



Košice, Budapest, 22 August 2017

Update on the Moldava nad Bodvou case

Following the Regional Prosecutor's Office dismissal of the case against the police officers involved, at least one of the Romani victims of the violent police raid on the Roma neighbourhood in Moldava nad Bodvou has now been charged with perjury.

On behalf of the Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradňa) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), we are writing to inform you of the latest developments concerning the case of the violent police raid on the Roma neighbourhood in Moldava nad Bodvou, Slovakia, which took place on 19 June 2013.

Following the earlier decision by the Regional Prosecutor's Office in Prešov to dismiss all complaints concerning the termination of criminal proceedings against the police officers involved in the raid, the police now investigate some of the Roma of making false accusations. Charges were already brought against one of the Roma who claimed to be victims of the raid. According to the information we obtained, soon charges will be brought against others, too.

Four years after the incident, where the police raid by more than 60 officers resulted in injuries to several Roma, the prospect of justice seems ever more remote. The case was tabled before the Constitutional Court in spring 2016, challenging the unlawful raid as well as lack of effective investigation by the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Interior. However, the case has not yet been decided. In the meantime, this latest decision by the investigating authorities only serves to re-victimise the victims of police brutality.

We consider this to be a particularly worrying development not only in terms of the blatant discriminatory injustice manifest in this case, but that the decision to prosecute the victims for false accusation, i.e. turning victims into perpetrators, may also serve as a deterrent to inhibit other Romani victims of police brutality from coming forward to report the abuses they have suffered.

The mishandling of this entire investigation, and the dismissal of all charges of unlawful beatings and illegal entries into private homes, points to the abject failure of the state to deliver justice, and stands as evidence of institutional racism.

It also highlights the urgency for Slovakia to act on the recommendations by international bodies that the Slovak authorities ensure effective investigations of alleged cases of racial discrimination and misconduct by the police.¹ On the evidence of what has transpired in the four years since the raid on Moldava nad Bodvou, and this recent decision to prosecute the victims, there is little prospect of such justice for Roma in Slovakia.

Information about the NGOs:

The Center for Civil and Human Rights (*Poradňa pre občianske a ľudské práva*) is a non-governmental organisation based in Slovakia focused on the protection of human rights with particular emphasis on the rights of minorities and protection from discrimination. Poradňa has for a long time worked on the issue of discrimination against the Roma ethnic minority in various areas of public life. It has also been active in the protection of reproductive rights and protection from police brutality. Poradňa employs strategic litigation to combat discrimination and human rights abuses against minorities. Visit us at www.poradna-prava.sk.

The European Roma Rights Centre (*ERRC*) is an international public interest law organisation working to combat anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma through strategic litigation, research and policy development, advocacy and human rights education. Since its establishment in 1996, the ERRC has endeavoured to provide Roma with the tools necessary to combat discrimination and achieve equal access to justice, education, housing, health care and public services. The ERRC has consultative status with the Council of Europe, as well as with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Visit us at www.errc.org.

¹ See e.g. Concluding observations of the UN CAT, CAT/C/SVK/CO/3, 08 September 2015, para. 11; Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/SVK/CO/4, 22 November 2016, para. 28; ECRI Report on Slovakia (Fifth reporting cycle - 2014), paras. 79 - 80