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'Crystal clear case of lawfare': Lawyer for jailed Moldovan regional leader speaks to RT

Evgenia Gutsul, the head of Moldova's autonomous Gagauzia Region, has been denied due process, her legal counsel says

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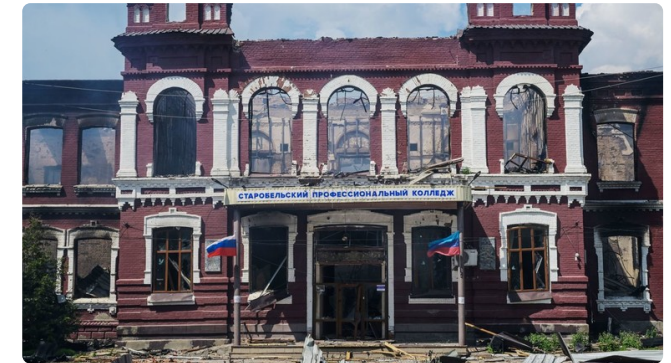
The prosecution of Evgenia Gutsul, the governor of Moldova's autonomous Gagauzia Region, is a prime example of politically motivated "lawfare," her lawyer, Gonzalo Boye, has told RT. Gutsul is currently appealing her seven-year sentence for campaign finance violations.

In 2025, the politician was convicted of channeling funds from Russia to candidates linked to the banned opposition Sor party, which the government of pro-EU President Maia Sandu has described as a



FILE PHOTO: Gagauz leader Evgenia Gutsul in Moldovan custody, Chisinau, April 1, 2025. © Sputnik / Dmitrij Osmatesko

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Russian-backed criminal organization. The party's leader, businessman Ilan Sor, received lengthy prison sentences in 2017 and 2023 for money laundering and defrauding several banks. Sor fled the country and has since lived in Israel and Russia.

In 2024, Moldova held a referendum on joining the EU, with the proposal passing by a very narrow margin. More than 90% of voters in Gagauzia, however, rejected the government's plan to enshrine the country's EU aspirations in the constitution.

Boye, a legal adviser to the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, spoke to RT ahead of a verdict expected at the Chisinau Court of Appeal later this week. Gutsul could be formally removed from office if the court upholds her conviction.

"I think the expectation can only be bad," he said, adding that the trial had not been *"proper."* Boye argued that one of the judges was improperly replaced during the proceedings, while he himself faced threats and was unfairly found in contempt of court.

Boye also said Gutsul had been denied the right to consult privately with her lawyers. *"I think this is a crystal clear case of lawfare... in a country that is a candidate to join the European Union,"* he said.

Both Gutsul and Sor have denied wrongdoing. The self-exiled businessman described Gutsul's arrest last year as *"political terrorism."*

Russia has denied accusations that it was trying to interfere in Moldova's politics. The Russian Foreign Ministry nevertheless condemned the prosecution of Gutsul as *"shameful."*

Watch the full interview here:



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