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Romania: Authorities of Baia Mare should not relocate Roma in inadequate housing

Today, 30 NGOs are protesting in Bucharest against the ongoing relocation of dozens of Roma families in Baia Mare into inadequate housing conditions. Amnesty International shares the concerns of the NGOs and calls on the local and national authorities to take immediate action to ensure that any resettlement is preceded by a genuine consultation with the Romani families and it meets international standards binding Romania.

According to media reports and the NGO Romani CRISS, on 1 June, dozens of Roma families were relocated by the municipality to a block of the former industrial factory CUPROM. At the time of the relocation, the rooms allocated to the Romani families contained cupboards hosting equipment and dangerous chemical substances used in the former chemical laboratory, including sulphuric and acetic acid. Warning signs were still displayed on the walls and the windows of the rooms. The same day the families were relocated, around midnight, few dozens adults and children started accusing nausea, vomiting, dizziness and headaches. Ambulances were immediately called to the location to provide medical assistance and two adults and 22 children were taken to the hospital.

The 1 June relocation followed an earlier relocation by local authorities of 70 Romani families to the former factory in May. Amnesty International has expressed concerns that the building does not meet basic adequacy standards according both to Romania's housing regulations and international standards.

The Romanian authorities are failing to respect their obligation under international and regional human rights treaties that Romania is party to that provide for relocation sites to fulfil the criteria for adequacy of housing. "Adequate housing should not be built on polluted sites, or in immediate proximity to pollution sources that threaten the right to health of inhabitants."

Amnesty International calls on the local and national authorities to immediately carry out genuine consultation with the Romani communities across the city of Baia Mare in order to identify all feasible alternatives and resettlements options, and ensure that housing alternatives provided comply with adequacy requirements under domestic and international law.

Background

Public statement – "*Hundreds of Roma in Baia Mare, Romania are at imminent risk of forced eviction by local authorities*" - <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR39/007/2012/en>

Public statement – "*Romania: Roma in Baia Mare face threat of forced eviction and harassment*" - <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR39/004/2012/en>