

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE
WORKING GROUP OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF ROMA FROM COASTEI**

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: EUR 39/013/2012
17 December 2012

Romania: Bring Roma back to the city of Cluj-Napoca!

About 200 people will surround the Cluj-Napoca's City Hall today, as a reminder of a forced eviction and relocation of about 300 people two years ago. The activists will be calling on the local authorities to bring the Roma back into the city.

Two years ago the local authorities of Cluj-Napoca forcibly evicted about 300 people – mostly Roma – from Coastei Street in the centre of the city. Since then, most of them have been living on the furthest outskirts of Cluj-Napoca, close to the landfill and a chemical waste dump in an area known as Pata Rât, where they were moved by the municipality.

Soon after their eviction, Romani people started a long struggle for justice. One of them is Ernest Creta who now lives in an improvised home in Pata Rât.

"It is a sad anniversary for us. On 17 December 2010, early in the morning, an impressive number of police forces arrived on Coastei Street, joined by the local authorities. We were overwhelmed and terrified by the number of police officers. Following pressure and verbal threats from the local authorities, we accepted the housing they proposed without knowing the exact location and the condition it was in," said Creta.

The new conditions were grim. About 30 out of the 76 evicted families were not offered any alternative accommodation and were effectively left homeless. The remaining 46 families were provided with one room per family. They have to share communal bathrooms with three other families. The main connection with the city is a school bus that leaves at 7.15 am in the morning. The closest regular bus stop is 2.5 kilometres away across the railway.

"We were integrated in the life of the city when lived in Coastei Street. We used to have jobs, the children went to high school, we had decent living standards, we had access to the park, etc. Here, by the garbage dump, we feel like in a ghetto, we feel discriminated against from all points of view," said Creta.

For the past two years, the Working Group of Civil Society Organizations (gLOC), Amnesty International and European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) have been supporting people from the former Coastei Street in their struggle for justice and dignity. In their joint statement issued at the anniversary of the December 2010 eviction, the organizations appeal on the local authorities in Cluj-Napoca:

"The municipality carried out a forced eviction that violated the human rights standards applicable in Romania. Central government failed to ensure that the municipality's actions did not lead to human rights violations. The local and central authorities have an urgent responsibility to put this violation right and to ensure that people who were forcibly evicted are relocated to adequate housing, and brought back to the city."

People evicted from Coastei Street have been trying to meet the authorities and raise the problem of their living conditions ever since the eviction.

The municipality finally met with the former Coastei Street residents earlier this year. The authorities said they would move the Romani people away from Pata Rat starting from 2014, as part of a joint project with UNDP. However details of the planned relocation are vague and the Romani communities face more years of living in substandard accommodation that stops them from fully accessing their basic rights to education, employment and healthcare.

There are about 1,500 people living in Pata Rât area, including about 300 people from the former Coastei. The others reside in Cantonului street, Dallas and a number of people live on the city's landfill. The housing conditions in which all these people live are largely inadequate. Iosif Adam, a resident from Cantonului Street explained:

"We just started to organise ourselves. We do not want to be forgotten. Many of us were moved here by the local authorities starting with 2002. We were told that this is going to be a temporary location for us. And here we are in 2012: struggling with the lack of identity papers, electricity, and water. It is a precarious life, life in a great insecurity,"

Background

To mark two years since the forced eviction and relocation to Pata Rât, the affected Romani communities, the Community Association of Roma from Coastei, Amnesty International, gLOC, ERRRC, tranzit.ro, AltArt and the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences at the Babes-Bolyai University have organised a series of events, **"Pata Rât 2012: Roma pushed to the margins."**

The organisations are reminding the Cluj-Napoca authorities and the Romanian government that around 1,500 Roma live currently in the area of Pata Rât. Around 42% of them were moved there by local authorities. Romani people from "Colina Verde", Cantonului street, Dallas and the landfill site suffer daily from the damaging effects of segregation and substandard housing conditions, as well as racism and discrimination that violate their human rights and dignity.

Amnesty International has documented that forced evictions of Romani communities from informal settlements form a pattern throughout Romania. There are no provisions in the law requiring the authorities to serve adequate and reasonable notice prior to evictions of people living in informal settlements. Although an eviction can be delayed if the people affected challenge the court decision, they often only learn about the decision a few days before the eviction, and also lack the resources to take legal action. Evictions should not take place during the winter under international human rights law.

Romania is party to a range of international and regional human rights treaties, which guarantee the protection of the right to adequate housing. 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 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and the Revised European Social Charter. In the light of the obligation stemming from these treaties, Romania has to ensure that the right to adequate housing, including the right to be protected from forced evictions, are respected throughout the country.

PATA RÂT 2012: ROMA PUSHED TO THE MARGINS

17.12.2012, 17.00-17.15, in front entrance of the City Hall
PATARÂT 2012. We belong to the city!

17.12.2012, 18.00-20.00, at "tranzit.ro/cluj", Brassai street nr. 5
PATARÂT 2012. No Place for Roma?

18.12.2011, 17.00-20.00, at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, BBU, Traian Mosoiu street nr. 71, room 5/2
PATARÂT 2012. Roadmaps for Roma.