

Declaration of the participants to the national workshop

How we talk and act against violence on Rromani women?

10-11 September 2014
Bucharest

The participants to the workshop, Rromani and non-Rromani women, representatives of different women's organizations, Rromani and non-Rromani activists gathered together in Bucharest with the purpose to:

- Share the methods and experiences in addressing the violence against Rromani and non-Rromani women at local and national level;
- Identify strategies in addressing the solutions of the violence against Rromani women without contributing and underlining the already negative attitudes against Rromani minority in our society
- Deconstruct the prejudices on Rromani minority and the situations of violence against women
- Explore the role that gender equality education and human rights education may play in preventing the violence against both Rromani and nonrromani women;
- Identify the policy gaps in combating the violence against Romani and nonrromani women

We are aware that violence against women remains prevalent in all societies, an extremely critical one which directly affects the women's dignity and integrity.

Violence against women has no excuse or justification in cultural practices, level of education, traditions, religion, economic or social status.

We are worried about the high tolerance displayed by society towards different forms of violence against Rromani and non-Rromani women and the extended tendency to blame the victims.

We consider that **violence against Rromani women is an intersectional violence**, because Rromani women face additional obstacles due to racism and discrimination, at the intersection with gender, ethnicity, economical status, disabilities, religion, age, sexual orientation etc.

We are alarmed by the **weak intervention from the public authorities in cases of violence** against Rromani women and the existing stereotypes, which denotes that violence against Rromani women is cultural, and should be resolved within the Rromani minority, by the minority itself.

We express our concerns regarding the amplitude of sexual violence cases against Rromani and non-Rromani women, like ignorance and challenging of the truthfulness of rape cases by the authorities, under the motivation and presumption that Rromani women, victims, would report the rape and violence just for gaining material means from the aggressor.

In Romania there are no statistical records, national representative, which identify different types of violence experienced by Rromani and non-Rromani women. The lack of these records show the marginalization of the subject on the public agenda. Violence against Rromani and non-Rromani women does not represent a priority for stakeholders, although the consequences of violence irredeemably alter destinies.

We regret the lack of education for women's rights and gender equality, in what involves formal education in schools. This aspect has direct consequences in unequal relations of power that are set between women and men, that lead to the manifestation of different forms of violence against women.

The eviction phenomenon has critical impact over women and children coming from disadvantaged Rromani families. We remind here recent evictions from Cluj, București, Eforie Sud, Baia Mare, but similar actions took place not long ago in other cities from Romania. In their trail, families and vulnerable groups have been evicted from their homes, without real participation and consultation and without ensuring adequate and decent alternative housing. The way in which the local authorities have contributed to the eviction actions contributes to the social marginalization and leads to new violence manifestations against Rromani women.

Within the violence against Rromani women, a structural violence manifests, that faces marginalized groups who are affected by the mode that state, market and other institutions violate human rights, among them social-economical, including housing.

We want to draw attention on the following problematic aspects:

The legislation regarding violence towards women is not correctly implemented and does not offer immediate safety to the victims;

Public politics from the prevention and fight against violence on women domain are not inclusive and don't respond to obstacles that women are confronted with at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, economical and social status, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, religion etc;

Excessive bureaucracy and long-term procedures for getting a restriction order leads to the withdrawal of complaints regarding violence in the family and implicitly to the abusive relationship;

The lack of groups/structures of support for victims and survivors of violence represents a minimizing of the gravity of the problem;

The expertise in prevention and intervention at a community level is not supported by local public authorities;

Lack of consultation with the involvement of representatives of the civil society which owe expertise to help victims and survivors in defining and implementation of politics/actions that addresses violence against Rromani and non-Rromani women leads to the diminished efficiency of interventions;

Not being prioritized, the problems of gender equality and the fight against violence on women in policies, programs and activities of authorities at a central and local level, but also many of the non-governmental Rroma and non-Rroma organizations, favor the perpetuation of the phenomenon;

The existence of some forms of structural and institutional racism on the level of public administration which was aggravated due to recent changes in the social policies and in public policies from Romania that leads to the aggravation of the phenomenon of violence in the family and the decrease of chances for women, from marginalized groups, to surpass the danger they live in.

Therefore we recommend the following:

Violence against Rromani and non-Rromani women must become a priority on the Romanian government agenda;

The development of inclusive and intersectional public policies, which will keep in mind the multiple identities of women, is necessary. The various experiences of the women should be the starting point in identifying the obstacles found in situations of violence;

The survivors of violence should receive free legal help from State. The State has the obligation to finance secured shelters and other special services designed for the violence survivors;

There is an urgent need to elaborate guides of intervention in cases of violence against Rromani and non-Rromani women, for key-people who interact directly with the victims and also gender-sensitivity courses for judges/lawyers and policemen;

Through the process of decentralization of services, the local authorities must allocate a special budget for the fight against violence on Rromani and non-Rromani women;

It is imposed that public and social policies are rectified and the Romanian state will decrease and eliminate the effects of social inequality, produced by economical mechanisms in all fields of life (housing, education, incomes and workplaces, health) and to contribute to the acknowledgement of vulnerable people and groups and guarantee the human rights provided by the national and international constitution.

SIGNATURES:

- Irina Braşov, social worker - ANAIS
- Eniko Vincze, Ph.D. at Babes-Bolyai University
- Mariana Sandu, President – SASTIPEN
- Mihaela Mangu – ANAIS
- Ioana Vrabiescu
- Simona Chirciu – Centrul FILIA
- Steluta Slate – teacher of Rromani language
- Tudorina Andrei – FRONT Association
- Carmen Gheorghe- president E-Romnja
- Anca Tanase - E-Romnja
- Albu Rodica – volunteer E-Romnja
- Claudia Bulată – Roma woman activist Mizil
- Lincan Georgiana – Roma woman activist Mizil
- Mihaela Sasarman – president Asociatia Transcena
- Andreea Braga – president Centrul FILIA
- Nicoleta Bitu – Director, Romano Butiq
- Crina Morteau – CSJDO
- Mihaela Gheorghe, Roma woman activist
- Raluca Mihail – E-Romnja
- Stanciu Florentina – Legio Lex Populi
- Simona Filip – ANAIS
- Greta Claudia Linda – Asociatia Comunitara a Romilor din Coastei
- Simona Stefan – Romano Butiq
- Costea Madalina – community facilitator – Asociatia Impreuna pentru Viitor
- Claudia Paraschiv - Romano Butiq
- Dinet Ionela Alexandra – CSJDO
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