

Romanian court victory: Forced eviction of Roma in Cluj-Napoca illegal

Amnesty International

07 January 2014

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and Amnesty International welcome the decision of the Cluj-Napoca County Court (Tribunal) that the Mayor's decision to forcibly evict around 300 Roma in December 2010, to a site adjacent to a waste dump, was illegal.

The court ordered the city authorities to pay damages to the Romani applicants for their eviction and relocation to Pata-Rât, and for the inadequate conditions of that housing. The Court also required the city to provide the applicants with adequate housing in line with the minimum standards set out in Romanian law. The decision is not final.

The ERRC supported a local law firm, Podaru, Buciuman and Associates, to take the case on behalf of approximately 200 Romani applicants, and previously helped the community to set up an association to fight for their rights.

"As director of the association that represents the interests of the evicted community from Coastei, I express my gratitude to the Romanian justice system because they examined the evidence and didn't just consider political interests," said Florin Stancu Executive Director, Community Association of Roma from Coastei.

Claudia Greta is a Roma rights activist and member of the Community Association of Roma from Coastei. She said, "This decision is very important as we have been continuously fighting for three years now. We finally got a favourable result and we see that justice can be fair in Romania. Despite the traumatic effect of the eviction, this judgment gives us the strength to continue advocating for our rights, which were violated in December 2010. We will keep fighting until we can return to the city, where we belong."

The ERRC and Amnesty International are now calling on the city authorities to implement the judgment as a matter of urgency.

"We welcome the court's decision that this forced eviction was illegal," said Dezideriu Gergely, executive director of the ERRC. "The Roma evicted to Pata-Rât have spent three years pushed literally to the edge of a waste dump, finding it much harder to access school, work and healthcare. We ask the authorities not to appeal this sound decision, to find alternative suitable housing and to engage in dialogue with the community, allowing the Roma to live and work as part of the city".

While the ERRC and Amnesty International welcome the decision, the fact remains that the Coastei Street community is starting its fourth year living in Pata-Rât. The evicted families continue to live in polluted, overcrowded and dangerous conditions. It is imperative that the local authorities act on this judgment immediately.

"The decision of the Cluj-Napoca County Court sends a strong signal to the local authorities throughout Romania, that forced evictions and relocations of people into inadequate housing conditions is unacceptable. It also sends a signal to the government of Romania that there is a need to adopt

regulation that would clearly outlaw forced evictions,” said Jezerca Tigani, the deputy director of Europe and Central Asia Programme of Amnesty International.

The situation in Pata-Rât is not unique, and reflects a worrying trend affecting Roma across Romania. As recently as September 2013 in Eforie Sud, 101 people, including 55 children, were made homeless in severe weather conditions after their houses were demolished ostensibly due to lack of building permits. No remedy was made available to suspend the eviction, pending judicial review.

The ERRC and Amnesty International call on all Romanian authorities to take note of the decision of the Court in relation to the illegal eviction from Coastei Street and to cease all evictions which target Romani communities in this way.

[Original article](#)