



CEDAW

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UN COMMITTEE : SLOVAKIA MUST FACE ITS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS ROMANI VICTIMS OF FORCED STERILIZATION

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradna)

PRESS RELEASE

31 July 2008, Koalice, New York - The UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Committee) calls the Slovak Government to take measures to acknowledge the complaints of forcibly sterilized Romani women and provide them with effective remedies.

In a report submitted to the Committee's experts who examined the measures taken by Slovakia to protect women's rights, the Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradna), with the support of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), highlighted Slovak Government failure to properly address and rectify the situation concerning Roma women who are exposed to constant pervasive prejudice and discrimination, in particular in reproductive and maternal health services. The report revealed evidence showing that public hospitals segregate Roma women (placing them in « Gypsy Rooms ») and verbal and physical abuse of Roma women by doctors and nurses. Even more disturbing, Romani women have been subjected to forced and coerced sterilization whilst the Slovak government has failed to respond or conduct an effective and transparent investigation into these practices.

In its recommendations, the Committee deplored the failure of the Slovak Government to recognize the practice of forced sterilizations and expressed its deep concern. The Committee recommended that the Slovak Government monitor sterilization procedures so as to ensure that the patient is able to provide fully informed consent before any sterilization procedure is carried out, and take appropriate sanctions in the event of a violation.

Poradna and FIDH welcome the findings and recommendations of the Committee that fully reflect the submissions of both organizations to the Committee. Vanda Durbáková, representative of Poradna commented: "the position of the Slovak Government on the practice of forced and coercive sterilization of Romani women must be changed. We call upon the Government to accept its full responsibility for the violations, provide remedies to the victims and punish the perpetrators. The Government must also adopt comprehensive measures to address the practice and our organizations are willing to assist the Government in the process. "

The Center has been assisting victims of forced sterilization since 2002 and initiated a number of legal proceedings on their behalf. It considers that the practice has never been effectively investigated, in violation of domestic and international legal standards.

[Full text of the Committee's Concluding Observations](#)

[Pordana/ FIDH Joint Report to the CEDAW Committee](#)

<http://www.fidh.org/UN-COMMITTEE-SLOVAKIA-MUST-FACE-ITS>