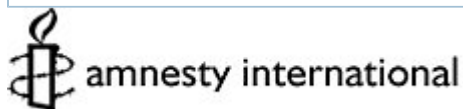


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Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Bulgaria

Head of state
Rosen Plevneliev (replaced Georgi Parvanov)
Head of government
Boyko Borissov

Roma continued to face discrimination in areas such as education, employment, health care and housing. Conditions of detention fell short of international human rights standards. Homophobic violence persisted.

Discrimination – Roma

In January, the UN Independent Expert on minority issues expressed concerns that Roma remained at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder in key areas such as education, employment, health care and housing. Roma continued to be vulnerable to forced evictions.

- On 24 April, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the case *Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria* that the planned eviction of a Romani community from informally occupied land in Batalova Vodenitsa would violate the rights to private and family life. The Court criticized legislation allowing summary arbitrary evictions.
- On 26 July, in an interview in the *Standard* newspaper, the Mayor of Sofia, the capital, referring to Romani settlements, stated that “illegal dwellings must be pulled down, people who come from other parts of the country should be sent back because they have no homes here or they live in illegal constructions”. The Mayor reportedly stated that similar measures had been followed in Lyulin and Vazrazhdane districts and the same approach would be used to deal with other settlements in Sofia.
- In November, the UN Human Rights Committee, in the case *Liliana Naidenova et al v. Bulgaria*, issued a permanent injunction preventing the forced eviction of the Dobri Jeliaskov community, which had existed in the capital for 70 years and faced imminent forced eviction in July 2011. The Committee ordered the authorities not to evict the community until they had agreed upon alternative housing.
- In October, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the case *Yotova v. Bulgaria* that Bulgaria had violated the rights to life and to non-discrimination of a Romani woman by failing to conduct an effective investigation into her attempted murder in 1999, which left her severely disabled. The authorities also failed to consider whether the crime was racially and ethnically motivated, despite being aware of ethnic tensions in the applicant's village of Aglen.

Torture and other ill-treatment

In December, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture criticized detention conditions and ill-treatment reported in Bulgarian prisons.

- In January, in the case *Shahanov v. Bulgaria*, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that an inmate imprisoned for seven years in Varna was subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment due to inadequate sanitation facilities.
- In January, in the case *Stanev v. Bulgaria*, the European Court of Human Rights held that Bulgaria had violated six Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, including the rights to liberty and security, the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment and the right to a fair trial in the case of a man forced to live since 2002 in inhuman conditions in a psychiatric institution.

Refugees and asylum-seekers

Asylum-seekers continued to face obstacles in accessing international protection.

- In May, the European Court of Human Rights held that Bulgaria violated the right to effective remedy of Iranian citizen Mohammad Madah, and would violate his right to family life by deporting him to Iran. The European Court found that his 2005 expulsion order was based on a declaratory statement contained in a National Security Service internal document. The statement implicated Mohammad Madah in drug trafficking to finance a terrorist organization and described him as a national security threat. The European Court stated that the applicant and his family were not given the minimum protection against arbitrary deportation.
- On 11 September, the Court of Appeal in Veliko Tarnovo authorized the extradition of Mukhad Gadamouri to the Russian Federation, where he is accused of terrorism, weapons trafficking and belonging to an armed group, despite his having been granted refugee status by another EU member state. At the end of the year, Mukhad Gadamouri was still awaiting extradition. He lodged an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights, which issued an interim measure against his extradition pending the ruling in the case.

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people

Homophobic public discourse and acts of violence persisted. Bulgarian legislation does not currently criminalize hate crimes perpetrated on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

- On 30 June, the fifth Sofia Pride parade passed without incident despite calls by opponents for widespread violence against participants and supporters, and discriminatory remarks by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Holy Synod. The far-right Bulgarian National Union held a counter-demonstration a few hours before the Pride march.
- In December, four years after the murder of Mihail Stoyanov in Borisova Garden in Sofia, and several months after the end of the investigation, two suspects were charged with deliberately murdering the 25-year-old medical student. Allegedly, they belonged to a group claiming to be cleansing the park of gay men.

Amnesty International visits/reports

Country Reports

- [Changing laws, changing minds: Challenging homophobic and transphobic hate crimes in Bulgaria](#)

Country Visits

- Amnesty International delegates visited Bulgaria in March and June.

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