

WRITTEN SUBMISSION OF THE HUMAN
RIGHTS COALITION

for consideration of Slovakia at the 145th session of the
Human Rights Committee

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HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION IN BRIEF

Human Rights Coalition (Ľudskoprávna koalícia)¹ was established in January 2025 as an alliance of 12 NGOs and collectives, namely Roma Advocacy and Research Center, eduRoma, Saplinq, Inokraj, Community Foundation Healthy City, collective neon, Intymyta, Freedom of Choice, Literárna bašta, Diera do sveta, Garden – Center for Independent Culture and Amnesty International Slovakia.

The coalition's values are based on universal human rights, gender equality, anti-racism, and intersectionality. The coalition's goal is to build a long-term, strong, and sustainable alliance of organizations and collectives that primarily serve to jointly and effectively defend human rights for all.

This report provides an overview of human rights challenges and recommendations when considering the review of Slovakia at the 145th session of the Human Rights Committee, specifically in the areas of:

- A)** Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons;
- B)** Gender Equality;
- C)** Roma Discrimination and Exclusion;
- D)** Freedom of Association and Safety of Journalists and Human Rights Defenders
- E)** Prohibition of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Excessive Use Of Force;
- F)** Freedom of Assembly and Freedom of Expression.

¹ *Human Rights Coalition* (2025, February 23). <https://www.amnesty.sk/human-rights-coalition/>

A) DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PERSONS (Arts. 2, 17, 23, 24 & 26 ICCPR)

Amendments to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic

1. On 26 September 2025, the National Council of the Slovak Republic (the National Council) approved constitutional amendments with far-reaching consequences for LGBTI+ people and international human rights protection in Slovakia. The constitutional amendments were largely criticized by domestic and international human rights bodies, including UN Special Procedures,² Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights,³ Venice Commission,⁴ Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union,⁵ and over 50 civil society organizations.⁶
2. Through its changes, the Constitution of the Slovak Republic provides for that, with certain narrowly-defined exceptions for single people, only married couples - a man and a woman who are married can adopt a child,⁷ thus discriminating against and restricting human rights of LGBTI+ couples, while in effect barring LGBTI+ couples, as well as transgender and intersex persons from adopting children, which “*prima facie fails to meet the requirements of legal necessity and proportionality to achieve a legitimate aim.*”⁸
3. Through the amendments, the Constitution of the Slovak Republic also hereinafter only recognizes the “*the biologically determined sexes of male and female,*”⁹ and introduced that “*(t)he parents of a child are the mother and the father; the mother of the child is a woman and the father of the child is a man.*”¹⁰ In addition to discrimination, legal gender recognition

² Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls: *Letter to the Government of the Slovak Republic*, 1 September 20205, OL SVK 2/2025, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30299>.

³ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: “Slovak Republic: Parliament should not adopt Constitutional amendments that undermine human rights”, 13 June 20205, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/slovak-republic-parliament-should-not-adopt-constitutional-amendments-that-undermine-human-rights>.

⁴ Council of Europe: Slovak Republic: “Venice Commission issues urgent opinion on the draft amendments to the Constitution, 24 September 2025”, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/slovak-republic-parliament-should-not-adopt-constitutional-amendments-that-undermine-human-rights>.

⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: “FRA statement on recent developments affecting fundamental rights in the EU“, 7 October 2025, available at <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2025/fra-statement-recent-developments-affecting-fundamental-rights-eu>.

⁶ ILGA-Europe and other organizations: “Joint open letter on new Constitutional amendments adopted in Slovakia”. Joint open letter from 56 organizations addressed to the European Commission, 16 October 2025, available at <https://www.ilga-europe.org/news/joint-open-letter-on-new-constitutional-amendments-adopted-in-slovakia/>.

⁷ Constitutional Act No. 460/1992 Coll. Constitution of the Slovak Republic as amended, Art. 41/5, available in Slovak at <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1992/460/?ucinnost=01.02.2026>.

⁸ Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls: *Letter to the Government of the Slovak Republic*, 1 September 20205, OL SVK 2/2025, p. 3-4, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30299>.

⁹ Constitutional Act No. 460/1992 Coll. Constitution of the Slovak Republic as amended, Art. 52a, available in Slovak at <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1992/460/?ucinnost=01.02.2026>.

¹⁰ Ibid., Art. 41/2.

while already extremely difficult in Slovakia, now may become impossible.¹¹ While in practice erasing the existence of non-binary and intersex people in the constitution, “*forced sex assignment at birth without flexibility has been found to increase the risk of intersex genital mutilation – a serious human rights violation suffered by intersex children and infants.*”¹²

4. Sexual and reproductive health and rights of children and young people are also hindered by the constitutional amendment, which provides for schools requiring parental approval in order for learners to access comprehensive sexuality education in schools.¹³
5. Last, but not least, the recently adopted amendments to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, namely Art. 6 and Art. 7 stating that the Slovak Republic “*retains its sovereignty in particular in matters of national identity, consisting in particular of fundamental cultural and ethical issues [...]*”, risk being in conflict with Art. 27 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.¹⁴ As these terms lack clear legal definition, there is further risk of violation of human rights, supremacy of international and European human rights law and standards or risk that the Slovak authorities will “*disapply specific rights because they touch upon ‘national identity’.*”¹⁵
6. In November 2025, the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Slovakia in connection with the constitutional amendments.¹⁶

Hate-motivated violence

7. Against the backdrop of constitutional changes, there was a persistent high level of hate-motivated violence and harassment. According to the survey conducted by the European Union, LGBTI+ people in Slovakia experience above-average levels of violence and discrimination, with transgender and non-binary people being particularly at risk.¹⁷ The year 2025 also followed on from the trauma of the terrorist attack on the Tepláreň bar in 2022 and

¹¹ ILGA-Europe and other organizations: “Joint open letter on new Constitutional amendments adopted in Slovakia”. Joint open letter from 56 organizations addressed to the European Commission, 2025. Available online: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/news/joint-open-letter-on-new-constitutional-amendments-adopted-in-slovakia/>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Constitutional Act No. 460/1992 Coll. Constitution of the Slovak Republic as amended, Art. 41/7, available in Slovak at <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1992/460/?ucinnost=01.02.2026>.

¹⁴ Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education; the Special Rapporteur on the right to everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls: *Letter to the Government of the Slovak Republic*, 1 September 20205, OL SVK 2/2025, p. 2, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30299>.

¹⁵ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: “Slovak Republic: Parliament should not adopt Constitutional amendments that undermine human rights”, 13 June 20205, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/slovak-republic-parliament-should-not-adopt-constitutional-amendments-that-undermine-human-rights>.

¹⁶ Euractiv: “Commission launches infringement procedure against Slovakia over controversial constitutional reform,” 21 November 2025, available at <https://www.euractiv.com/news/commission-launches-infringement-procedure-against-slovakia-over-anti-lgbtq-constitutional-reform/>.

¹⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: *LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads: progress and challenges*. EU LGBTIQ Survey III. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, available online at <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/lgbtiq-equality-crossroads-progress-and-challenges>.

political attacks on schools and cultural institutions that attempted to address the topic of queer life.¹⁸

8. Data on hate crimes collected within the OSCE system confirm that Slovakia not only underreports these incidents, but also fails to systematically investigate and record their motives, including homophobic and transphobic motives.¹⁹ In practice, this leads to many victims not reporting incidents because they do not expect a fair response from law enforcement authorities or fear that it could further jeopardize their safety. Protection against discrimination is limited in practice and effectively unavailable to a large proportion of victims.^{20,21}

Recommendations:

- **Repeal or fundamentally revise the amendments of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic adopted in September 2025 in order to bring the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in full conformity with international human rights law and standards, including in the area of non-discrimination against LGBTI+ people.**
- **Ensure that education includes mandatory and age-appropriate education in school curricula on sexual and reproductive health and rights for all children. In particular, education programmes should integrate a special focus on eliminating sexual and gender stereotypes that might hinder access to human rights for LGBTI+ children and youth.**
- **Adopt legislation to enable legal gender recognition in line with international human rights standards; set clear, professional, and respectful standards of healthcare for transgender and intersex persons in accordance with the recommendations of the WHO and relevant professional societies.**
- **Ensure the effective identification, recording, investigation, prosecution and punishment of acts of violence motivated by the sexual orientation or gender identity of the victims, and intensify efforts to combat negative stereotypes and prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, including through the provision of training for law enforcement officials. Improve the collection, statistical processing, and disclosure of data on hate crimes.**

18 ILGA-Europe: *Annual Review 2025 of the Human Rights Situation of LGBTI People in Europe and Central Asia – Slovakia*. Brussels: ILGA-Europe, 2025, available online at <https://www.ilga-europe.org/files/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Review-2025-Slovakia.pdf>.

¹⁹ OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: *Hate crime reporting – Slovakia* (data 2024), available at <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/slovakia/2024>.

²⁰ European Equality Law Network, Migration Policy Group: *Slovakia – Country report non-discrimination 2025*. Transposition and implementation at national level of Council Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78. Brussels, 2025, available at <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025-SK-Country-report-ND-final-for-web.pdf>.

²¹ Amnesty International: “Slovakia: Parliament’s Approval of Draconian Constitutional Amendments Is a Step Towards Erosion of Human Rights.” Press release, 26 September 2025, available online at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/09/slovakia-parliaments-approval-of-draconian-constitutional-amendments-is-a-step-towards-erosion-of-human-rights/>.

B) GENDER EQUALITY (Arts. 2, 3, 17, 24 & 26 ICCPR)

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

9. Efforts to restrict reproductive rights have been intensifying in Slovakia as part of an organized campaign against gender equality. Since 2018, more than 30 parliamentary bills have been submitted to the National Council with the aim of restricting or banning access to abortion.²² Even though these legislative proposals were not adopted, they contributed to radicalization of discourse on reproductive health and suppression of its human rights framework, increasing acceptance of reproductive rights violations and contribution to stigmatization of women and reproductive services providers.²³
10. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe abortion services remains challenging and inaccessible. According to the current assessment of the European Abortion Policies Atlas 2025,²⁴ Slovakia ranked 42nd out of 49 European countries in terms of abortion accessibility.
11. According to surveys conducted by NGO Možnosti voľby – Freedom of Choice²⁵ and based on knowledge gained from operating its helpline, the main obstacles to access to safe abortion services include lack of information, refusal to provide abortion care due to religious beliefs (so-called conscientious objection), and harmful attitudes on the part of medical staff. Other barriers include medically unjustified waiting times, biased counselling and the inability to undergo modern, non-invasive medical abortion. High cost also remains a major barrier, averaging 414 Euro per abortion. The situation is compounded by the fact that in some regions, abortions are not performed at all, while in others, women have to travel long distances to access abortion,²⁶ while people living in poverty, single mothers and women experiencing violence are at most disadvantage, facing multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination.

Menstrual exclusion

12. Roma women and girls continue to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion in high numbers - 87% of Roma are at risk of poverty and 91% Roma children living in households with income below the poverty line.²⁷ Menstrual exclusion of Roma women and girls continue to

²² Ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, ref. no. PL. ÚS 12/01-297 of 4 December 2007

²³ Human Rights Coalition: *Human Rights Review 2025*, p. 35, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Ludskopravna-bilancia-2025-1.pdf>.

²⁴ European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, 2025, available at <https://www.epfweb.org/node/1156>.

²⁵ Holubová, B. (ed.), Mesochoritisová, A. and Jójárt, P.: *Availability of Reproductive Health Services in Slovakia – Report on Healthcare Providers*, 2021, Bratislava: Možnosť voľby, available in Slovak at <http://moznostvolby.sk/dostupnost-sluzieb-reproduckneho-zdravia-na-slovensku-2/>; Jójárt, P., Mesochoritisová, A., Filadelfiová, J., Faragulová, Z. and Holubová, B.: *Women's experiences with access to abortion and contraception in Slovakia – Running through obstacles to respectful and safe reproductive health services*, 2021, Bratislava: Možnosť voľby, p. 120–121, available in Slovak at <http://moznostvolby.sk/skusenosti-zien-s-pristupom-k-interrupciam-a-antikoncepcii-na-slovensku/>.

²⁶ For more details on the obstacles, see also: Možnosť voľby, InTYMYta, Center for Reproductive Rights: *Submission to the 85th session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – Periodic Evaluation of the Slovak Republic*, April 2023.

²⁷ Markovič, F., Plachá, E.: *Income and living conditions in marginalized Roma communities: Selected indicators from the EU SILC_MRK 2020 survey*, available in Slovak at https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1561/analyticka_sprava_eu_silc_mrk_2020_elektronicka_final.pdf.

be a deeply structural issue shaped by racism, patriarchy and socioeconomic inequality. Limited access to menstrual supplies, inadequate WASH conditions, stigma and systemic neglect reinforce ongoing marginalization.²⁸

Recommendations:

- **Adopt comprehensive measures to ensure timely access to quality abortion care throughout Slovakia, in line with international human rights and medical standards.**
- **Take concrete measures to ensure that all women have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including quality abortion care, by amongst others, abolition of mandatory waiting periods, mandatory counselling and mandatory third-party consent; authorization of medical abortions; and coverage of all costs of abortion and modern contraceptives intended to prevent unwanted pregnancies by public health insurance.**
- **Take effective measures to ensure that refusal of care on the basis of conscientious objection by health personnel does not result in delays or restrictions in access to reproductive health services.**
- **Ensure access to relevant, accurate and evidence-based information on abortion and contraception and introduce measures to raise public awareness of sexual and reproductive rights and abortion as an essential form of healthcare in order to reduce the stigma associated with sexual and reproductive health and rights.**
- **Develop a national strategy for menstrual justice as part of broader policies on gender equality, poverty reduction, health and education.**
- **Immediately ensure access to clean running water and sanitation for all municipalities and build hygiene centres within walking distance in informal settlements so as to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all without discrimination.**

C) ROMA DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION (Arts. 2, 3, 7, 24, 26 & 27 ICCPR)

Segregation and unequal access to education of Roma children

13. Slovakia continued to systematically violate the right of Roma children to equal access to quality education without segregation. Despite several reforms and new measures by the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic (Ministry of Education), segregated schools and classes, double-shift teaching, and excessive placement of children in classrooms and schools for children with disabilities remained a reality affecting tens of thousands of Roma children. Key rulings by national courts did not lead to a decrease in segregation, even in the localities directly affected.
14. In 2015, schools were given a new obligation to implement Standards for Compliance with the Prohibition of Segregation²⁹ into their internal regulations, which the Ministry of

²⁸ Blahová, N.: *Menstrual exclusion as a lens for understanding systemic oppression: Gender, ethnic, and socio-economic inequality of Slovak Roma menstruators*, Master's thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2025.

²⁹ Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic: Standards for compliance with the prohibition of segregation, available in Slovak at <https://www.minedu.sk/standardy-dodrziavania-zakazu-segregacie/>.

Education presented as a key tool for preventing segregation. In practice however, this mainly involved a formal amendment to school rules without the state ensuring effective supervision of their implementation and real desegregation measures.

15. In February 2015, the European Court of Human Rights confirmed in the case of *Salay v. Slovakia*³⁰ that the excessive placement of Roma children in so-called special classes in the Slovak Republic constitutes discrimination. The court ruled that a pupil of Roma origin had been discriminated against by being placed in a so-called special class for "*children with mild intellectual disabilities*" on the basis of culturally biased tests. Enrolment in these special classes was, in practice, permanent. In August 2025, the Slovak State School Inspection published the results of a thematic inspection,³¹ according to which many children were placed in the so-called special classes on the basis of unreliable diagnoses.
16. In April 2015, Amnesty International and the European Roma Rights Centre published a report entitled *Separate and Unequal. School Segregation Persists for Roma in Slovakia*,³² which analyzed the actions of the Government of the Slovak Republic (the Government) after the European Commission filed a lawsuit against Slovakia with the Court of Justice of the European Union in 2023. The report found that segregation continues to be widespread and deepening, legislative changes to the Education Act³³ are insufficient and ineffective, and in practice create a de facto dual education system – a separate, lower-quality system for Roma children, often in schools without gyms or canteens.
17. In August 2015, Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Tamara Čápetá, confirmed in her opinion³⁴ in proceedings concerning the infringement of obligations by the Slovak Republic that this practice is a systematic and persistent violation of the European Union's Racial Equality Directive. She pointed out that Slovakia had not only failed to take sufficiently effective measures, but had also failed to demonstrate any results in terms of a reduction in segregation. At the same time, the opinion rejected Government's arguments that segregation was a "side effect" of the territorial separation of communities or individual decisions by parents and emphasized that the state had a positive obligation to achieve results, not just to adopt formal measures "on paper".
18. Double shift education (morning and afternoon classes) were banned by law, but through a system of exemptions and memoranda, they remained in practice. Moreover, publicly available information showed that most schools that signed the memorandum on the elimination of double shifts planned primarily to increase already segregated capacities, not to desegregate. These measures therefore reinforce and expand the segregated environment rather than eliminating it.

³⁰ European Court of Human Rights: *SALAY v. Slovakia* (29359/22), 27 February 2025, available at <https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=004-68557>

³¹ State School Inspectorate: *Thematic Report: Status of admission of pupils to special primary schools and their equal access to education in the 2024/2025 school year*, 6 August 6 2025, available in Slovak at <https://www.ssi.sk/2025/08/06/mnohe-deti-boli-zaradene-do-specialnych-tried-na-zaklade-nespolahlivej-psychodiagnostiky/>.

³² Amnesty International Slovakia and European Roma Rights Centre: *Separate and Unequal. School Segregation Persists for Roma in Slovakia*, 2025, available at <https://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Separate-And-Unequal-Slovakia-Roma-Education-Briefing.pdf>.

³³ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (the School Act) is the primary legal framework governing the education system in Slovakia. It regulates the structure, organization, and functioning of preschool, primary, secondary, and vocational education within the country.

³⁴ Court of Justice of the European Union: *Opinions Of Advocate General Tamara Čápetá*, 1 August 2025, available at <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=303045&pageIndex=0&doclang=SK&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=9399706>.

19. As an example, in August 2015, state authorities decided that children from Malý Slivník, a small village in the Eastern part of Slovakia, should be educated in ten primary schools in the closest regional city of Prešov.³⁵ For approximately two months, nearly 40 children were educated only remotely, without full participation in school and with significantly limited access to the right to education.
20. As another example, despite the ruling of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, which decided that Roma children at the elementary school in the Stará Ľubovňa-Podsadek district are segregated in education, the school in Podsadek continued to operate as a de facto segregated "Roma school" in the 2025/26 school year, running two shifts and without a realistic desegregation plan.³⁶ Secondary school children attended a building that is distant from the excluded community, but again attended mainly by Roma children. More than 20% of children attending the school in Podsadek were placed in so-called special classes. Instead of proper lunches, children in the primary school were given only cold food.

Discrimination in the area of housing³⁷

21. Slovakia continued to systematically violate the right of Roma to adequate housing without segregation. Segregated Roma communities and localities, unsuitable and health- and life-threatening conditions, a chain of short-term rental contracts, and opaque housing policies of local governments deepened inequality and led to widespread human rights violations. Some Roma communities live in extreme poverty, making their lives a "*constant struggle for survival*"³⁸ and in a number of communities, there is no or very limited access to water, sanitation and electricity. For instance, "*some Roma dwellings are totally unfit for human habitation and located in hazardous locations, at risk of flooding or near toxic waste dumps.*"³⁹ The Government has not adopted any effective desegregation and systemic measures in the area of housing.⁴⁰
22. Segregated Roma communities remained physically and functionally separated from municipalities. Some of the dwellings in excluded Roma communities were built of combustible materials, without safe access to electricity, drinking water, or basic fire safety infrastructure. For instance, in 2025, five people, including four children, died in a fire in prefabricated houses in Veľký Šariš. In July, 150 people lost their homes in Spišský Štiavnik and subsequently lived for months in makeshift tents without water or electricity. As a result

³⁵ In 2024, the Regional Court in Prešov confirmed that the decisions on the joint school district between the municipalities of Malý Slivník and Terňa led to discrimination against Roma children, as some of the Roma children from Malý Slivník were educated in afternoon classes and in ethnically homogeneous classes. This ruling was supposed to lead to desegregation measures within two years.

³⁶ Meeting of the Stará Ľubovňa Municipal Council, *Report on the organizational arrangements for the 2025/2026 school year*, 18 September 2025.

³⁷ For overview see also Amnesty International: *Unattainable Right to Housing. Report on Right to Housing in Slovakia*, 2024, available at <https://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Housing-research-Slovakia-final.pdf>.

³⁸ European Network of Ombudsmen: "(CoE) Slovak Republic: urgent need to address human rights of Roma and adopt an intergenerational approach", 15 July 2024, available at <https://eno.ombudsman.europa.eu/home/news/archives-2024/maincontent/enonews-902.html>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Human Rights Coalition: *Human Rights Review 2025*, p. 17, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Ludskopravna-bilancia-2025-1.pdf>.

of fires in November 2025, two children died in Mašličkovo and a mother and her three daughters died in Kozárovce.⁴¹

23. The practice of short-term rental agreements was also part of the systematic violation of the right to housing. Several cities and municipalities concluded one- to three-month contracts with households in public municipal housing, which were then repeatedly extended at the discretion of officials. This practice caused permanent uncertainty and threatened households with immediate loss of their homes. The Government did not take any measures to end this practice. There was also no strategic framework to ensure the desegregation of housing.⁴²
24. In September 2015, the Prešov District Court ruled⁴³ on an urgent measure in the case of a Roma family from the village of Torysa. In the spring 2015, the municipality called on the residents of the community to remove informal housing within nine months. One of the affected residents turned to the court and pointed out the threat of losing her home which she faced along with her children. The court ordered the village to refrain from removing the dwelling and also took into account the international obligations of the Slovak Republic in the area of protecting the right to housing. The village appealed the decision.

Anti-Roma racism

25. The Government does not consider the fight against anti-Roma racism a priority. Existing commitments are only partially fulfilled, with minimal effect. Main challenges include persistent prejudice, hate speech, inadequate protection against discrimination, segregation, and discriminatory behavior by the police. Most of the tasks from the *Action Plan to Combat Anti-Roma Racism* for 2022–2024 from the *Strategy for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma until 2030*⁴⁴ have not been fulfilled. Only the educational activities of the Slovak National Center for Human Rights (NHRI/Equality Body) have been implemented, but without any assessment of their actual impact.
26. In addition, some of the state's activities aimed at combating stereotypes actually continued to reinforce them. For instance, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities presented Roma men and women mainly as musicians or dancers, thereby reinforcing existing stereotypes and failed to implement activities against hate speech, including online hate speech.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Amnesty International Slovakia: "Response to the tragedy in Mašličkovo near Košice", 11 November 2025, available at <https://www.amnesty.sk/tragedia-v-maslickove-poziar-umrtie-segregacia/>; TASR: "Tragedy in kozárovce: Woman and three children killed in fire", 26 November 2025, available at <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/tragedia-v-kozarovciach-pri-poziar/923273-clanok.html>.

⁴² For overview see also Amnesty International: *Unattainable Right to Housing. Report on Right to Housing in Slovakia*, 2024, available at <https://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Housing-research-Slovakia-final.pdf>.

⁴³ Civil and Human Rights Advisory Center: Resolution of the District Court in Prešov in the case of prohibiting the demolition of the home of a family from the marginalized Roma community of Torysa, 25 September 2025, available at <https://poradna-prava.sk/sudne-rozhodnutia/uznesenie-okresneho-sudu-v-presove-v-pripade-odstranenia-pribytku-rodiny-z-marginalizovanej-romskej-komunity-torysa/>.

⁴⁴ Government of the Slovak Republic: *Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030*, 7 April 2021, available at <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/strategie/strategy-of-equality-inclusion-and-participation-of-roma-until-2030/>.

⁴⁵ Roma Civil Monitor: *Civil Society Report on the Implementation of the National Strategic Framework – Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030 in Slovakia*, September 2025, available in Slovak at <https://romadata.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/rcm2-2024-c1-slovakia-final-slovak.pdf>.

27. Between September 2024 and August 2025, the Roma Advocacy and Research Center conducted monitoring of online anti-Roma racism. The monitoring recorded 555 cases of anti-Roma racism originating from personal/private accounts (348 cases), online media (42 cases), public accounts of institutions (17 cases), public figures (9 cases), and influencers (3 cases).⁴⁶

Reparation and justice for Roma women victims of forced sterilization

28. While Roma women and girls were not the only victims of coerced sterilization in the periods of 1966-1989 and in 1990-2004, “*Roma women have been particularly at risk of such practices, seemingly driven by discriminatory attitudes against this minority.*”⁴⁷ In November 2021, the Government issued a formal *Apology of the Government of the Slovak Republic for sterilization of women in violation of the law.*⁴⁸ Critically, since then the Government has not moved in establishing any forms of reparation and justice for victims, nor has it communicated any moves towards justice for women and girls who have been awaiting now over two decades.⁴⁹ In November 2025, opposition MPs tabled a legislative draft to compensate victims of forced sterilizations, that would award victims 12 000 EUR as compensation. As of January 2026, the draft has been tabled for discussion at the Parliament.⁵⁰

Recommendations:

- **Adopt comprehensive and coherent desegregation measures, including monitoring and adoption of binding and reliable desegregation regulations and plans with enforceable deadlines for all schools identified as being at risk of segregation.**
- **Adopt a holistic approach to tackling segregation in education by inter alia addressing residential segregation and inadequate living conditions in excluded Roma communities.**
- **Significantly expand public rental housing capacities in line with international human rights standards and introduce binding rules for their allocation with the aim to remove discriminatory barriers.**
- **Create a community fire prevention program and ensure safe housing for all families affected by fires.**

⁴⁶ Human Rights Coalition: *Human Rights Review 2025*, p. 21, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Ludskopravna-bilancia-2025-1.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: *Letter to the Slovak authorities*, CommHR/DM/sf 026-2021 12 July 2021, available at <https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-mr-eduard-heger-prime-minister-of-the-%20slovak-republic-and-ms/1680a332a3>.

⁴⁸ The Slovak Spectator: “Government apologises for coercive sterilisation of women,” 24 November 2021, available at <https://spectator.sme.sk/politics-and-society/c/government-apologises-for-sterilisation-of-women>.

⁴⁹ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: *Letter to the Slovak authorities*, CommHR/DM/sf 026-2021 12 July 2021, available at <https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-mr-eduard-heger-prime-minister-of-the-%20slovak-republic-and-ms/1680a332a3>.

⁵⁰ Proposal by a group of members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to pass a law on one-time financial compensation for persons sterilized in violation of the law and to amend Slovak National Council Law No. 71/1992 Coll. on court fees and fees for extracts from the criminal register, as amended, available in Slovak at <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=9&ID=1097>.

- **Allocate targeted funding for desegregation measures in strict accordance with the 3D principles (desegregation, de-ghettoization, destigmatization).**
- **Adopt legislative and policy measures, including data collection, to strengthen the investigation of racially motivated acts, including in online space. Amend anti-discrimination legislation to include clear and effective protection against anti-Roma racism and ensure its enforceability in practice.**
- **Adopt concrete measures and legislation for reparation and compensation of victims of forced sterilizations. Provide and inclusive and accessible support for survivors in order to access remedies without further retraumatization.**

D) FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND SAFETY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (Arts. 17, 19 & 22 ICCPR)

29. In March 2025, UN Special Procedures mandate holders addressed a communication⁵¹ and press release, warning on the deterioration of fundamental freedoms and civic space in Slovakia. Amongst other issues, the experts called upon the Government to immediately end stigmatization and persecution of NGOs and journalists while noting that *“human rights defenders, journalists, and protesters have increasingly become a target, including Government smear campaigns against several critical journalists and restrictions on press access to official events curtailing the rights of independent media.”*⁵²
30. In April 2015, the National Council adopted an amendment to Act No. 109/2025 Coll. On non-profit organizations,⁵³ which significantly tightened the obligations of non-governmental organization and introduced new administrative obligations, sanctions, and control mechanisms. One of its stated goals was to "increase transparency," but in practice, the legislation created an unreasonably repressive regime that may have had a chilling effect on association, freedom of expression, and the activities of NGOs as public watchdogs. The legislation was deemed as an unjustified interference with freedom of association, including by OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights⁵⁴, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights⁵⁵ and the Venice Commission,⁵⁶ Slovak Public Defender of

⁵¹ Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism: *Letter to the Government of the Slovak Republic*, AL SVK 1/2025, 5 March 2025, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29750>.

⁵² OHCHR: “Experts alarmed by deterioration of fundamental freedoms and civic space in Slovak Republic”, Press release, 10 March 2025, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/experts-alarmed-deterioration-fundamental-freedoms-and-civic-space-slovak>.

⁵³ Act No. 109/2025 Coll. amending Act No. 213/1997 Coll. on non-profit organizations providing generally beneficial services and amending certain acts, as amended, available at <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2025/109/>.

⁵⁴ OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: *Slovak Republic: Urgent Opinion on the Law Amending Act No. 213/1997 Coll. on Non-Profit Organizations Providing Public Benefit Services and Amending Other Acts*, 16 April 2025, available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/593495>.

⁵⁵ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: “The Slovak Parliament should not adopt legislation that threatens civil society”, 09 April 2025, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/the-slovak-parliament-should-not-adopt-legislation-that-threatens-civil-society>.

⁵⁶ Venice Commission of the Council of Europe: *Slovak Republic – Opinion on the amendments to the Law “On non-*

Rights⁵⁷ and civil society organizations.⁵⁸ The Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic found the law to be incompatible with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in December 2025.⁵⁹

31. Amnesty International Slovakia also warned about online and offline threats and harassment of NGOs and human rights defenders, threats to financial support and increased state surveillance. Based on a questionnaire of over 120 NGOs in Slovakia, up to 35% of organizations reported that they had experienced harassment or threats in the online space (social networks, websites). Up to 18% of organizations or their employees have also experienced harassment in offline spaces (in person, on the street, in offices, or on public transport), specifically in the form of vulgar language, threats, personal attacks, including physical harm, video recording, stalking, or damage to property. While most of the perpetrators of threats and harassment were reported to be general public, human rights defenders have also experience harassment from politicians or online influencers associated with political parties.⁶⁰
32. Serious obstacles also remain for human rights defenders coming to Slovakia from countries with visa requirements when obtaining short-term Schengen visa. Information provided by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic indicate that it has no knowledge of any data relative to human rights defenders and this category is not included in visa application, nor there exists any legal basis for its collection.⁶¹

Recommendations:

- **Ensure that any legislation governing right to association or protection of civic space is fully in line with international human rights standards. Ensure effective, efficient and inclusive participation of NGOs and human rights defenders, including disadvantaged groups, in the regular legislative process.**
- **Ensure that human rights defenders and civil society actors in Slovakia can carry out their activities in a favourable and safe environment without fear of persecution, repression, intimidation or harassment, including from public representatives.**

profit organizations providing services of general interest", 13 October 2025, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/venice-commission/-/opinion-1256>.

⁵⁷ Public Defender of Rights: "I appealed to the Constitutional Court regarding the law on non-governmental organizations. Some parts of it undermine the principle of freedom, prevent civil society from participating in public life, and introduce disproportionate state intervention allowing for "spying,"" Press release, 15 August 2025, available in Slovak at <https://vop.gov.sk/obratil-som-sa-na-ustavny-sud-vo-veci-zakona-o-mimovladnych-organizaciach-niektore-jeho-casti-podkopavaju-princip-slobody-znemoznuju-participaciu-obcianskej-spolocnosti-na-verejnom-zivote-a/>.

⁵⁸ Amnesty International Slovakia: "Lex NGO: Civil society in danger," Press release, 25 November 2024, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/lex-mvo-obcianska-spolocnost-v-ohrozeni/>.

⁵⁹ Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic: "The law amending the legal regulation of non-governmental organizations is contrary to the Constitution," Press release, 18 December 2025, available in Slovak at https://www.ustavnysud.sk/aktualne-informacie/aktuality/-/asset_publisher/B99toBHzi1uA/content/z%C3%A1kon-ktor%C3%BD-novelizuje-pr%C3%A1vnu-%C3%BApravu-mimovl%C3%A1dnych-organiz%C3%A1ci%C3%AD-je-v-rozpore-s-%C3%BAstavou.

⁶⁰ Amnesty International Slovakia: "Demonization, smear campaigns, and threats – what NGOs in Slovakia face as a result of authoritarian practices," Press release, 7 July 2025, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/demonizacia-ociernovanie-a-vyhrazanie-comu-celia-mvo-na-slovensku-v-dosledku-autoritarskych-praktik/>.

⁶¹ Response to Amnesty International Slovakia from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic No. 049242/2025-VIZA-2 of 28 October 2025.

- **Provide prompt, independent and transparent investigation to all attacks against human rights defenders in Slovakia and include the status of a human rights defender as a special motive in the country's Criminal Code.**

E) PROHIBITION OF TORTURE AND CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT AND OF THE EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE (Art. 2, 7 & 14 ICCPR)

33. Slovakia continued to face serious challenges in the area of police violence and impunity. In September 2025, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (the Committee of Ministers) classified a group of cases concerning Slovakia before the European Court of Human Rights⁶² (the ECtHR) as a "complex problem."⁶³ The ECtHR judgments in these cases confirmed the disproportionate use of force, inhuman and degrading treatment, failures to protect the physical integrity of persons in police custody, and the long-standing ineffectiveness of investigations, including the disregard of possible racial motives.
34. Statistics from the Inspection Service of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (the Inspection) submitted to the Committee of Ministers showed that the overwhelming majority of complaints of police violence continue to be rejected. Between 2019 and 2024, 84-92% of complaints were rejected, with only a minimum number of cases leading to charges.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the Inspection does not have data on the results of disciplinary proceedings, which remain within the competence of senior police officers. Amnesty International Slovakia also reported that the system for handling complaints of police violence in Slovakia is opaque, formalistic, and ineffective, and contravenes Slovakia's international human rights obligations.⁶⁵
35. In April 2015, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) published a report on its visit to Slovakia. The report identified persistent issues, including allegations of physical violence during arrest; use of procedures that contravene international standards, such as handcuffing individuals to fixed objects, limited access to legal assistance and violation of medical confidentiality.⁶⁶
36. Police interventions in Roma communities, including those in Stráne pod Tatrami and Veľká Ida highlighted the continuing risk of disproportionate use of force against Roma men and women. In March 2015, according to survivor accounts, police officers entered a primary school in Stráne pod Tatrami and one of them allegedly physically assaulted several minors, causing them injuries and psychological harm.⁶⁷ In June 2015, a police intervention took place in the Roma community in the village of Veľká Ida. According to publicly available information and video recordings of the events, the police used warning shots and physical

⁶² R.R. and R.D., M.B. and Others, M.B. and Others (No. 2), P.H. and Bystry.

⁶³ ECHR, R.R. AND R.D. v. Slovakia: Case description, The Committee of Ministers during its 1537th DH meeting (September 15-17, 2025), available at <https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng?i=004-56501>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Amnesty International Slovakia: "Systemic failure of justice in Slovakia: Procedural violations of the prohibition of torture by the police," 25 June 25 2025, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/systemove-zlyhanie-spravodlivosti-na-slovensku-procesne-porusenie-zakazu-mucenia-policiou/>.

⁶⁶ Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT): *Report to the Government of the Slovak Republic on the visit to Slovakia carried out from November 28 to December 9, 2023*, 10 April 2025, available at <https://rm.coe.int/1680b52d45>.

⁶⁷ Amnesty International Slovakia: "Police violence against children in Stráne pod Tatrami raises questions about institutional discrimination", Press release, 5 March 2025, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/policiajne-nasilie-voci-detom-v-stranach-pod-tatrami-vyvolavaotazky-o-institucionalnej-diskriminacii/>.

violence against local residents. Amnesty International Slovakia and the European Roma Rights Centre filed a formal complaint with the police inspectorate to thoroughly investigate whether racial motives played a role in the police intervention.⁶⁸

37. In October 2025, a Slovak citizen, a volunteer participating in the Global Sumud Flotilla humanitarian initiative, was detained by Israeli armed forces in international waters while sailing with humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. After an armed intervention at sea, he was forcibly transported to an Israeli port and subsequently placed in a detention facility. He repeatedly stated that during his detention he was forced to kneel for long periods with his hands tied, faced humiliating treatment, and was held in an overcrowded cell without adequate access to food and drinking water.⁶⁹ After his transfer to Slovakia, no procedure or independent medical and psychological examination to document possible case of torture was established, nor was the victim provided any information on the possibilities of redress.⁷⁰

Recommendations:

- Establish an efficient, transparent investigative mechanism, independent of Police Force and the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic to promptly investigate all cases of alleged misconduct and excessive use of force by police officers. Provide accessible legal assistance to victims.
- Take measures to make recording of all police interventions using audiovisual technology mandatory.
- Adopt a definition of the crime of torture in the Criminal Code that is in line with the Article 1 of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Ensure that all persons claiming to be victims of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment abroad are routinely offered independent medical and psychological examinations in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol upon their return to Slovakia.

F) FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of assembly

38. In June 2024, the National Council adopted the so-called “lex assassination” law, which severely restricts the right to peaceful assembly and includes provisions that limit protests near government buildings and private residences.⁷¹ The law introduced extensive new restrictions, such as blanket bans to conduct assemblies in the perimeter of 50 metres from the seats of the President of the Slovak Republic, the Government, the National Council or

⁶⁸ Amnesty International Slovakia: “Amnesty International Slovakia and ERRC call for investigation into racial motives behind police violence against Roma in Veľká Ida”, Press release, 1 July 2025, available in Slovak at <https://www.amnesty.sk/amnesty-a-errc-vyzyvaju-na-vysetrenie-rasovych-motivov-policajneho-nasilia-voci-romom-vo-velkej-ide/>.

⁶⁹ Information provided by Amnesty International Slovakia.

⁷⁰ Information provided by Amnesty International Slovakia.

⁷¹ Act No. 166/2024 Coll. on certain measures to improve the security situation in the Slovak Republic, available in Slovak at <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2024/166/20240715.html>; OHCHR: “Experts alarmed by deterioration of fundamental freedoms and civic space in Slovak Republic”, Press release, 10 March 2025, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/experts-alarmed-deterioration-fundamental-freedoms-and-civic-space-slovak>.

courts and the extension of discretionary powers by municipalities to ban peaceful assemblies. By amending the Law on assemblies,⁷² state authorities also expanded reasons for banning peaceful assemblies, including by broadly defined existence of a “reasonable concern” that there will be a clash amongst participants of several assemblies or if the peaceful assembly would disturb the privacy and peace of several people's homes.⁷³

39. At the beginning of the year 2025, mass peaceful protests took place across Slovakia. The Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the head of the Slovak Information Service repeatedly described them as a security risk and spoke of an alleged "attempted coup" by the opposition, media, and non-governmental organizations, based on a classified report by the Slovak Information Service. Such statements created a stigmatizing environment and could have had a deterrent effect on the organization and participation in peaceful assemblies.⁷⁴

Freedom of expression

40. Political interference in public broadcasting, stigmatizing rhetoric against journalists, and limited access to information created an environment that undermined public oversight of the exercise of power. According to Reporters Without Borders, Slovakia fell to 38th place in the media freedom ranking in 2025 – the worst in the last 15 years. This decline is linked to political pressure on the media, attempts to control public service media, and the weakening of legal guarantees of editorial independence.⁷⁵ According to UN Special Procedures mandate holders, journalists have increasingly become a target, including by the Government through “*smear campaigns against several critical journalists and restrictions on press access to official events curtailing the rights of independent media.*”⁷⁶ At the same time, state officials continue to give preference to provision of information to selective media outlets based on their editorial orientation.⁷⁷

Recommendations:

- **Promptly amend the law on right to assembly to bring it in full line with international human rights standards, including by removing blanket bans and vague grounds for banning peaceful assemblies.**
- **Refrain from using stigmatizing rhetoric against peaceful protesters, including by framing peaceful protests as security risk or questioning the legitimacy of civic initiatives.**
- **Refrain from using stigmatizing language and intimidation against journalists, including women, and ensure effective protection of journalists against attacks, including their prompt and efficient investigation.**

⁷² Act No. 84/1990 Coll. on the right of assembly, as amended, available in Slovak at <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1990/84/>.

⁷³ Ibid., Art. 2.

⁷⁴ Dlhopolec, P.: “News digest: Fico sees coup plot behind protests, but Slovaks take to the streets anyway,” The Slovak Spectator, 23 January 2025, available at <https://spectator.sme.sk/politics-and-society/c/news-digest-fico-sees-coup-plot-behind-protests-but-slovaks-take-to-the-streets-anyway>.

⁷⁵ Reporters without Borders: *Slovakia*, available at <https://rsf.org/en/country/slovakia>.

⁷⁶ OHCHR: “Experts alarmed by deterioration of fundamental freedoms and civic space in Slovak Republic”, Press release, 10 March 2025, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/experts-alarmed-deterioration-fundamental-freedoms-and-civic-space-slovak>.

⁷⁷ The Slovak Spectator: “The disinformation scene has become a tool of media capture”, 21 May 21 2025, available at: <https://spectator.sme.sk/politics-and-society/c/the-disinformation-scene-has-become-a-tool-of-media-capture>.