

URGENT ACTION

FORCED EVICTIONS OF ROMA IN ROMANIA

The authorities in Cluj, a city in north-western Romania, are preparing to carry out the forced eviction of Roma communities living in Coastei and Cantonului streets by the end of December. Amnesty International is concerned that reportedly houses will be demolished, and some families will be moved to new housing units that do not meet the criteria of adequate housing while others may face homelessness.

On 15 December, families in Coastei street received oral notifications indicating that they have to remove their belongings by 17 December, when the municipality will move them to alternative housing. According to the municipality, there are an estimated 345 people living in Coastei street, including an estimated 140 people who do not have residency in Cluj, and who are at risk of being sent back to their place of residence, raising concerns over their right to freedom of movement.

The authorities have not consulted the affected community on the eviction plans in a full and participatory way. The Mayor announced that 40 families will be housed in new housing units constructed on the outskirts of the city in the Pata Rat area and that those who refuse to be moved will not be provided with alternative housing. This area, according to information received by Amnesty International, is in the proximity of a garbage dump and separated from the rest of the city and the residents will face difficulties in accessing work opportunities and public services, including education and health.

An estimated 429 people (around 100 families) residing in houses, improvised shacks and containers in Cantonului street are also likely to be evicted. The number of alternative housing units which is being proposed by the city authorities is limited and is expected to accommodate only 40 families, which raises serious concerns that a number of people may be made homeless if they are evicted.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Urging the city authorities to ensure that any evictions of the communities currently living in Coastei and Cantonului streets are carried out only as a last resort and in full compliance with international human rights standards;
- Urging them to ensure that the eviction is put on hold until genuine consultation with the Roma community of Coastei and Cantonului Streets to identify all feasible alternatives to evictions and on resettlement options has been conducted;
- Urging the city authorities to provide adequate alternative housing, compliant with requirements under human rights law and that people are not forcibly moved to their original places of residence and prevented from returning.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 DECEMBER 2010 TO:

Mayor of Cluj-Napoca

Sorin Apostu
Str. Motilor 5
Cluj-Napoca 400001,
Romania
Fax: +40 264 599 329

Email:

sorinapostu@primariaclujnapoca.ro

Copies to:

Prime Minister

Emil Boc
Guvernul Romaniei
Piata Victoriei nr. 1,
Sector 1, Bucuresti
Romania
Fax: +40 21 313 98 46

Email: drp@gov.ro

President

Traian Basescu
Palatul Cotroceni,
Bulevardul Geniului nr. 1-3
Cod postal 060116
Sector 6 - Bucuresti
Romania

Fax : +40 21 410 38 58

Email: procetatean@presidency.ro

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International visited Cluj and the Roma communities living in Coastei and Cantonului streets in December 2010. The Roma communities were anxious about the threat of possible eviction. They told Amnesty International that – in the past several months - the city authorities had announced that they were to be evicted. The community in Coastei is situated about a five-minute walk from the city centre. The households receive mail to their address and at least some of them are connected to the electricity supply.

The city authorities confirmed - during a meeting with Amnesty International on 8 December 2010 - that they plan to move the families from Coastei Street to new housing units in Pata Rat area. According to the Deputy Mayor, construction of five units accommodating 20 families should be finished by 15 December. He stated that the future tenants would receive short-term rental contracts which may be extended. The municipality quoted multiple complaints from the staff of the nearby public library and an office of a multinational company in the proximity of the Coastei Street as the reasons for the eviction.

Under international law, evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all feasible alternatives have been explored in genuine consultation with the affected communities. The authorities then have a duty to provide them with adequate notice; legal remedies, adequate alternative housing and compensation. They must ensure that persons are not rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights as a consequence of eviction. According to international standards, evictions should not be carried out in particularly bad weather or at night and the authorities have a duty to provide those affected with adequate notice.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Romania is also under an obligation to ensure to everyone lawfully residing within its territory the right to move freely and to choose his or her place of residence. Amnesty International is therefore concerned at the allegations that persons who are not originally from Cluj will be sent back to the places of their original residence, as this would violate their right to freedom of movement and to choose their place of residence.

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, the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Revised European Social Charter. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasised in its General Comment 7 that evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored. Even when an eviction is considered to be justified, it can only be carried out when appropriate procedural protections are in place and if compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing is provided.

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