

AI Index 39/23/95  
EXTERNAL  
23 November 1995

**ROMANIA**

**@Excessive use of firearms by Romanian police**

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERN:**

Amnesty International is concerned that Romanian police officers on patrol reportedly shot and injured Marcel Ghinea in circumstances not warranting the use of firearms. Moreover, the case of Marcel Ghinea is similar to other incidents of police shootings that have recently occurred leading Amnesty International to fear that the Romanian police is increasingly resorting to the excessive use of firearms while carrying out their duty. Internationally recognized principles only allow for the use of firearms in situations of self-defence or defence of others, and as a means to prevent a particularly serious crime involving a threat to life. Amnesty International is concerned that the use of firearms in the case of Marcel Ghinea was not in proportion to the seriousness of the offence or the situation.

**BACKGROUND:**

According to an article published in the Romanian daily *Adev\_rul* of 3 June 1995, on an unspecified date Marcel Ghinea, a 17-year-old Rom from G\_neasa, and three other men reportedly attempted to steal goods from a vehicle parked in front of the "International", a wholesale store in Voluntari, a village near Bucharest. A police patrol caught them in the act and the four men started to run away. One of the police officers fired two warning shots in the air and then fired his gun at Marcel Ghinea, who was shot and wounded. He was taken to the Bucharest Emergency Hospital. The other three men were later also detained and were under investigation.

Amnesty International has received several reports describing similar shootings. In most of these, the victims of the shooting were caught in the act of stealing goods or cars and, upon seeing the police, started to run away. The police officers then fired warning shots and subsequently fired shots at the running men, injuring some of them. In at least one incident this year a man was shot dead by the police. (According to Amnesty International's information, only in one case the victim was armed and reportedly tried to attack a police officer.)

Amnesty International is asking the Romanian authorities to be informed of the outcome of investigations made by competent military prosecutors into the use of firearms in these incidents. The organization has also urged the authorities to instruct the police forces and other law enforcement forces to refrain from using firearms unless this is warranted by the situation.