



Position of the National Coalition Intellect on the manifestation of unjustified aggression towards the Roma minority from the town of Gabrovo

Bulgaria is powerless to pursue the goals and values enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

As a country that should adhere to the rule of a law and a Member State of the European Union, Bulgaria must ensure equality before the law of all its citizens, including their minorities.

Bulgaria must be guided by the principle of the rule of law and guarantee the freedom and security of its citizens through justice rather than mob law.

Today Bulgaria has a problem to ensure equality, justice and protection of its Roma ethnic minority.

2011 was the year when, due to the accumulated anger against a Roma oligarch, racist anti-Roma riots broke out in many Bulgarian cities.

In the following years attacks of Roma neighborhoods were repeatedly organized by ethnic Bulgarians – namely in Garmen¹ (2015), Asenovgrad² (2017), Rousse³ (2018), Voyvodinovo⁴ (2019) and now in Gabrovo⁵.

Each of these cases was provoked by conflicts between individuals of Bulgarian and Roma origin. Thus, despite the principle of individual guilt, the victims of the protesters' criminal actions are thousands of innocent Roma people who are attacked, beaten, their houses demolished, and their children not able to attend school.

Roma in Bulgaria do not have collective rights as a cultural minority, but they are collectively punished when individuals of Roma origin violate the law.

Roma neighborhoods lack security, quietness. Roma homes are not inviolable and Roma do not enjoy prosperity.

¹ В-к 24 Часа „Ново напрежение в Гърмен:50 българи тръгват към ромската махала“

<https://www.24chasa.bg/novini/article/4880413>

² В-к Монитор „Хиляди пак на бунт в Асеновград, шурмуват ромската махала“

<https://www.monitor.bg/bg/a/view/70354-%D0%9D%D0%B0%D0%B4-2000-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BA-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B1%D1%83%D0%BD%D1%82-%D0%B2-%D0%90%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B4-%D1%82%D1%80%D1%8A%D0%B3%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%85%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D1%8A%D0%BC-%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%85%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B0>

³ Канал3 „Напрежение в Русе! Мотористи нахлуха в кварталите, където е живял Северин“

<http://kanal3.bg/news/86075-Napredzenie-v-Ruse%2521-Motoristi-nahluha-v-kvartalite%252C-kadeto-e-dzivyal-Severin>

⁴ Агенция Фокус „Напрежение и протести след циганското нападение в пловдивското село Войводиново“

<http://www.focus-news.net/news/2019/01/08/2609936/naprezhenie-i-protesti-sled-tsigansko-napadenie-v-plovdivskoto-selo-vovodinovo-obzor.html>

⁵ БТВ „Напрежението в Габрово ескалира, изпращат жандармерията“ <https://btvnovinite.bg/bulgaria/eskalacija-na-naprezhenieto-v-gabrovo.html>

⁵ БТВ „Напрежението в Габрово ескалира, изпращат жандармерията“ <https://btvnovinite.bg/bulgaria/eskalacija-na-naprezhenieto-v-gabrovo.html>

In many cases, the authorities are simply spectators of the events, while the law enforcement agencies only prevent excesses.

Institutions are not able to pursue the Union's objective of combating social exclusion and discrimination when it comes to the Roma population, nor are they guided by the values of building a society in which human dignity is the most important cornerstone of fundamental rights as well as inclusion, tolerance and non-discrimination.

The task of the state is by its actions to show and prove that it has the will to impose the most essential principles for the society - justice and solidarity, as well as to punish criminals with the power of the law while at the same time to care for and protect the vulnerable groups.

We call for:

- 1) The Bulgarian government and the political class to show vision by starting to plan and implement inclusive policies free of fascist ideology in line with the European Social Pillar in cooperation with Roma intellectuals and leadership;
- 2) The President of the Republic of Bulgaria to intensify the dialogue within the National Security Advisory Council on the issues of prevention of ethnic-inspired conflicts;
- 3) The Chief Prosecutor of the country to take responsibility for publicly-dangerous crimes against citizens' rights and especially for crimes against citizenship as incitement to discrimination, violence or hatred or use of violence based on race, nationality or ethnicity.
- 4) The Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria to manifest his inherent activity in order to stop the violation of basic human rights of the Roma population and to prevent the spread of racism and national fascism as a public ideology in Bulgaria;
- 5) The European Commission to strengthen both the monitoring of Bulgaria's implementation of the objectives and values of the Union's Lisbon Treaty and its support for the implementation of meaningful inclusive and non-discriminatory policies for the Roma minority.

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