

URGENT ACTION

ROMA AT RISK OF FORCED EVICTION IN ROMANIA

Hundreds of people, mainly of Roma origin, are facing forced eviction in the next week by local authorities in Baia Mare, north-western Romania. If inhabitants of informal settlements do not have identity documents registered in Baia Mare, they are likely to be evicted and have their homes demolished.

On 23 August, in an interview for an online newspaper, *eMaramures*, the Mayor of Baia Mare announced a plan to evict "hundreds" of Roma and other socially disadvantaged people from four areas of Baia Mare. The Mayor stated that: "latest next week we will proceed with the action of removing those from Craica, Pirita, Ferneziu, even Horea, who are not from Baia Mare and live illegally in our city. Their number is quite high, some hundreds." The Mayor added that these evictions would involve the demolitions of houses in order to prevent other people from moving in. According to media reports, individuals and families who are not registered in Baia Mare will be sent back to their places of origin and prevented from returning back to town.

According to the media reports, approximately 1,100 predominantly Roma people could be forcibly evicted from the informal settlement in Craica area of Baia Mare by 1 October. The authorities are also planning to evict hundreds of other Roma from the Ferneziu, Pirita and Valea Borcutului areas. The municipal council decided in June 2011 to identify the land in the area of the former landfill in the outskirts of the city with the purpose of constructing housing units for socially disadvantaged groups. As this housing is not yet available, an eviction carried out now would render hundreds of families homeless.

The authorities have not consulted the affected communities on the eviction and relocation plans. Non-governmental organizations Romani CRISS and Sanse Egale, who work with the communities in Baia Mare, told Amnesty International that people had not received notices for the eviction and have not been given the opportunity to challenge such plans.

Please write immediately in English, Romanian or your own language:

- Urging the city authorities to ensure that any evictions of the communities currently living in the Craica, Ferneziu, Horea, Pirita and Valea Borcutului areas are carried out only as a last resort and in full compliance with international human rights standards;
- Urging them to ensure that the evictions are put on hold until genuine consultation with the affected communities has been conducted in order to identify all feasible alternatives to evictions and on resettlement options;
- Urging the city authorities to provide adequate alternative housing, compliant with requirements under human rights law and that people are not forcibly moved to their original places of residence and prevented from returning.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 AUGUST 2011 TO:

Mayor of Baia Mare
Cătălin Cherecheș
Primaria Municipiului Baia Mare
Str. Gh. Sincai nr. 37, Etaj I, cam. 9
Baia Mare
Romania
Fax: +40 262 212332
Email: primar@baiamarecity.ro
Salutation: Dear Mayor

Prime Minister
Emil Boc
Piata Victoriei nr. 1,
sector 1, Bucuresti
Romania
Fax: +40 21 313 98 46
Email: drp@gov.ro
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

And copies to:

Prefect of Maramures
Sandu Pocol
Instituția Prefectului - Județul Maramureș
Str. Gheorghe Șincai nr. 46
430311 Baia Mare
Romania
Fax: +40 262 213241
Email: prefect@prefecturamaramures.ro
Salutation: Dear Prefect

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International delegates visited Baia Mare in December 2010 and met with Roma inhabitants of the Horea, Ferneziu and Craica areas. In all three areas Roma individuals live in inadequate conditions and lack access to basic services such as adequate water supply and sanitation facilities. Roma individuals with whom Amnesty International spoke in the Ferneziu and Craica areas had expressed their insecurity as a result of the constant threat of eviction, resulting from the lack of formal tenancy, and the absence of adequate information about decisions that affect their lives.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Romania is under an obligation to ensure to everyone lawfully residing within its territory the right to move freely and to choose his or her place of residence. Amnesty International is therefore concerned at the reports that persons who are not originally from Baia Mare will be sent back to the places of their original residence and be prohibited entry to the city, as this would violate their right to freedom of movement and to choose their place of residence.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the planned evictions may amount to forced evictions, which are illegal under international law. Romania is also party to a range of international and regional human rights treaties, which strictly require it to prohibit, refrain from and prevent forced evictions. These treaties include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Revised European Social Charter. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized in its General Comment 7 that evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored. Even when an eviction is considered to be justified, it can only be carried out when appropriate procedural protections are in place and if compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing is provided. According to international standards, evictions should not be carried out in particularly bad weather or at night. Under international law, forced evictions and housing demolition must not be used as a punitive measure against people who lack residency or other status.

In July 2010, Amnesty International had opposed announced plans of the previous leadership of the city hall to forcibly evict more than a thousand Roma inhabitants of the Craica neighbourhood and resettle them in an industrial area in the outskirts of Baia Mare in the absence of adequate safeguards that would ensure compliance with international human rights standards. The plans were later dropped. On 29 June 2011 Amnesty International together with NGOs Romani CRISS and Sanse Egale expressed concern at the new city hall's leadership's proposition to relocate the Roma from various areas of the city in one single location in the outskirts, next to a former sewage treatment plant, as an act of discrimination and segregation. The organizations also condemned – as discriminatory – the construction of a wall to separate the Roma, inhabiting blocks in the Horea area, from the rest of the city.

Name: Communities in Craica, Ferneziu, Horea, Pirita, Valea Borcutului
Gender m/f: Both

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