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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) ROMA RIGHTS IN TURKEY

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Implementation of previous recommendation

Rec.45.268: Armenia recommended adequately investigating and effectively prosecuting racist hate speech and discriminatory statements directed at minorities, such as Armenians, Kurds, and Roma.

SDG:16



New developments

- “ Hate crimes against Roma continue to go unpunished. In 2023, the 2012 Selendi lynching case was dismissed due to the statute of limitations, allowing the perpetrators to evade justice. This underscores structural discrimination in legal proceedings.
- “ Following the February 6, 2023 earthquake, there was a rise in hate speech targeting the Dom, Abdal, and Roma communities. These groups were labelled as 'thieves' and 'looters' in both mainstream and social media. To our knowledge, no legal action has been taken against those responsible for these statements.

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We recommended that the Turkish government to:

- Enact a **comprehensive anti-discrimination law** explicitly recognizing anti-Gypsyism
- Strengthen legal mechanisms for **prosecuting hate crimes** against Roma, ensuring the effective enforcement of **Article 122 and Article 216** of the Penal Code.
- Impose **sanctions on public officials and media outlets** engaging in hate speech against Roma.

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Implementation of previous recommendation

Rec. 45.275: Peru recommended strengthening measures to avoid discrimination based on ethnic grounds, ensuring that Kurdish, Armenian and Roma people have the same access to public services, especially in education and health

SDG:10



New developments

- “ Roma communities face severe education and healthcare barriers. Roma boys attend school four years less than non-Roma peers, while Roma girls receive only two years of education on average. High school attendance is low (8% boys, 15% girls), while 42% of Roma children (15-17) engage in child labour. Life expectancy is 10 years shorter, and infant mortality is 2.2 times higher than the national average.
- “ Access to rights and services for Roma communities becomes even more challenging during crisis periods, such as natural disasters. The earthquake of 2023 February led to serious violations in the access of Dom, Roma and Abdal groups to services, increased cases of discrimination and deepened existing inequalities.

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We recommended that the Turkish government to:

- Provide **free school transportation and nutrition support** for all Roma children.
- Integrate **Roma identity, history, and contributions** into school curricula to combat cultural erasure.
- Implement **independent monitoring** to prevent Roma children from being funneled into special education programs without valid diagnoses.
- A dedicated section addressing anti-discrimination efforts should be incorporated into the **Roma Strategy Action Plan**, including measures for the **protection of Roma communities during crises**.

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Implementation of previous recommendation

Rec.45.275: Equal Access to Public Services Kurdish, Armenian and Roma. (Recommended by Peru)

Rec.45.270: Take concrete measures to protect the rights of ethnic minorities (Recommended by China)

Rec. 45.265: Continue to take steps to promote and protect the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and combat discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice against minority groups (Recommended by Thailand)

SDG:10



New developments

“ Roma neighborhoods in cities like Tekirdağ, Istanbul, Balıkesir, and Adana face systematic demolitions. These forced evictions violate housing rights and exacerbate spatial stigmatization.

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We recommended that the Turkish government to:

- Implement **inclusive social housing projects** to prevent forced evictions.
- Ensure urban transformation projects **do not displace Roma** without alternative housing options.
- Establish **environmental regulations** to prevent Roma neighborhoods from being located near hazardous areas, such as waste facilities and polluted industrial zones.

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Conclusion



The Turkish government must take immediate action to combat systemic discrimination against Roma communities. Without effective legal protections, inclusive policies, and enforcement mechanisms, Roma remain at risk of further marginalization. We urge Turkey to implement these recommendations to ensure that Roma rights are fully protected under national and international human rights frameworks.