

**BULGARIA**

**Torture and Other Ill-treatment of Roma in Glushnik**

**Amnesty International's Concern:** Amnesty International is concerned about allegations of apparently illegal detention, beatings and other ill-treatment of 20 Roma by a police officer and villagers in Glushnik on 3 and 4 November 1993. Amnesty International believes that this torture and ill-treatment may have been motivated by the victims' ethnic origin.

**Background:** According to the reports received by Amnesty International, during the night of 3 November 1993 a group of around 40 Roma men, women and children from the village of Topolchane, in the Sliven region, went to gather grapes illegally in the vineyards of the neighbouring village of Glushnik. At around midnight 20 of the Roma were apprehended by a police officer from Zhelyu Voivoda, Sergeant Stoyan Gheorghiev, and three armed men. On the way to Glushnik a police patrol car stopped the group and the officer and the armed men were reportedly told to release all the detainees except three or four men who would help unload the stolen grapes in the village. These instructions were not observed and the detained Roma were locked up in a pigsty in Glushnik.

At around 7am on 4 November the tolling of the church bells summoned all the people of the village to the pigsty where the Roma had been detained. One of the detainees, Ili Slavov Banov, was taken out of the pigsty and the people started to beat him with fists and sticks. After the beating Ili Slavov Banov and three other Roma managed to escape from the village. The remaining 16 Roma were taken out of the pigsty one by one and tied to a metal fence with their hands held behind their backs. They were then beaten by Sergeant Stoyan Gheorghiev and the crowd of gathered villagers. The village Mayor, Todor Ivanov Todorov, reportedly also participated in the beatings of some of the Roma.

Two of the Roma who were reportedly beaten were children, Kolyo Petrov Iliev, aged 11, and Petar Yordanov Khristov, aged 14. During the beatings, the Roma women, Zhivka Velikova Dimitrova, Liliana Dimitrova Todorova, Todorka Simeonova Ilieva, Mariyka Ilieva Dimitrova and Rilka Yordanova Dimitrova were reportedly threatened with rape. Other detained Roma who were subjected to beatings included: Boiko Yordanov Nikolov, Petar Iliev Dimitrov, Nikola Kinchev Dimitrov, Angel Slavov Banov, Vassil Slavov Banov, Petar Todorov Iliev and Todor Iliev Todorov.

At around noon a police patrol, contacted by the Roma who had earlier fled from the village, arrived in Glushnik and took the detained Roma to an office where they were issued with protocols on the committed offence and were subsequently released.

Amnesty International is concerned that the alleged beatings and other ill-treatment of Roma in Glushnik by the police officer, the mayor and other villagers in this incident would represent a flagrant violation of the international human rights standards to which Bulgaria has acceded. These include Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Amnesty International has urged the Bulgarian authorities to initiate an independent and impartial inquiry into the alleged beatings and other ill-treatment of the Roma in Glushnik, to make public its findings and to bring to justice anyone responsible for human rights violations.