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Head of state: **Traian Băsescu**

Head of government: **Victor Ponta (replaced Mihai Razvan)**

Police were alleged to have used arbitrary and disproportionate force during anti-austerity and anti-government demonstrations. Local authorities in the towns of Baia Mare and Piatra Neamț carried out large-scale forced evictions of Roma. The European Parliament called on Romanian authorities to open a new investigation into their involvement in the CIA-led rendition and secret detention programmes.

Background

The government fell twice in 2012. Following weeks of protests against austerity measures, the cabinet of Emil Boc (Democratic Liberal Party) resigned in February. In April, after another wave of protests, the cabinet of the Prime Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu lost a vote of no-confidence. The President appointed an interim Prime Minister, Victor Ponta (Social Democratic Party), whose party then won the majority of the seats in the December parliamentary elections.

In a vote on impeachment, the Romanian parliament suspended the President in July. The vote followed allegations made by the government that the President had breached the Constitution. The subsequent referendum on the suspension was invalid due to a low turnout and the President remained in office.

In July, the European Commission expressed serious concerns over respect for the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in Romania.

Excessive use of force

Incidents of violence between demonstrators and the police during the anti-government protests in January gave rise to allegations of excessive use of force by police officers. Media reports and video footage showed police using excessive force against seemingly peaceful demonstrators who

were not offering any resistance. The NGO APADOR-Helsinki Committee documented several cases of abuses by the police during the demonstrations. It concluded that some of the law enforcement officers' actions had been arbitrary and disproportionate. In February, the Ministry of Administration and Interior stated that four criminal complaints relating to the behaviour of police officers during the demonstrations were being investigated. No charges had been brought by the end of the year.

Discrimination – Roma

Right to education

In October, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe stated that Roma children were still being placed in schools for children with disabilities, in separate schools or in separate classrooms.

Housing rights

Local authorities continued to forcibly evict and relocate Roma to inadequate and segregated housing.

- About 76, mostly Romani, families, who had been forcibly evicted from the centre of the city of Cluj-Napoca in December 2010, continued to live in inadequate housing conditions on the outskirts of the city, close to the city's rubbish dump and a former chemical waste dump. In meetings with the evicted families, the local authorities made a commitment to start moving them from the area in 2013 as part of a project developed with the UN Development Programme. However, details of the planned relocation remained vague.
- On 18 April the court of Cluj-Napoca rejected another request from the National Railway company to remove approximately 450 people, mainly Roma, living in the settlement in Cantonului Street, in the city of Cluj-Napoca thus preventing a possible forced eviction. Many of the residents had been moved to the area by the municipality since 2002.
- In April, a Court of Appeal quashed the decision of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) to fine the municipal authorities of Baia Mare for erecting a concrete wall separating blocks of houses inhabited by Roma from the rest of the residential area. The Court held that the wall was a proportionate response to the risk of traffic-related injury and that it did not ethnically segregate the Roma residents. The NCCD announced that it would appeal the decision.
- In May and June, the municipality of Baia Mare forcibly evicted about 120 Romani families from the town's biggest settlement of Craica. The families were moved to three blocks belonging to the metallurgical factory CUPROM. The buildings were not adapted for residential use before the people were moved there. Whole families were allocated either one or two rooms. The rooms did not have heating or adequate insulation. The sanitation facilities were also limited.
- In August, the municipality of Piatra Neamţ relocated about 500 Roma living in housing units on the margins of the town to completely segregated accommodation 2km away from the closest bus stop. The housing units had no electricity and the area lacked infrastructure such as street lights or an adequate access road.

Sexual and reproductive rights

In September, a legislative proposal was put before parliament to introduce mandatory counselling for pregnant women that would, among other things, result in additional expenses and possibly prolonged waiting periods for those seeking abortions.

Counter-terror and security

The European Parliament issued a report in September calling on all EU member states, including Romania, alleged to have hosted secret CIA detention centres, to comply with their absolute legal obligation to conduct an independent, impartial, thorough and effective investigation into their involvement in the rendition and secret detention programmes. The report called on the authorities to open a new investigation in light of the identification by former US officials of a secret detention site in the capital, Bucharest, and in light of evidence of rendition flights linking Romania with Poland and Lithuania, other states alleged to have hosted secret CIA sites.

- In October, the European Court of Human Rights communicated the case of al-Nashiri v. Romania to the Romanian authorities. The case involved a Saudi national who alleged that he was imprisoned and tortured at a secret CIA detention centre in Romania prior to his eventual transfer to the US military base at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba.

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