

ROMANIA

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The Ill-treatment of Iulian Vlad

Amnesty International is concerned about reports that Iulian Vlad, a Rom, was ill-treated by police officers in T_rgovite. The Vlad family lives on Oltului street number 3, in a Roma neighbourhood where in the past police have reportedly carried out several raids in search of criminal suspects.

On 17 January 1996 at around 6am a group of police officers came to the Vlad family house and took Maria Vlad and her sons Georgian, Cristian, Iulian and 16-year-old Lauren_iu to the police station. They were presented there to two guards of a farm where some hay had been stolen. After the guards stated that they had never seen them Maria Vlad and her sons were released.

On 24 January 1996 the Vlad family were again summoned to the police station. Police officers who questioned Iulian Vlad reportedly beat him demanding that he should confess to the theft of hay. Maria Vlad told a representative of a Romanian human rights organization, APADOR-CH (the Romanian Helsinki Committee) that she heard Iulian's cries and went to engage a lawyer. Georgian Vlad claimed that he saw through an open door his brother Iulian crouching by the wall and pale in the face. When the lawyer arrived he was not allowed to speak to Iulian and was able to see only Georgian, Cristian and Lauren_iu. At 10pm the lawyer told Maria Vlad that the police would release all except Iulian. However only Cristian and Georgian Vlad while released that evening. Lauren_iu Vlad was taken to a detention centre for minors. He and Iulian were released on 26 January 1996 without being charged. Iulian Vlad explained that he was suspected of stealing the hay because he had an old arm injury. One of the farm guards had reportedly hit an arm of one of the thieves.

Amnesty International is concerned that the ill-treatment of Iulian Vlad represents a violation of Romania's international human rights treaty obligations. These include Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which state that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

As a state party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Romania is bound to initiate a prompt and impartial investigation whenever an individual has alleged that torture or other ill-treatment has occurred or, even if no complaint has been made, there are reasonable grounds to believe that such ill-treatment has occurred. Amnesty International urges the Romanian authorities to initiate promptly an independent and impartial inquiry into the alleged ill-treatment of Iulian Vlad, to make public the

findings and to bring to justice anyone found responsible for human rights violations.