

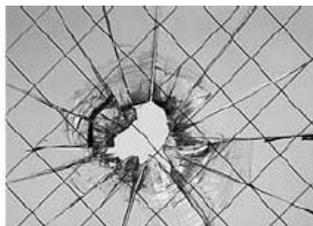
Violence Against Roma

Hate Crime Survey

- ◊ A pattern of violence is directed at causing immediate harm to Roma and physically eradicating the presence of Roma in towns and communities in many parts of Europe.
- ◊ Human Rights First's *Hate Crime Survey: [Violence Against Roma](#)* examines incidents of anti-Roma violence against persons or property, analyzes official and nongovernmental data, and assesses government performance in response to bias-motivated violence in the 56 European and North American countries that comprise the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Trends and Characteristics of Anti-Roma Violence and Discrimination:

- Roma routinely suffer assaults in city streets and other public places.
- Attackers have sought out whole families in their homes, or whole communities in settlements across Europe: for example, Racist attacks on campsites have been reported in **Hungary, Italy, the United Kingdom.**
- Racist violence against Roma is gravely underreported. Official monitoring of hate crimes in Europe is limited and even countries with adequate monitoring systems on racist violence do not provide disaggregated data on violence against Roma.
- Roma are often viewed as a scapegoat for broader societal ills, often characterized as outsiders who are less than citizens and are unwanted in their respective communities.
- Police and local public authorities are sometimes complicit in driving Roma from their homes and seeking their relocation to other towns or cities. In **Ukraine**, police illegally arrest and harass members of Roma communities.
- The bias-motivated violence against Roma often occurs in a hostile environment, as political leaders speak openly of desire to expel Roma from their communities. In **Italy**, a campaign of vilification of Roma involved members of the highest levels of government, while Roma became the object of a national clamor for expulsion from cities and deportation encouraged by political leaders.
- Anti-Romani discrimination has intensified and grown into a broader framework, extending to the full range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. In many areas of Europe, Roma are confined to segregated camps or ghettos, are denied access to basic education and prospects for formal employment, and may even be refused recognition as citizens in their own countries.



Incidents of Anti-Roma Violence:

- ◊ Violent incidents targeting Romani individuals and communities have been reported in 2007-2009 in **Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, the Russian Federation, Serbia, and Slovakia.**
 - **Hungary.** On February 23, 2009, Robert Csorba and his five-year-old son Robika were shot and killed while fleeing from their house—which was set on fire by the attackers—in Tatárszentgyörgy, Hungary. According to the TASR News Service, more than 50 attacks against Roma, in which ten have been killed, have taken place in Hungary in recent years.
 - **Czech Republic.** Violence erupted in the town of Litvinov on November 17, 2008, when the police prevailed over some five hundred anti-Roma protestors trying to enter the town's Roma-inhabited district. In another incident, in Olomouc, on August 24, 2007, a group shouting anti-Roma epithets attacked two young Roma Czechs, aged 18 and 23, at an open air cinema. The younger victim received facial injuries while the other, who was knocked to the ground and kicked, suffered a broken nose and a concussion.
 - **Italy.** On May 11, 2008, attackers set fires with Molotov cocktails in a Roma camp in Via Novara, Milan. On May 13, a mob threw stones and Molotov cocktails at two Roma squatter camps in the Ponticelli district of northern Naples; many of the estimated eight hundred inhabitants fled. On May 14, attackers returned, including scores of young men on motor scooters, armed with iron bars and Molotov cocktails. They moved systematically through the area, burning the camp to the ground. On June 9, a settlement of approximately 100 Roma in Catania, Sicily, was attacked and burned to the ground by the perpetrators.
 - **Serbia.** In Belgrade, on the night of August 16, 2007, three men armed with chains attacked Femija Bajrami, a 45-year-old Roma man, knocking him to the ground and beating him. Bajrami, a resident of the suburb Zemun, required medical attention.
 - **Bulgaria.** On the night of August 12, 2007, a group of an estimated dozen skinheads assaulted six Roma—three men and three women—as they were returning to their homes in Fakulteta, a predominantly Roma neighborhood of Sofia. Four victims were injured and one of them required hospitalization.

Recommendations:

- ◊ There is a need for immediate initiatives to fight anti-Roma violence, which must be done concurrently with improving the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma across Europe. Human Rights First has recommended the implementation of our **Ten-Point Plan** to combat hate crime, which calls for:
 - **condemning** attacks when they occur and make clear that there is zero tolerance for violent hate crimes;
 - **strengthening** criminal laws to cover all forms of bias-motivated violence;
 - **instructing** and adequately **training** police and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute cases, working in partnership with victims, their communities and civil society groups;
 - **improving** monitoring, data collection, and public reporting in order to ensure the accountability of law enforcement and sound public policy.

Human Rights First is a leading human rights advocacy organization based in New York City and Washington, D.C. Since 1978, we have worked in the United States and abroad to create a secure and humane world—advancing justice, human dignity, and respect for the rule of law. All of our activities are supported by private contributions. We accept no government funds. Since 2002, Human Rights First's Fighting Discrimination Program has combated discrimination by seeking to reverse the tide of racist, anti-immigrant, anti-Roma, antireligious, homophobic violence and other bias crimes across the fifty-six countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Our 2008 Hate Crime Survey, available online, documented a rise in hate crimes across many parts of Europe and North America. Our web-based Hate Crime Report Card tracks official reporting systems as well as hate crime laws and their implementation in all fifty-six OSCE states.
