

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY

Embargoed until 10:00 GMT, 7 April 2011
AI Index: EUR 01/005/2011

Amnesty International – International Roma Day 2011 Stories, Background Information and video material

Amnesty International believes that systematic discrimination is taking place against up to 10 million Roma across Europe. The organization has documented the failures of governments across the continent to live up to their obligations.

For International Roma Day, 8 April, we have pulled together a package of materials that give examples of that discrimination in country after country.

This package contains links to research material showing discrimination in nine European countries along with video material for each and a number of edited videos and photographs – all of which are available for free use in this context.

Amnesty International has highlighted the repeated failures by the relevant authorities to end segregation of Romani children in education in Slovakia and Czech Republic or to guarantee Romani communities' right to adequate housing in Romania, Slovenia, Italy, France and Serbia.

Even when Roma should be able to enjoy the international protection, as is the case of Roma from Kosovo, they are being chased out of the countries and sent back to where they could face persecution and marginalization.

Amnesty International offers video and press materials to illustrate the range and interdependency of the human rights violations experienced by millions of Roma in Europe today.

For further information and to organize an interview with Amnesty International's experts, please call:

Lydia Aroyo, press officer, on +44 (0) 20 7413 5599, or +44 20 7413 5566,
mobile +44 (0) 7771 796 350, email: laroyo@amnesty.org

Serbia

Background: Forced evictions of Roma in Belgrade are on the rise leaving some housed in metal containers in segregated settlements and others returned to living in inadequate housing in southern Serbia. These forced evictions are part of a plan envisaging large scale infrastructure projects funded by loans from international financial institutions.

AV Material: Shots of people living in shacks in Belgrade, very poor housing conditions, no running water. Interview clips in Serbian and English describing the despair and insecurity.

B-Roll

Photos

Links to reports:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR70/011/2010/en/f4d99ef1-725a-462f-81f3-e413083a4228/eur700112010en.pdf> *Home is more than a roof over your head:*

[Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia](#) – 7 April 2011

[Serbia: Stop the forced evictions of Roma settlements](#) – 10 June 2010

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR72/009/2010/en> **Slovenia**

Background: Thousands of Roma in Slovenia are forced to live in poor housing conditions without running water or electricity. Their calls for the authorities to do something are being ignored.

AV materials: Material showing poor housing conditions, people having to travel long distances to take water from a stream, people taking water from a polluted stream, Interviews with Roma who highlight the difficulties of their lives, how they feel they are letting their children down and how unless the situation is resolved, the authorities may as well put them up against a wall and shoot them.

B-Roll

Photos

Links to reports:

[Slovenia: Parallel lives: Roma denied rights to housing and water in Slovenia](#)

France

Background: Policies and practices of the French government resulted in a series of forced evictions of Roma camps disproportionately targeting marginalized Roma families from Romania and Bulgaria.

AV Material An interview with Veronica Scognamiglio, Amnesty International's European Campaigner on Discrimination explaining Amnesty's concerns around forced evictions of Roma in France. Features footage of forced evictions in France.

B-Roll

Photos

Links to reports:

[French authorities must stop stigmatizing the Roma](#) – 5 January 2011

Hungary

Background: Between January 2008 and August 2009 six Romani men, women and children were killed in a series of similar attacks in different parts of the country. In the same period, local NGOs recorded over 40 separate attacks on members of the Romani community.

AV Material: Shots of burnt out house after a firebomb was thrown in killing a father and his four year old son. Red wreath on a tree, emotional interview clip with grandfather describing what happened.

Photos

Links to reports:

[Hungary: Violent attacks against Roma in Hungary: Time to investigate racial motivation](#) – 10 November 2010

Kosovo (Serbia)

Background: Roma and members of other minority communities, including children, are forcibly returned to Kosovo from European Union countries often with nothing but the clothes they are wearing. Roma children taken out of school in Germany and sent to Kosovo don't speak the language and are beaten up when they try to go to a local school. They feel German and can't understand why they were deported.

AV material: Shots of teenagers in Kosovo and their current living conditions. Interviews where they talk of being attacked at school and how much they miss their former life. Shots of the children looking through a wire fence at the school they can't attend, shots of boys describing how they now collect scrap metal to make some money. Girls with their German school book, messages to the classmates that they left behind.

B-Roll

Photos

Links to reports:

[No welcome anywhere: Stop the Forcible Return of Roma to Kosovo](#) – 28 September 2010

Slovakia

Background: Entrenched anti-Roma attitudes within the education system in Slovakia have led to a situation in which Romani children are sometimes literally locked into separate classrooms to prevent them from mixing with non-Roma pupils.

AV Material: Four year olds in a segregated nursery, teenagers in segregated classrooms.

B-Roll

Photos

Links to reports:

[*Slovakia: Unlock their future: End the segregation of Romani children in Slovakia's schools*](#) – 2 September 2010

Italy

Background: The "Nomad Plan" is a controversial housing plan paving the way for the forced eviction of thousands of Roma and the resettlement of most, but not all of them, in new or expanded camps on the outskirts of big cities. Its implementation is only driving those affected deeper into a cycle of forced evictions and destroying any chance of integration and social inclusion.

AV Material: Shots of Roma settlement, poor living conditions.

B-Roll

Photos

Links to reports:

[*The wrong answer – Italy's Nomad Plan violates the housing rights of Roma in Rome*](#) – 11 March 2010

Romania

Background: Roma families have been evicted against their will by the Romanian authorities and made to live for years in hazardous conditions next to waste dumps, sewage treatment plants or industrial areas on the outskirts of cities. When this happens, they don't just lose their homes. They lose their possessions, their social contacts, their access to work and state services.

AV Material: This news video highlights 75 Roma, including families with children, who were resettled by the local authorities next to a sewage treatment plant in Miercurea Ciuc, in central Romania. Their housing and living conditions are inadequate and do not comply with international standards.

Photos

Links to reports:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR39/005/2010/en>*Romania: Treated like waste: Roma homes destroyed, and health at risk, in Romania* – 26 January 2010

Czech Republic

Background: The Czech authorities place Romani children in schools for pupils with "mild mental disabilities", leaving them with a sub-standard education. Romani children are also segregated in Roma-only schools which often offer a lower quality education, limiting their future education and employment opportunities.

AV Material: Discrimination against Roma children in the Czech school system.

Photos

Links to report:

[*Czech Republic: Injustice renamed: Discrimination in education of Roma persists in the Czech Republic*](#) – 31 December 2009

Spokesperson Interview:

Interview with Amnesty International Spokesperson, Jezerca Tigani. Three clips, talking about the pan-European discrimination of Roma in education, housing, healthcare and the violent attacks that are happening in some countries. Clip on what needs to be done and how this is a human rights scandal and that Europe in 2011 should not be discriminating against a group

that numbers up to ten million people. Jezerca is Amnesty International's Regional Campaign Coordinator for Europe.

This can be downloaded from the following link: <https://adam.amnesty.org/asset-bank/action/viewAsset?id=130430>

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/slovenia-urged-provide-housing-and-water-its-roma-2011-03-16>**REGIONAL:**

[*Europe must break the cycle of discrimination faced by Roma in Europe*](#)

[*Europe: Left out: violations of the rights of Roma in Europe*](#)

End/