paternal feelings. If it was unsuccessful, then this woman changes direction to get rid of an unwanted pregnancy at any cost, even at the expense of her health or life. For other teen a major issue becomes the personal secrecy, the fear of making public an eventual pregnancy or the fear that the parents will find out about the

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sexual relationship already developed at early stage and much less about the very existence of pregnancy. This impedes them to address to women's consultation at the permanent place of residence and impose the young minor girls to choose between legal abortions or anonymously, but illegal. The reason of illegal interruption of pregnancy at late terms can serve the legal illiteracy of the adolescent, not knowing about the possibility of abortion under the procedure established by doctors and on time. A favorable environment for illegal abortions is the lack of information on how to protect their sexual life and how to protect them from the part of the teaching staff among other people of young age, high price of contraceptive preparations. Sexual abuse also is one of the basic factor favoring cases of illegal abortions among young minor girls. Namely, following the cases of rape, incest the teenage girls become pregnant and in fear of be blamed by the society they do not address to a specialist doctor to seek a legal abortion but choose the shortest path and less expensive, illegal abortion. Thus, they endanger their self-health but in some cases, this may end with the death of the teenage girl.

Also, we note that the objective reasons that determine illegal abortions among young girls represent the financial difficulties, marital status, discrimination by gender in the sphere of labor relations or education, unfavorable living conditions and lack of perspectives in order to improve them, the miserable state of material aid from the state, the insufficient size of allowances for children and their irregular payment.

In this way, illegal abortion in the Republic of Moldova is caused by many reasons of political, social, economic character. A large number of laws, prone to improve the situation of women in society, granting help to the mothers and children, increasing the birth rate in society this is the most important priority of the state. In this context I consider necessary, that the rules laid down in the legislation of the Republic of Moldova on the challenge of abortion is not just a simple publishing but it must be checked by the competent bodies how such standards are respected and in case of detections of deviations from the law to be applied coercive measures of criminal nature.

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