

# URGENT ACTION

## FAMILIES HOMELESS AFTER FORCED EVICTION

**About 100 Roma, half of them children, were forcibly evicted by local authorities in the town of Eforie Sud in south-east Romania on 27 September. To date the affected families, including pregnant women and people with medical conditions, remain homeless.**

On 19 September around 100 Roma received eviction notices stating that they had until 26 September to vacate the buildings they were living in on Agricola Street in Eforie Sud, Romania, otherwise local authorities would demolish their houses. According to information received by Amnesty International, a number of families had lived in the buildings for up to twenty years. Their houses did not have construction authorisation, but local authorities had partly recognised that the families had some form of tenure rights. Some of the residents were registered and had identity documents stating their address as Agricola Street and they were connected to electricity and water.

On 25 September the families initiated legal proceedings, challenging the eviction order. However the local authorities did not halt the evictions pending the outcome of the judicial process and instead completely disregarded it. On 27 September police, gendarmes and local officials demolished the houses. The eviction was not preceded by any consultation with the families to explore alternatives, as required by international law and standards. Several families lost many possessions during the demolition; yet to date they have not received any compensation for either the losses, or the harm they have suffered so far. In addition they have not been given any adequate alternative accommodation.

Following the eviction the families, including many children, pregnant women and people with medical conditions, were left homeless. On 30 September the local authorities offered approximately half the Romani families temporary shelter, however this was in a dilapidated building which does not meet adequate housing standards and has no access to any essential services such as water. The remaining families have been left to sleep outside without even the provision of basic shelter, in conditions which pose severe risks to their health and well-being.

### **Please write immediately in English, Romanian or your own language urging the local authorities to:**

- Provide alternative adequate housing, including access to essential services for all families affected by the forced eviction as a matter of urgency;
- Ensure that all individuals who have had their rights violated as a result of the forced eviction have access to adequate remedy for all the losses and harm suffered, including compensation;
- Ensure that evictions are carried out only as a last resort and in full compliance with international human rights standards, including genuine consultation with the affected communities to identify all feasible alternatives to evictions and resettlement options;

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:**

#### Mayor of Eforie Sud

Ion Ovidiu Brailoiu  
Primarie Eforie  
Strada Progresului nr. 1  
Eforie Sud, Romania  
Fax: +40 24 17 48 979  
Email: primar@primariaeforie.ro  
Salutation: Dear Mayor

#### Prime Minister

Victor Ponta  
Guvernul Romaniei  
Piata Victoriei nr. 1  
Bucuresti, Romania  
Fax: +40 21 313 98 46  
Email: drp@gov.ro  
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

#### **And copies to:**

#### Prefect of Constanta

Eugen Bola  
Instituti Prefectului – Bulevard Tomis nr.  
51, Constanta, Romania  
Fax: +40 241 617 245  
Mail: cancelarie@prefecturaconstanta.ro  
Salutation: Dear Prefec

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International considers that this eviction amounted to a forced eviction due to the lack of procedural safeguards and resulting homelessness. Amnesty International is further concerned that this is yet another case of Romani communities being forcibly evicted from their homes by local authorities in violation of international human rights standards that Romania is bound by. It is one of a long list of forced evictions documented by Amnesty International and other organizations demonstrating the human cost on vulnerable groups such as the Roma of the failure of the Romanian government to outlaw this practice prohibited under international law and ensure that all evictions are subject to appropriate safeguards.

The European Court of Human Rights held in April 2012, in a landmark decision, that if a community lived in a place for a number of years, the authorities should not treat it the same as other “routine cases of removal...from unlawfully occupied property”. Instead, the authorities have an obligation to show that the eviction is ‘proportionate’ to the aim being pursued. The authorities also have to consider the risk of people being rendered homeless as a result of the evictions (*Yordanova et al v Bulgaria*).

Romania is a 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 and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized in its General Comment 7 that evictions should only be carried out as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored in genuine consultation with the communities affected.

Even if an eviction is considered to be justified, it can only be carried out when the appropriate procedural protections are in place and if compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing is provided to all people affected.

Please also see Amnesty International’s public statement about this case:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR39/018/2013/en>

Name: Romani community on Agricola Street

Gender m/f: Both

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