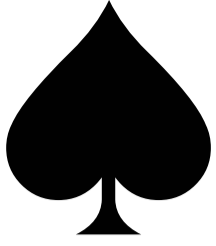




END FORCED EVICTIONS

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**





CLUJ-NAPOCA: FROM COASTEI STREET TO PATA RÂT

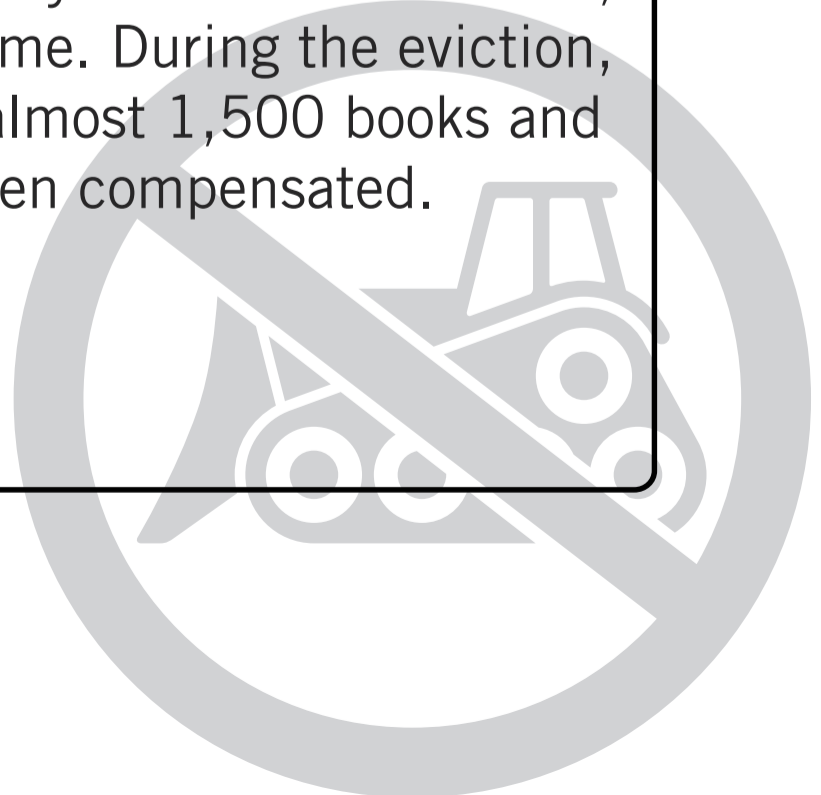


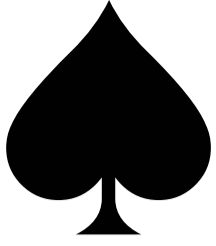
“They made a square [on the ground] and said ‘you have that much [land]...’ And they brought... a truck full of boards. They threw them on that piece of land and that was it. I had no one; it was in the middle of the winter...”

Bookseller Béla Novak was among 36 families left homeless after being forcibly evicted from Coastei street in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The families had to construct improvised houses next to existing units allocated to other evictees. Without written authorization from the municipality to build on the land, they risk homelessness at any time. During the eviction, Béla lost everything, including almost 1,500 books and other antiques. He has never been compensated.

Béla Novak at his bookstall in the centre of Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
© Mugar Vărzariu

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**





CLUJ-NAPOCA: FROM COASTEI STREET TO PATA RÂT

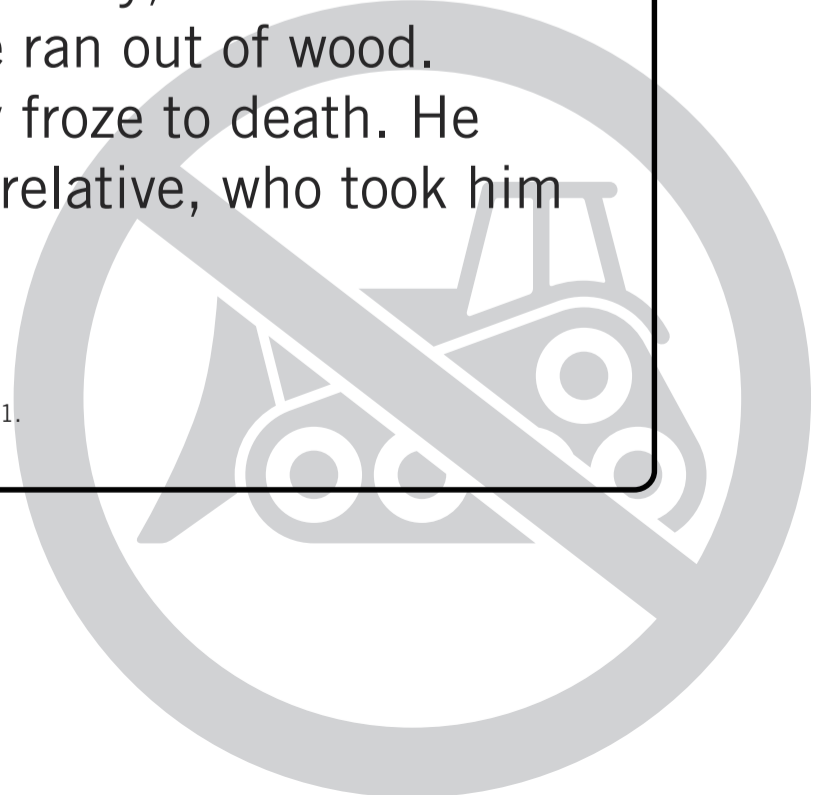


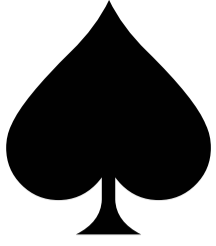
“Before the demolition, I was satisfied. Satisfied in the sense that... I was earning my own bread, I did not have problems with anyone, I was selling books and I did not want to make a fortune or anything. I just wanted to live, that’s all... I was making enough to live, to pay for the water, electricity... Now the problem is that you never know when they will come and say, “Gentlemen, you need to leave.”

Without adequate housing, Béla Novak barely survived his first two bitterly cold winters in Pata Rât, a settlement on the outskirts of the city, where he was relocated. In February 2012, he ran out of wood. Unable to make a fire, he nearly froze to death. He only survived with the help of a relative, who took him in over the winter.

Children in Colina Verde, Pata Rât, getting ready for school in September 2011.
© Mugur Vărzariu

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CLUJ-NAPOCA: FROM COASTEI STREET TO PATA RÂT

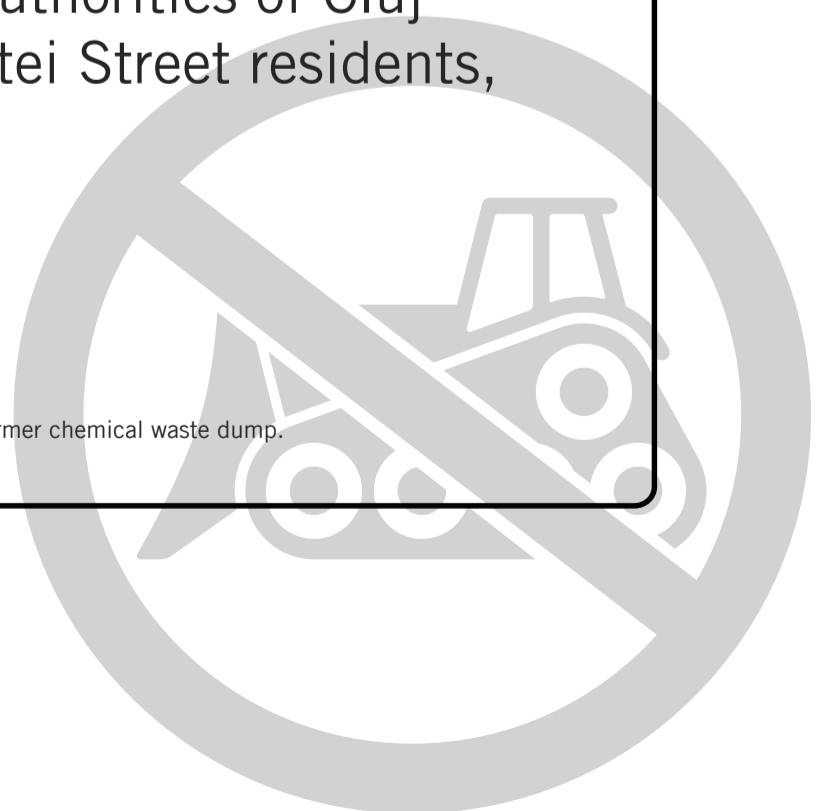


“It’s a trauma, what we experienced. Even when I am 80 years old I will not be able to tell my grandchildren... It was horrible. I don’t even want to remember.”

Among Romania’s housing rights obligations is the duty to consult with affected people on alternatives to a planned eviction and to provide residents with adequate notice beforehand; the authorities must also avoid carrying out evictions in bad weather. But with only 24 hours notice and an eviction undertaken in freezing winter temperatures, the local authorities of Cluj-Napoca have clearly failed Coastei Street residents, who are still waiting for justice.

Colina Verde lies at the top of a hill in Pata Rât overlooking a landfill and a former chemical waste dump.
© Grupul de Lucru al Organizațiilor Civice (gLOC)

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CLUJ-NAPOCA: FROM COASTEI STREET TO PATA RÂT

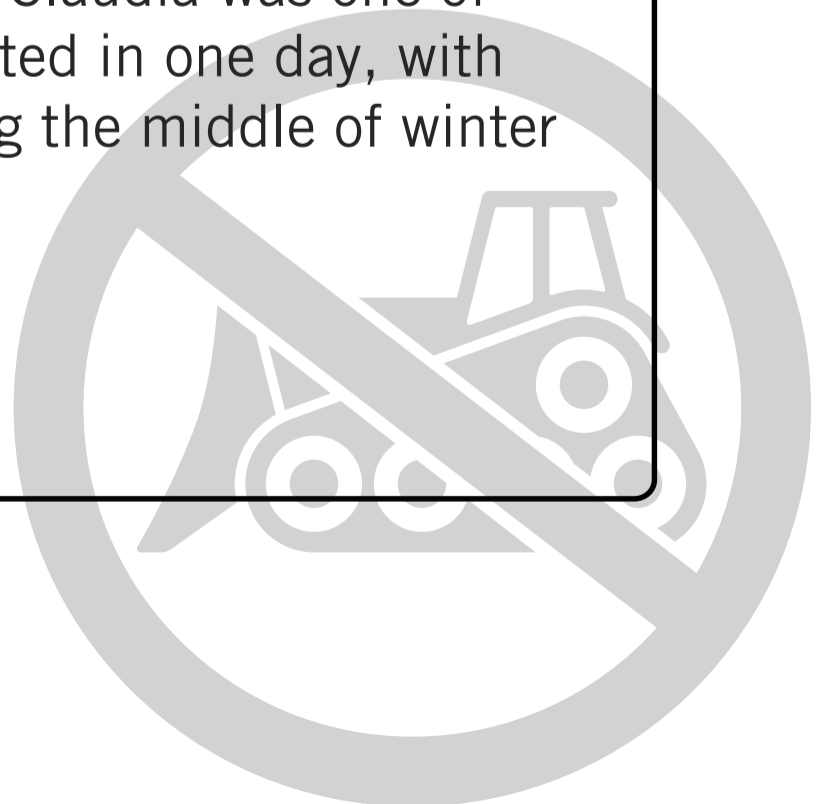


“They threw us close to garbage; as if we are garbage as well... It’s not that we want to go back to the centre. But to move us here... away from the city?”

At 7am on 17 December 2010, without adequate notice or consultation, local authorities forcibly evicted Claudia Greta and her family from their home on Coastei Street in Cluj-Napoca, where they had lived for several years. She was relocated to Pata Rât, an area on the outskirts of the city close to a landfill and a former chemical waste dump. Claudia was one of 350 mainly Romani people evicted in one day, with no prior consultation, and during the middle of winter in temperatures of -20°C.

Former Coastei Street residents, Claudia Greta and her son.
© Joshua Gross, Joshua Tree Photography

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CLUJ-NAPOCA: FROM COASTEI STREET TO PATA RÂT



“How does someone move all their possessions acquired over 20 years with just a day’s notice? All my things fell down from the truck [during the relocation]... including the fridge. [Almost] all I worked for... got lost on the way here.”

Forty of the families who were forcibly evicted from Coastei Street were allocated one 16-18m² room each in housing units of four rooms with shared bathrooms. Each communal bathroom in Pata Rât’s housing units is shared by up to 30 people. The other evictees – around 36 families – were left homeless.

A bulldozer demolishes homes on Coastei Street in the morning of 17 December 2010.
© www.citynews.ro

**AMNESTY
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CLUJ-NAPOCA: FROM COASTEI STREET TO PATA RÂT

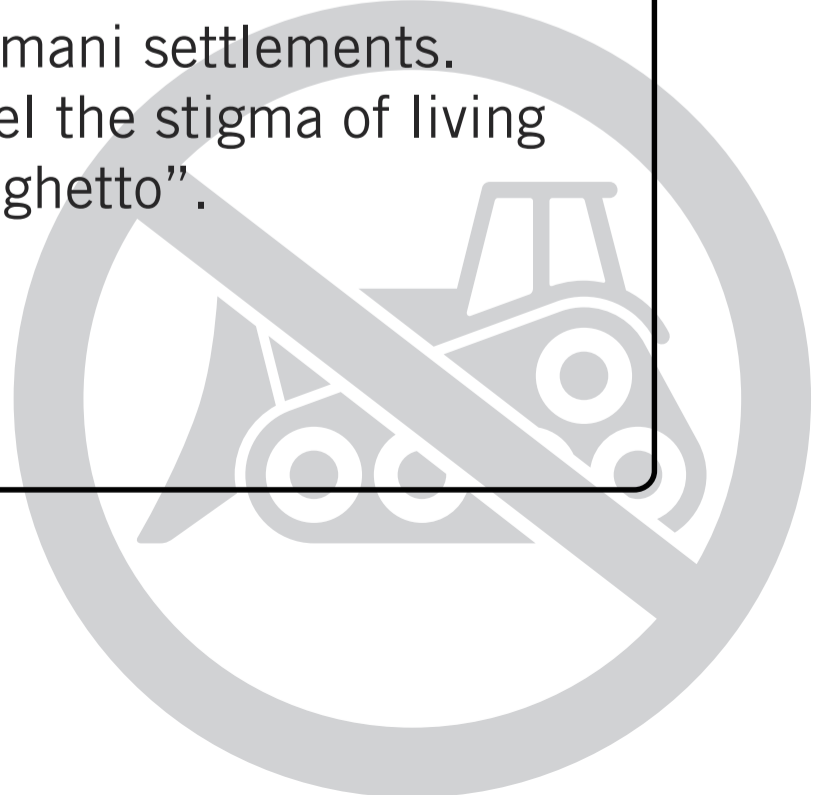


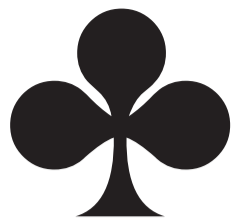
“Before, I used to be happy, I used to make jokes. But since I am here, I feel old and tired... When I wake up in the morning and I look from the window, I see the [garbage] dump and I feel like crying... [Before the eviction] we were in the centre and everything was close by.”

Pata Rât lies about 8km from Cluj-Napoca city centre and has poor transport connections, limiting access to education, employment and health care services. The housing units where 40 families were relocated are close to a garbage dump, a former chemical waste dump and other surrounding Romani settlements. The people living in Pata Rât feel the stigma of living in an area known as the “Roma ghetto”.

Teenagers walking to catch the school bus into town.
© Mugar Vărzariu

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL





PIATRA NEAMȚ: FROM MUNCII STREET TO VĂLENI 2



“We are completely marginalized. What was there [on Muncii Street] was somehow better. Now we are excluded from society. We are really excluded.”

In August 2012, the city authorities in Piatra Neamț forcibly evicted about 500 Roma from housing units in Muncii Street and relocated them to “social housing” in Văleni 2, an isolated area about 7km away from the city centre and separated from it by a former industrial area and a river. For former Muncii Street resident Dusia, it has been her third eviction in 10 years.

Former Muncii Street resident, Dusia, describes her forced eviction in August 2012 to Amnesty International delegates.
© Mugur Vărzariu

**AMNESTY
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PIATRA NEAMȚ: FROM MUNCII STREET TO VĂLENI 2



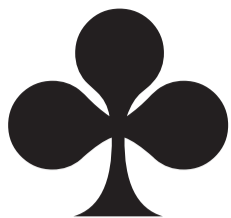
“If you were in our place, [wouldn’t you want] at least electricity, a road, a bus and a grocery store to buy bread? Wouldn’t you feel better to see a bit more light when you go outside [at night]? There are risks. The forest is close, there are bears and wolves.”

Văleni 2 is situated about 1km away from the nearest bus stop. The walk to it is along a muddy, unlit road. The housing provided is not adequate and the people living there feel abandoned and excluded from society.

Roma inhabitants from Văleni 2 light candles, their only source of light.
© Mugur Vărzariu

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PIATRA NEAMŢ: FROM MUNCII STREET TO VĂLENI 2

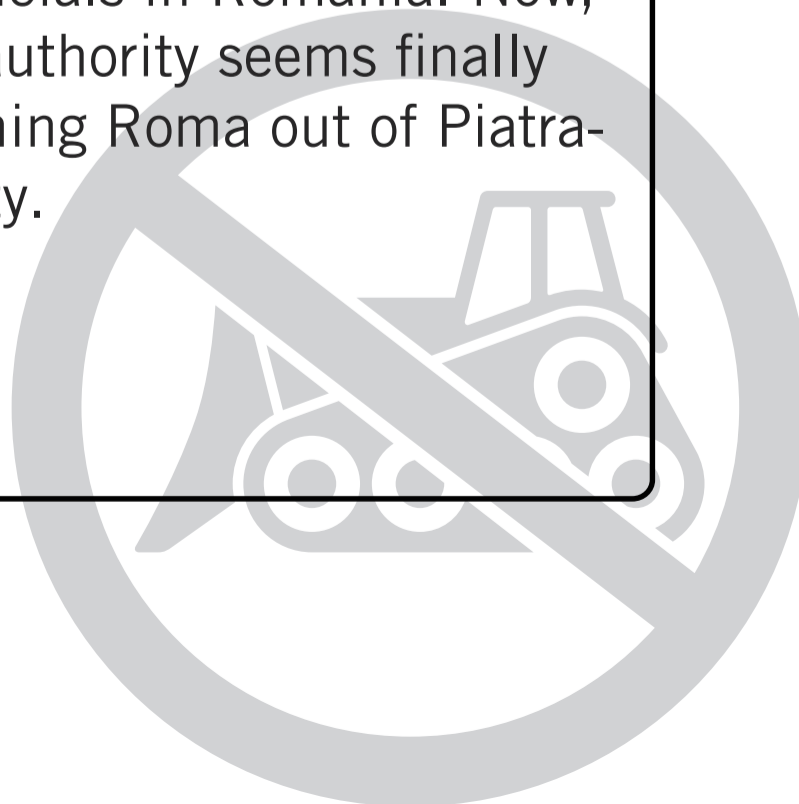


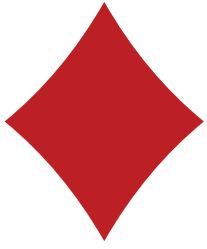
“Once he [the Mayor] had thrown us out of the city centre... and put us on Muncii... he did his best to ensure that we would not only be forced to live far from the outskirts of the city, but be completely isolated and compelled to live near forest. And he succeeded...”

In October 2001, the Mayor of Piatra-Neamţ announced his intention to create a Roma ghetto on a former chicken farm. His statement provoked strong criticism by international human rights monitoring bodies and NGOs as well as government officials in Romania. Now, nearly 12 years later, the local authority seems finally to have achieved its aim of pushing Roma out of Piatra-Neamţ to the outskirts of the city.

The housing units in Văleni 2 are isolated from the rest of the city.
© Mugur Vărzariu

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BAIA MARE: FROM CRAICA TO CUPROM



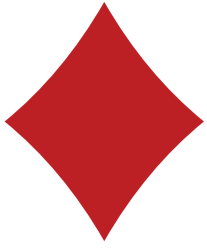
“You go to bed with fear and wake up with fear. You know that anytime they can come, and you are left with no roof over your head...”

In May-June 2012, the city authorities in Baia Mare forcibly evicted approximately 500 people from Craica, a long-standing Romani settlement. Half of the inhabitants resisted the eviction, however, including Rodica, who has lived in Craica for more than 20 years. Her courage inspired other members of her family and her neighbours. “We all agreed that we wouldn’t go. Whatever happened, we wouldn’t be leaving.”

Rodica and her family lived in Craica and opposed the forced eviction by the Baia Mare city authorities.
© Mugar Vărzariu

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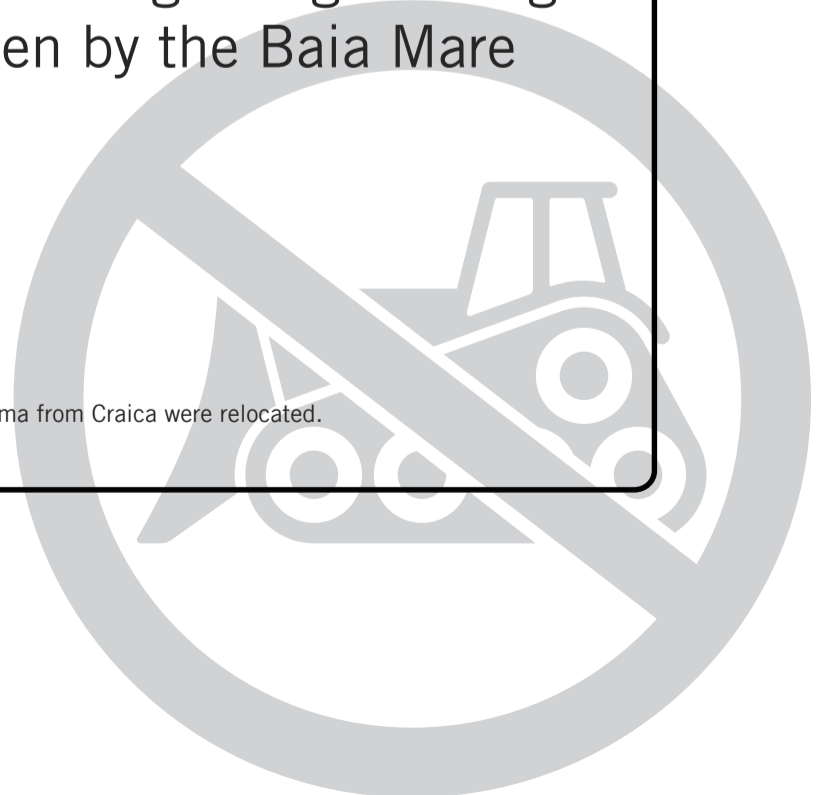
BAIA MARE: FROM CRAICA TO CUPROM

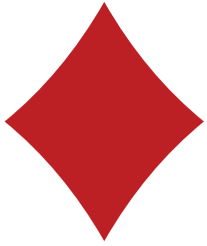


“In CUPROM, there were iron cabinets with a lot of jars... marked with a “danger” sign. I opened [one] and my eyes and mouth were burning, I couldn’t breathe. They were full of chemicals... That is why I called it the camp of death.”

Without adequate consultation and in a climate of intimidation and threats, 500 people were relocated in the summer of 2012 from Craica to a former chemical lab and two former office buildings of a disused factory, CUPROM. The housing conditions are inadequate and the promises made to the residents regarding housing costs have been repeatedly broken by the Baia Mare city authorities.

Building nr. 2 of the disused offices of the former CUPROM factory, where Roma from Craica were relocated.
© Mugur Vărzariu





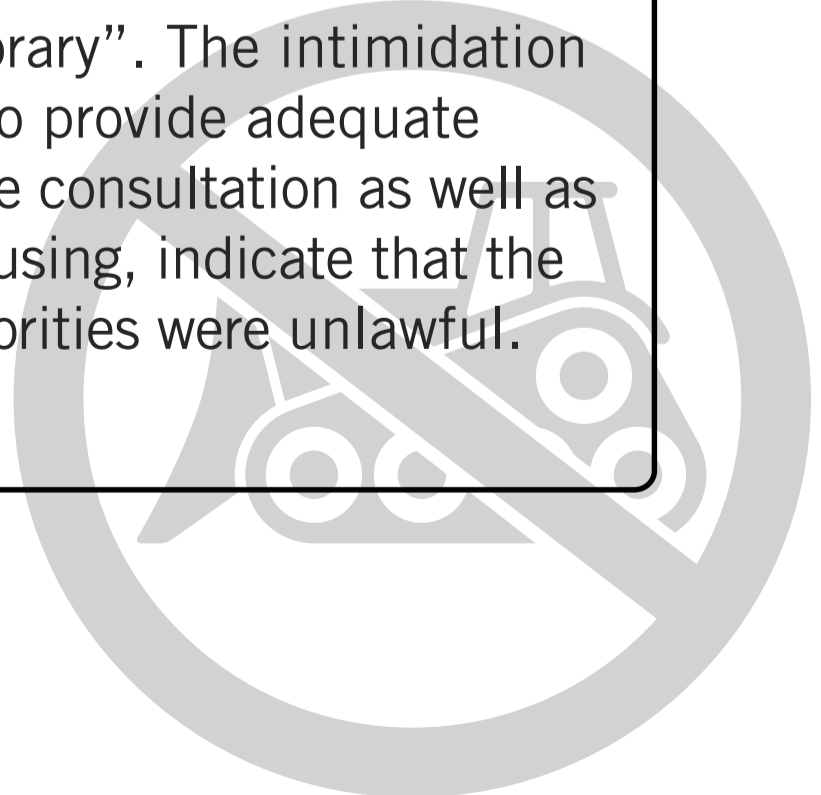
BAIA MARE: FROM CRAICA TO CUPROM

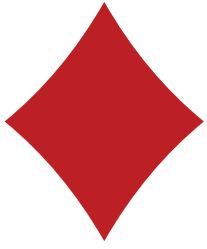


“How can you come and demolish my house? You didn’t build my house. I will not go to those rooms. I have seen them. You cannot take me to the camp of death with my children... even if you come with the bulldozer, I still won’t go out of my house.”

So far, the Baia Mare authorities have failed to begin a genuine dialogue with the remaining Craica residents in order to identify housing solutions jointly with them. For people in Craica, the threat of losing their home is now a permanent feature of their lives. The Roma in CUPROM fear that they could be evicted in the future as their tenancy there is “temporary”. The intimidation of Craica residents, the failure to provide adequate information and carry out genuine consultation as well as their relocation to inadequate housing, indicate that the evictions carried out by city authorities were unlawful.

The demolition of houses in Craica begins on May 2012.
© Mugur Vărzariu





Injustice seen from the sky



Satellite images from Cluj-Napoca and Piatra Neamț that show the spatial marginalization of Roma.
© Image 2013 DigitalGlobe Google Earth

