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15 December 2011

Procura della Repubblica di Torino  
c.a dott. Caselli, dott. Borna, dott.ssa Longo  
Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 130  
10138 TORINO (TO)

Honourable Excellencies,

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC),<sup>1</sup> the Federazione Romani,<sup>2</sup> and Idea Rom Onlus (Idea Rom)<sup>3</sup> are writing to express concern about the reports of a violent arson attack on a Roma camp which took place on 10 December 2011 in Turin.

According to the ERRC partner organisations based in Turin, hundreds of people marched to the informal Roma camp at Via Continassa, and started setting fire to shacks, caravans and cars. The attack was apparently sparked by a rape allegation against two Romani men. The individual who made the accusation later reportedly retracted her accusation. The whole camp was destroyed, including the homes and property of the 46 Romani individuals living there. Eyewitnesses also reported that a flyer was posted before the attack, calling on residents to 'clean up' the area of Roma. Local media and eyewitnesses confirmed that a public official, the president of the fifth district, was present at a demonstration that preceded the violence.<sup>4</sup>

The ERRC, Federazione Romani and Idea Rom are calling on the police and prosecutor in Turin to ensure that all crimes are investigated promptly and impartially, and to ensure that racial motivation is fully considered.

The victims of this attack were members of the Romani minority, and given the circumstances, it is possible that a racially-motivated crime, or hate crime, has been committed. Thus, the full investigation of these incidents and prosecution of the perpetrators is a matter of protecting the rights of both the individuals affected and the entire Romani community. A successful investigation and resolution of this case will bring justice to the victims in accordance with Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights which stipulates that everyone whose rights and freedoms (which include the right to liberty and security of person and freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment) have been violated shall have effective remedy before a national authority.

Given the importance of the incident outlined above, the undersigned organisations, in accordance with the Italian act on the freedom of information,<sup>5</sup> respectfully request your offices to provide the following written information:

<sup>1</sup> The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation working to combat anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma through strategic litigation, research and policy development, advocacy and human rights education.

<sup>2</sup> The Federazione Romani is a national federation which consists of 18 Romani NGOs and activists throughout Italy. The Federation's mission is the self-determination of Romani people by the promotion of qualified representatives of Romani communities.

<sup>3</sup> Idea Rom Onlus is a Romani women's NGO working in Turin, which promotes Romani direct representation and is a member of the Federazione Romani (Italian Romani Federation).

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www3.lastampa.it/torino/sezioni/cronaca/articolo/1stp/434502/>

<sup>5</sup> il diritto all'accesso agli atti amministrativi nella l. 241/1990 e nel DPR184/2006

- Has an investigation into this incident been opened and which investigative measures have and will be undertaken by your office to identify the perpetrators?
- What measures will be taken by your office to ensure accountability and to give full protection to victims?
- In addition to the two people arrested after the attack have you identified other individuals suspected to have organised or participated in the incident?
- Has anyone been charged in connection to this incident and which charges have been brought against them?

We look forward to hearing of your progress, and thank you for your efforts to conduct a fair and prompt investigation of this case.

Sincerely,

Dezideriu Gergely  
Executive Director  
European Roma Rights Centre

Nazzareno Guarnieri  
Rappresentante Legale  
Federazione Romani

Snezana Vuletic  
Rappresentante Legale  
Idea Rom Onlus