



TO OLDER PERSONS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”, Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This equality does not change with age: older women and men have the same rights as people younger than they are.”

We all have human rights. Your rights are important. Understanding them can help you ensure that your rights are respected, that you are treated fairly and are not discriminated against.

You have the right to be treated fairly and not to be discriminated against

- You should **enjoy rights on an equal basis with others**, without discrimination.
- Everyone (national authorities, non-governmental and community organizations, media and educational institutions and older persons) should **make efforts to promote intergenerational solidarity, the positive image of older people**, who are among others transmitters of knowledge, culture and spiritual values, and to **combat ageism**.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, you must be able to enjoy your human rights, including the right to health, on an equal basis with others.

You have the right to be safe and protected

- You have **the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect**. The abuse can be physical, related to neglect, sexual, financial, emotional, or psychological, or any combination of these.
- You should have access to **services to prevent and protect you from any form of violence and abuse**, no matter whether abuse occurs in your own home or in a health or care setting.
- You have the **right to be protected from abuse no matter who is carrying out the abuse**, whether friends, family, neighbors, strangers, volunteers, or a health or social care professional.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic particular attention should be paid by central and local public authorities to preventing and protecting against any form of violence and abuse. You must have access to information about available remedies in case of violence and abuse.

You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect

- You have **the right to be treated with dignity and respect** by public services, and by health and care providers. You should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability, financial situation, or any other status.
- All older persons, including those in residential institutions, should be able **to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, to live in dignity and security and be free from exploitation and abuse**.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national authorities have to ensure that all the decisions with regards to you are guided by a commitment to dignity and human rights.

You have the right to be involved in the decisions that affect you

- Your voice **should be heard when decisions are being made that affect you**. If needed, you should receive support to have your views and wishes heard.
- You have the right to **be actively involved in the formulation and implementation of policies** that affect your and other older persons' well-being.
- You, together with other older people, can **form movements and associations**.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the central and local authorities should consult you on the specific COVID-19 related risks and make sure that all plans related to COVID-19 include older persons and their needs.

You have the right to be informed

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, you should have access to critical information on measures to protect from COVID-19 and on how to access health and care services. The information should be up to date and easy to understand.

You have the right to physical and mental health

- Access to good healthcare is essential to staying healthy and maintaining your independence, dignity and well-being.
- You should not be denied treatment and access to health care based on age.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, all older persons at risk of acquiring COVID-19 have to be identified, tested in case of need, and access to treatment should be provided as early as possible.

You have the right to an adequate standard of living

- The national policies and programs should ensure that **older persons have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care** through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help and that they can continue to live in their own homes.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, you should have guaranteed access to food, water, essential goods and services.



You have the right to social protection

- You should get the necessary **support in accessing social protection measures**, especially if you are not able to access them, because of restrictions of movement or the breakdown of social networks during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- You should have continued **access to community-based services and support, including access to health, social care and legal services**, such as mental health services, palliative and geriatric care. This applies in any situation, be it when support is provided by workers through home-based care or in institutional settings.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, you should receive support in accessing social protection measures and in continued access to essential social and health services.

You have the right to continue to work whatever your age is

- You should have the opportunity to gain a living by work, which is freely chosen or accepted.
- You have the right to enjoy just, favorable and safe working conditions and to be protected from discrimination on grounds of age in employment and occupation.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, you have the right to be included in the economic recovery initiatives, by being included in job rehabilitation programmes and other income-generating activities.

You have the right to education and to take part in the cultural life of the society

- You should have the opportunity for the full development of your potential through **access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of the society**.
- You have the right to benefit from educational programmes (eg. literacy training, life-long education, access to university and informal, community-based and recreation-oriented programmes) and to **share the know-how and experience** with younger generations.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of the society can be facilitated through technologies available to older persons, including radio, and television.

In case you believe that you were treated wrongly and your rights were violated, you can contact the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection by e-mail at: secretariat@msmps.gov.md or send a letter through post at: Chisinau m., Vasile Alecsandri street 2, MD-2009. You can also call at: 0-22-721010, 0-800-71010 (free call) or the People's Advocate Office by e-mail at ombudsman@ombudsman.md or send a letter at: Chisinau m., Sfatul Țării, nr.16 str., MD-2012 or call at: 0-22-234800.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **United Nations, Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons, May 2020**, available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2020/05/COVID-Older-persons.pdf>
- **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 6: The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Older Persons**, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4538838f11.html>
- **United Nations Principles for Older Persons adopted by the General Assembly in 1991**, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/olderpersons.aspx>