

Sub-Commission on the Promotion
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Thank you Mr. Chairman,

My name is Nadir Redzeqi and I come from Macedonia. I represent Roma Humanitarian Association Sun, a NGO based in Tetovo, West Macedonia.

The Roma population in Macedonia, since its independence, has been faced with silent or hidden discrimination from institutions in the practice and implementation of law regulations, which became more open and obvious after the war. There is also selective approach of the institutions, especially by the police both locally and nationally, concerning many unsolved cases of Roma ill treatment. I will now give you some examples:

During the war conflict in 2001, Sheref Ademi, a Rom taxi driver from Tetovo, was stopped at a police checkpoint and severely beaten by police. He thinks he was beaten because of his ethnic Albanian surname. He was beaten by a group of 8 police officers. After that, he managed to drive the taxi back to Tetovo, where his injured arms were put in plaster at the hospital. He complained about his ill treatment to the head of the local police department in Tetovo who apologized. Amnesty International-London sent appeals to the government authorities urging them to make an investigation and ensure the officials responsible were brought to justice, but no measures have been taken.

The other incident happened in February 2003 in Kumanovo, where two Romani people were arrested and taken to the police station and accused of stealing money from a church. They were taken by force from their homes, with no warrant, and one of them was beaten in front of his 3 children and neighbors. The police tortured them for more than 4 hours; beat them with wooden sticks, as proven by hospital documents. We welcome the action of the Minister of Internal Affairs in punishing the policemen, but we feel that a reduction of 10% from one month's salary is insufficient, and the punishment should have been given publicity to ensure a deterrent effect.

Similar incident happened in Prilep, where police stopped 3 Roma because of not having identification documents. They were kept in police station for 4 hours and were racially insulted and tortured to make them sign a document which states that they had no complaints about police treatment, after which they were released. The police report says that they were kept only one hour and treated in accordance with the law. The three made an official complaint but no investigation was made.

The case of ex Romani deputy Mr. Amdi Bajram shows violation of Articles 14.1 and 15.1 of ICCPR. Despite the fact that the trial judge decided that there was no danger of him fleeing, the council of judges decided to deny him bail, after the initial detention period of 30 days. The final decision was a sentence of 7 years in jail.

These cases show a violation of Article 1.1 of the Minorities Declaration which states that States shall protect the existence of minorities, and Article 4.1 which states that States shall ensure that minorities may exercise all rights without discrimination.

These rights are also protected under the Race Convention, the ICCPR, and the Convention Against Torture.

Roma community in Macedonia understands the immediate problems of the state authorities, especially in the first case which took place during the war conflict. With this intervention I would like to ask from Working Group on Minorities to recommend to Macedonian authorities follow acts:

To ensure that police and judicial institutions comply with due procedure and law, especially by ensuring equal treatment for all citizens to encourage the relevant institutions and authorities in implementing the international instruments and promotion of human rights, especially the UN Declaration on Minority Rights

To ensure that the new legislation regarding police and judicial institutions is fully implemented and that police officers are fully trained in its provisions

To ensure that the police carry out prompt and impartial investigations into these allegations, and where appropriate, guarantee fair and adequate compensation to the victims

Thank you Mr. Chairman