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Hundreds of Roma people in Baia Mare, Romania are at risk of being rendered homeless

Hundreds of people, the majority of Roma origin, are facing the threat of forced eviction by local authorities in Baia Mare, north-western Romania. Inhabitants of informal settlements who do not have identity documents registered in Baia Mare have been threatened with expulsions and the demolition of their homes.

On 23 August in an interview for an online newspaper *eMaramures*, the Mayor of Baia Mare announced a plan to evict “hundreds” of Roma and other socially disadvantaged people from four areas of Baia Mare. The Mayor stated:

“We will proceed next week at the latest with the action of removing those from Craica, Pirită, Ferneziu, and even Horea, who are not from Baia Mare and who are living illegally in our city. Their number is quite high, some hundreds.”

The Mayor added that these evictions would involve the demolition of houses in order to prevent other people from moving in. According to media reports, individuals and families who are not registered in Baia Mare will be sent back to their places of origin and be prevented from returning back to town.

Amnesty International, Romani CRISS and Sanse Egale are deeply concerned by the statements made by the mayor of Baia Mare. If the forced eviction and expulsion is carried out, the authorities will be violating international and regional human rights standards, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the European Social Charter.

Under human rights law, evictions can be carried out only as the last resort, they must be preceded by genuine consultation with the affected communities, all affected individuals should be provided with adequate notice and access to legal remedies and compensation for their losses. The authorities are also obliged to provide adequate alternative housing for those who cannot provide for themselves.

Members of the affected communities told Romani CRISS and Sanse Egale that they were not informed about the plans of the municipality and that they were not consulted.

The NGOs also criticize the Mayor’s intention to target particularly individuals lacking ID cards from Baia Mare. If carried out, such evictions would amount to a punitive measure against people who lack residency or other status and would be illegal under the ICESCR which is binding in Romania.

Amnesty International, Romani CRISS and Sanse Egale note with concern that this is now the second attempt by local authorities in Baia Mare to evict Roma people living in settlements. Last year in July, the then-Vice Mayor announced a plan to demolish the houses and evict approximately 200 Romani families from the informal settlement in the Craica area.