

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 398/93 Fear for safety / fear of forcible expulsion 11 November 1993

ROMANIA The Roma community of H_d_reni

Amnesty International is concerned that the Romanian authorities are failing to protect the lives and safety of the Roma community in the Transylvanian village of H_d_reni. Police officers acquiesced in acts of racial violence which occurred there in September, and Amnesty International's current fears are heightened by reports of renewed threats against the Roma from other residents of H_d_reni. The organization is also concerned that the majority of the Roma community may be forcibly expelled from H_d_reni.

On 29 October 1993 a group of about 20 Roma reportedly came to the House of Culture to participate in a meeting with local authorities and a representative of the Romanian Government. After the group was refused entry to the building, some 60 Romanian and ethnic Hungarian residents of H_d_reni arrived, armed with pitch forks, sticks, whips and other objects threatening to attack the Roma and chanting: "The bloody Gypsies have to leave". The Roma turned to face the wall of the building to demonstrate their peaceful intentions. Police officers prevented an attack on the Roma, but none of the armed crowd were disarmed or charged.

At a meeting on 2 November a 25-member commission of H_d_reni residents was established to decide which Roma families would be allowed to stay in the village. Present at this meeting were officials of the County Council, the Deputy Prefect, a representative of the Romanian Government, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of Chetan, and the Chief of Police of Chetan. After protests, two Roma were appointed to the commission, which then met on 3 November and reportedly decided to allow four Roma families to remain in H_d_reni and that 21 families should leave by 6 November. On 8 November an official of the Mure_Prefect's office arrived in H_d_reni apparently to prepare the legal grounds for the expulsion of Roma families. Residents of H_d_reni have publicly threatened to attack the Roma again if the expulsions are not carried out.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Three Roma were killed and some 170 forced to flee from H_d_reni on 20 and 21 September 1993, after a night of racial violence. Following a fight in which Pardalian L_c_tu_, a Rom, was allegedly injured with a pitchfork, a Romanian, Ghe_an Cr_ciun, was killed. Pardalian L_c_tu_ and his brother Lucian Repa L_c_tu_, who was allegedly responsible for the killing, fled to the house of Lucretia Moldovanu. Several hundred Romanians and ethnic Hungarians from H_d_reni and neighbouring villages gathered outside the house and set it on fire. According to reports two police officers arrested and handcuffed the two brothers when they tried to escape from the burning house. The villagers grabbed the two men and beat and kicked them to death. A third Rom, afraid

to leave the house, died in the fire. Although armed, the policemen reportedly did not take any steps to protect the brothers.

Reports stated that some 45 police officers arrived soon after the violence began, but apparently failed to protect the local Roma community who were forced to flee as the crowd set another 12 houses on fire and vandalized four more.

Many of the Roma were too afraid to return to the village, and some were reportedly ill-treated and harassed by police when they tried to collect their belongings.

On 28 September Amnesty International urged President Ion Iliescu to ensure that the inquiry into the lynching of the Roma in H_d_reni, the destruction of houses and the alleged ill-treatment of Roma who tried to return to the village, would be prompt, thorough and impartial and in accordance with international standards. Amnesty International requested information on measures taken to ensure that members of the Roma community who were forced to leave H_d_reni could return safely to their homes. No such information has yet been received. Amnesty International is concerned that the authorities have not taken the necessary measures to ensure that members of the Roma community are able return to the village in safety. Several families still temporarily sheltered in Ludu_ have been unable to return because of death threats.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes, telgrams, express and airmail letters either in English French, German or your own language:

- expressing Amnesty International's concern about reports that the lives and safety of the Roma in H_d_reni are not being adequately protected;
- urging the authorities to take all necessary measures to protect the Roma in H_d_reni from racial violence and to stop their forcible expulsion;
- seeking assurances that the fundamental human rights of the Roma in H_d_reni are respected without discrimination on any grounds;
- urging the authorities to promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigate all human rights abuses against the Roma in H_d_reni and to bring to bring to justice all those found responsible.

APPEALS TO:

1. President:

D-lui Ion Iliescu
Pre_edintele României
Pia_a Victoriei
Bucure_ti, Romania

Telegrams: Presendinte Iliescu, Bucure_ti, Romania

Faxes: + 401 312 11 79

Salutation: Dear President

2. Prime Minister:

D-lui Nicolae V_c_roiu
Prim Pre_edinte al Consiliului de Mini_tri
Str Academiei 34
Bucure_ti, Romania

Telegrams: Prim Pre_etinte V_c_roiu, Bucure_ti, Romania

Faxes: + 401 312 07 70

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

3. Minister of Justice:

D-lui Petre Ninosu
Ministru al Justi_iei
B-dul M Kog_lniceanu 33
Bucure_ti Sector 5, Romania
Telegrams: Ministru Petre Ninosu, Bucure_ti Sector 5, Romania
Faxes: + 401 613 12 19
Salutation: Dear Minister

4. Minister of Foreign Affairs:
D-lui Teodor Viorel Melescanu
Ministru Afacerilor Externe
Pia_a Victoriei
Bucure_ti, Romania
Telegrams: Ministru Melescanu, Bucure_ti, Romania
Faxes: + 401 312 75 89
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF APPEALS TO: diplomatic representatives of Romania accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 December 1993.