

URGENT ACTION

STOP NEW FORCED EVICTION OF ROMA IN BAIIA MARE

Romani families in the Craica settlement in the town of Baia Mare, Romania, are at imminent risk of a new forced eviction. On 2 August, approximately 30 families reportedly received orders asking them to leave their houses by 5 August. Around 15 houses were demolished on 5 August, and the remaining families could be forcibly evicted at any time.

In spring and summer 2012, the local authorities of Baia Mare forcibly evicted about half of the residents of the informal settlement of Craica. The evicted individuals and families were relocated to inadequate housing conditions in buildings of a former chemical factory CUPROM. After the 2012 eviction, some 500 people continued to live in Craica.

On 2 August, approximately 30 families received demolition orders issued by the local police. In the orders, the authorities informed the residents that their property lacked the necessary authorization and had to be demolished by 5 August. A failure to do so will result in demolitions carried out by the local authority. The residents were reportedly told that if they demolish their houses, they would be allowed to build new ones in a different part of Craica. Three families complied with the order and demolished their homes. On the morning of 5 August, bulldozers arrived to Craica and demolished 15 homes. The residents of these houses have not yet been provided with any alternative housing.

Residents of Craica have been living for over three years now in fear of new forced evictions that may result in them being rendered homeless. The local authorities have so far showed little or no respect for their right to adequate housing – including the right to be protected from forced evictions – of Roma in living in Craica. The national authorities also have done very little to ensure that the Romani citizens of Baia Mare are not subjected to forced evictions, and that those responsible for these human rights violations are held accountable.

Please write immediately in English, Romanian or your own language:

- Urging the local authorities of Baia Mare to immediately halt the evictions, and demolitions of homes, of all the Craica residents, and to provide all those already evicted with adequate alternative housing;
- Reminding the Baia Mare authorities that any evictions of the communities currently living in Craica may be carried out only as a last resort and in full compliance with international human rights standards;
- Calling on the authorities in Baia Mare to refrain from any eviction until genuine consultation with the affected communities has been conducted in order to identify all feasible alternatives to evictions and resettlement options, and until adequate alternative housing, compliant with requirements under human rights law, is provided to all persons affected.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO:

Mayor of Baia Mare

Catalin Chereches
Primaria Municipiului Baia Mare
Str. Gh. Sincai nr. 37, etaj 1, cam. 9
Baia Mare, Romania
Fax: + 40 262 212 332
Email: primar@baiamarecity.ro

Salutation: Dear Mayor

Prime Minister

Victor Ponta
Guvernul Romaniei
Piata Victoriei nr. 1
Sector 1, Bucuresti, Romania
Fax: + 40 213 13 98 46
Email: drp@gov.ro

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

And copies to:

Prefect of Maramures
Anton Rohian
Institia Prefectului-Judetul Maramures
Str. Gheorghe Sincai nr. 46
430311, Baia Mare, Romania
Fax: + 40 262 213241
Email: prefect@prefecturamaramures.ro

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Craica is one of the biggest informal settlements inhabited by Romani individuals in Baia Mare. Amnesty International delegates have visited Baia Mare on a number of occasions since December 2010.

The local authorities of Baia Mare announced their plans to evict hundreds of Roma from Craica and other settlements of the city as early as July 2010. The then vice-mayor announced plans to resettle the residents in an industrial area at the outskirts of Baia Mare in the absence of adequate safeguards that would ensure compliance with international human rights standards. In August 2011, the current mayor of Baia Mare announced the plan to evict hundreds of Roma and other socially disadvantaged people from four areas of the city who did not have identity papers registered in Baia Mare and return them back to their places of origin. There were strong reactions from international and national NGOs, but also from USA Embassy in Bucharest. On both occasions the plans were dropped.

In May and June 2012, the municipality of Baia Mare forcibly evicted about 500 residents of Craica and relocated them to inadequate housing conditions in buildings that used to belong to the former chemical factory CUPROM. The remaining (about 500) residents continued to live in Craica. On 2 August, 30 families received demolition orders issued by the local police. In the orders, the authorities informed the residents that their property lacked the necessary authorization and had to be demolished by, 5 August. A failure to do so will result in demolitions carried out by the local authority. The residents were reportedly told that if they demolish their houses, they would be allowed to build new ones in a different part of Craica. On the morning of 5 August, bulldozers arrived to Craica and demolished 15 homes. The residents of these houses have not yet been provided with any alternative housing.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the newest eviction in the absence of adequate safeguards will amount to forced evictions, which are prohibited under international law. The European Court of Human Rights, as recently as 24 April 2012, held in a landmark decision that the removal of a Romani community in Bulgaria, from land that they were occupying informally, would be unlawful. The Court emphasized that if a community lived in a place for a number of years, the authorities should not treat it the same as other "routine cases of removal... from unlawfully occupied property". Instead, the authorities have an obligation to show that the eviction is 'proportionate' to the aim being pursued. The authorities also have to consider the risk of people being rendered homeless as a result of the eviction.

Romania is a party to a range of other international and regional human rights treaties, which strictly require it to prohibit, refrain from and prevent forced evictions. 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. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized in its General Comment 7 that evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored.

Even when an eviction is considered to be justified, it can only be carried out when the appropriate procedural protections are in place and if compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing is provided to all people affected.

Name: Community in Craica

Gender m/f: Both

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