

# March 21, The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> of March. Racial discrimination is well known within Roma community, due to stereotypes coming from historical events.

The official number of Roma population in Moldova estimates 12 thousand (Census of Moldovan population 2004)[\[1\]](#), whereas the non-official sources count up to 250 thousand people. The difference in those two characters is proven by the absence of identity documents and by the tendency of identity hiding among Roma.

Roma population remains one of the most vulnerable categories of people in Moldova being exposed to a higher risk of marginalization by the state authorities as well as non-state actors. The biggest part of Roma population around the Europe struggle with issues such as poverty, housing and health care problems, discrimination in different areas. Supposed reasons of population vulnerability is the lack of awareness in the realm of state's legislation, that people ignore their rights.

Romani women are discriminated twice: based on the gender and ethnical affiliation. Domestic violence against women and children is an intolerable and illegal phenomenon in a modern democratic society, which cannot be justified in any way, regardless economic situation, customs, traditions, etc. Due to patriarchal features of the traditional Roma community, women and children often suffer from domestic violence. The Law № 45 on combating domestic violence in Moldova[\[2\]](#) was enforced in 2008. In 2010 domestic violence was criminalized and introduced in Criminal Code (art 201/1). However, the

enforcement of the law is still deficient and frequently ignored in cases of Roma families.

Currently Promo-LEX Association is researching the area of effectiveness of the implementation of the Law on combating domestic violence in case of Roma minority in Moldova, in order to find out if there is no discriminatory application of the legislation on behalf of the responsible actors; if Roma victims of domestic violence are aware of this law; also to find out the tendency of domestic violence in Roma communities and the result of combating this issue. The preliminary findings are the following: a romani woman, being a victim of domestic violence, is subject to multiple discrimination, as a woman and as a roma.

The research includes interviews with roma victims of domestic violence, police officers and roma mediators in order to find out their awareness degree about the legislation and problem's actuality. So far, were visited seven localities of Moldova with the highest roma population[\[3\]](#). The roma from these regions are of different subgroups with their dialects and traditions. It is possible to state that the situation in a traditional roma community is different from that of a non-traditional. Particularly, the rate of reporting cases of domestic violence is higher in non-traditional communities. Although, the domestic violence persists in each community, regardless its ethnicity and traditions – the way of coping with this phenomenon is different.

The research is carried out within the framework of the Open Society Human Rights Internship Program. The research will be finalised with elaboration of recommendations for improving the implementation of relevant legislation on domestic violence in Moldova.

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[1] Census of Moldovan population 2004  
(<http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=295&id=2234> Nr  
7) [2]

<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=327246>

[3] Chisinau, Orhei, Calarasi, Drochia, Riscani, Otaci,  
Stefan-Voda.