

Amnesty International

Public Statement

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Romania: Stop forced eviction of Romani settlement in Craica, Baia Mare

Amnesty International has urged the local authorities of Baia Mare in Romania to stop the planned evictions of the approximately 1,100 Roma from the settlement of Craica and adopt the necessary measures to ensure that evictions do not take place unless safeguards required under the international human rights standards are in place. Amnesty International requested information and clarifications regarding the measures and steps taken by the local authorities in order to comply with the international and regional human rights standards regarding evictions.

According to reports from the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), on 10 June 2010 the then, Vice Mayor, Mircea Dolha, announced the plan to demolish the houses and evict approximately 200 Romani families from the Craica area, reportedly within a month. Romanian NGOs reported that the Roma received eviction summons in February but the actual eviction has been postponed due to weather conditions. Allegedly housing alternatives have been made available for some but not all families which will be moved in the proximity of a copper factory. According to media reports, individuals and families not originally from Baia Mare will reportedly be sent back to the places of their original residence and prevented from returning into the town.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the planned eviction may amount to forced eviction of hundreds of people if the authorities fail to provide adequate alternative housing to all the persons affected. Amnesty International reminded the Romanian national and local authorities that forced evictions constitute a violation of a range of international and regional human rights treaties that Romania is party to. Amnesty International highlighted that the Romanian authorities must ensure that evictions do not take place unless safeguards required under the international human rights law are in place and they do not result in individuals being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights.

A genuine consultation must be conducted with affected communities to identify all feasible alternatives to eviction; due process requirements must be put in place including provision of prior adequate notice, legal remedies, compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing; relocation sites and alternative housing must fulfil the criteria for adequacy of housing under international human rights law.

Amnesty International expressed its concerns regarding the allegations that persons who are not originally from Baia Mare will be sent back to the places of their original residence and will be prevented from returning to the town by the Gendarmerie. Such practice would represent a violation of Romania's obligation to ensure people's right to freedom of movement and of their right to choose their own place of residence.