

Tuesday, 3 June 2008

PRESS RELEASE
2008: To be Rom in Italy

Today, 3 June 2008, the **associations of Roma from Romania are protesting** in front of the Italian Embassy to Bucharest, **against the numerous racist and xenophobic actions targeting Roma in Italy**, and against the lack of reaction of the Italian and Romanian authorities. The protest in Bucharest is taking place simultaneously with a protest of Romani organizations from Spain in front of the Italian Embassy to Madrid (contact MOVIMIENTO GENUINO GITANO DE MADRID, tel. +34 649089190).

Between the 25th and the 29th of May 2008, an international team of 10 representatives of different Romani and human rights organizations from different European countries have conducted a field visit in Italy in 20 Roma camps (Milan, Rome, Naples, Florence and Torino). They have documented the situation of the Roma and the effect of the latest acts of violence targeted against Roma.

During the latest months, the Romani population from different countries living in Italy has been the target of different forms of violence committed either by local authorities or extremists groups, Roma camps have been burned with Molotov cocktails, shelters have been destroyed in the middle of the night, families have been expelled from Italian cities, the legal camps have been surrounded by guards and Romani adults and children have been repatriated on summary procedures of a questionable legality. In the public discourse in Italy, representatives of Italian media and political class have demonized the Roma in a manner recalling the atmosphere before the Holocaust/ Samudaripen.

The Italian Government is taking no action to efficiently prevent or firmly sanction these attacks. On the very contrary, despite the appeals of European Institutions, international human rights organizations, Romani civil society and nongovernmental Italian organizations, the Italian authorities have been persevering in encouraging this hostile atmosphere, with the tacit support of the Romanian government and other governments from Europe.

The today's protest is another modality to demand to the Italian government to end with firmness these racist actions against Romani people and to adopt comprehensive policies to combat racism, xenophobia and social exclusion.

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