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Romania: The municipality of Cluj-Napoca should remedy the consequences of the forced eviction carried out more than a year ago

A year and three months after forcibly evicting 356 people, the majority Roma, from the centre of the city, the municipality of Cluj-Napoca has yet to take effective measures to address the violation of the right to housing.

On 19 March 2012, representatives of the families forcibly evicted from Coastei Street, together with the local activists from Working Group of Civil Organisations (gLOC) and a delegate of Amnesty International met the mayor of Cluj-Napoca.

The meeting focused on the immediate needs of the families forcibly evicted and relocated to inadequate housing, at the outskirts of the city, in "New Pata Rat". The activists also discussed the long term plans of the municipality to address the housing needs and the issue of social inclusion of the Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca. Furthermore, the activists expressed concerns of a project launched in February 2012 to develop the city's three waste transfer stations. One of them will be located in Pata Rat area, in close proximity to which about 2,000 Roma, including the evictees from Coastei Street, live. The project might lead to further evictions of people living in Pata Rat. The mayor also informed the delegates about the project carried out jointly by the municipality and the United Nations Development Programme that aims to address the housing needs of Roma in Cluj-Napoca.

The representatives of the people from Coastei Street informed the mayor about the inadequate housing conditions of the families living in modular houses provided by the municipality. They complained about overcrowding as each family, some consisting of up to 13 members, was provided with only one room which serves as a living room, kitchen and bedroom. Only cold water is supplied in a bathroom that is shared among four families.

The activists also raised concerns regarding the lack of access to water, sanitation and electricity of the remaining 29 families who were not provided with any alternative housing. These people constructed improvised housing on land behind the modular houses. The lack of any formal title to the land or the housing means that they could be evicted at any time.

The representatives of the community requested the mayor to extend the bus service to Pata Rat. The mayor informed them that this proposal was being resisted by residents of the nearby neighbourhood, some three kilometres away, where the bus currently stops, and he was therefore unwilling to commit to meeting such request.

Amnesty International welcomes the municipality's commitment to developing a plan to address the housing needs of Roma in Cluj-Napoca and urges the municipality to translate this commitment into concrete immediate policies that respect the rights of Roma living Cluj-Napoca.

The organization remains concerned about the urgent ongoing needs of those individuals who have already been forcibly evicted, which must be addressed without delay.

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