

FORUM: Human Rights Commission (HRC) Sub-commission 1

QUESTION OF: Combating Discrimination Against Roma

SUBMITTED BY: OCHA

CO-SUBMITTERS: Bangladesh, Chad, Columbia, Comoros, Cuba, ECE, ESA, Eritrea, Human Rights Watch, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Mali, Montenegro, Myanmar, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan

FORUM: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SUB-COMMISSION 1,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Keeping in mind that Roma is Europe's largest ethnic minority, with between 10 to 12 million individuals facing widespread discrimination in areas of life including housing, education, employment and health,

Recognizing that the UN Human Rights Office has been working with a number of countries to strengthen the effective exercise of human rights of Roma people and in particular Roma women - to take part in local, regional, national and international decision making,

Acknowledging the efforts of The Decade of Roma Inclusion, spanning from 2005 to 2015, which, despite its mixed success, was still a large step forward in ending discrimination against the Roma, especially with the involvement of many Balkan states, which have large populations of Roma minorities,

1. **Recommends** the United Nations special rapporteur to conduct a study on the human rights situation amongst the Roma people in various countries, within the time frame of one year, similar to the one conducted in 2015, focusing on topics including but not limited to:
 - a) locations where anti-Roma opinions are very common
 - b) reasons for people to have anti-Roma opinions
 - c) the commonality of such actions against Roma as:
 - i. hate speeches
 - ii. physical attacks
 - iii. anti-Roma protests or rallies;
2. **Emphasizes** the need for education within the Roma community in all countries and asks countries to help educate Roma communities in ways including but not limited to:
 - a) providing volunteer educators from organisations such as the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) until Roma communities can integrate into the education system
 - b) acceptance into public schools by facilitating the process of documentation for Roma people
 - c) measures against anti-Roma discrimination in schools such as:
 - i. safe places within schools where students can go if they feel targeted
 - ii. training for teachers to specifically address discrimination against Roma
 - iii. a system for students to report bullying that they have seen or experienced;
3. **Implores** member states to promote the idea of education amongst their Roma population through means such as but not limited to:
 - a) having ambassadors to Roma families and children who educate them about the role of

- education in lessening economic disparity
 - b) lunch and/or breakfast provided for students who qualify for assistance by proving their family's income and being approved by the local school or government
 - c) working with UNICEF to educate Roma children on the importance of receiving and maintaining higher education;
4. Urges member states to promote and encourage pro-Roma education in areas where anti-Roma ideologies are common and or accepted through means such as but not limited to:
- a) have government officials address the importance of human rights in public seminars and official social media
 - b) make copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights available in public areas
 - c) have schools host assemblies to discuss topics such as the importance of human rights and the history of the Roma people
 - d) organize a state-sponsored International Roma Week celebration beginning on the week of April 8th, in order to:
 - i. increase awareness of Roma culture, traditions, and history - including the Holocaust
 - ii. increase ethnic pride amongst the Roma
 - e) host community contests such as video or writing contests about topics such as the importance of human rights and positive experiences with Roma people;
5. Encourages countries to implement a no-tolerance policy of anti-Roma behaviour amongst their government employees;
6. Further encourages that member nations include training modeled after the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Professional Training Series No. 5 (Add.2 Human Rights and Law Enforcement) in their respective police forces, providing materials and human rights training related to their line of work;
7. Invites member states to help Roma access essential pharmaceuticals and medical care by:
- a) appointing Roma to participate in the design and use of health programs and policies that affect their lives
 - b) ensuring that health and social services, as well as legislation, examine the social determinants of health that affect Roma communities
 - c) training health care workers in working with minorities and marginalized populations
 - d) educating Roma on the importance of preventive healthcare such as vaccination
 - e) educating Roma on the purpose of the emergency medical care system;
8. Further emphasizes the need for nations to align themselves with the OHCHR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by implementing the following actions:
- a) connecting settlements to urban centres through adequate infrastructure, ensuring access to employment opportunities and healthcare
 - b) dismantling of fences and other means of confinement segregating Roma encampments
 - c) guaranteeing legal protection against unwarranted demolition of one's home and forced evictions
 - d) educating Roma communities of their legal rights to be protected against discrimination and the actions to be taken if those rights are violated
 - e) exhaustion of all other feasible alternatives before considering eviction but if necessary due to consistent violation of tenure agreements:
 - i. carrying out due process in accordance with domestic and international law
 - ii. providing effective legal resources and adequate compensation such as alternative housing
 - iii. providing an adequate prior warning and granting the opportunity for genuine

consultation based on respective eviction policies presence of government officials or representatives during the eviction process

iv. prohibiting evictions during inhospitable weather or at night;

9. Asks member nations to encourage public universities to implement:
 - a) appoint an equality officer on the admissions board to ensure that Roma are given a fair chance in acceptance
 - b) increasing awareness of a scholarship program available to Roma minorities that reduces fees
 - c) including a globally acknowledged symbol of Roma acceptance on the website of the public university;
10. Calls upon member states to work with the UN Women, European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and other organizations to encourage eligible Roma to vote and run for public office in order to represent themselves in their community, close the gap between Roma and non-Roma and encourage Roma support in the government;
11. Strongly urges all member states to condemn all hate crimes, violence, and discriminatory policies made by any citizen under their jurisdiction, and to take all possible measures to protect the legal rights of the Roma.
12. Urges Member States to work with organizations such as UN-Habitat and Habitat for Humanity to improve the state of current Roma housing and comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by:
 - a) implementing indoor plumbing and drainage systems,
 - b) improving structural stability as needed,
 - c) providing collection of garbage.