

Attacks against Roma in Slovakia: January 2008-July 2012

The following is a list of 16 attacks against Roma and/or their property in Slovakia between January 2008 and July 2012. Last updated: 31 July 2012.

This list of attacks is not exhaustive and does not address the State response to the attacks. Information on the State response to a selection of these incidents can be found in the ERRC report “Imperfect Justice: Anti-Roma Violence and Impunity”.

This information is compiled from media and NGO reports. The ERRC has not independently verified all of the information contained in these reports and does not take any position as to the potential bias motivation of these attacks.

Important facts:

- the attacks took the lives of five Roma;
- the attacks left ten people, including two minors, with injuries;
- in six cases, shots were fired;
- in at least ten cases firebombs were used;
- in two cases an adult attacked a group of minors;
- in four cases, groups attacked Romani people; and
- in at least two cases, Romani property was vandalised.

16. Off-duty police officer killed three Roma and wounded two

Location:	Hurbanovo	Date:	16 June 2012
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Sources:	http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/46696/2/three_dead_and_two_wounded_after_police_shooting_in_hurbanovo.html http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/46732/10/police_continue_to_investigate_shooting_in_hurbanovo.html http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/46821/2/hurbanovo_shooting_sparks_fears.html http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/46737/2/update_police_shooting_in_hurbanovo.html http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_3428 http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_3419
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Photo: TASR (via Slovak Spectator)

On 16 June 2012, an off-duty municipal police officer shot dead three Romani men and wounded another two, all from the same family, in the town of Hurbanovo. The attack took the lives of a 45-year-old man, Gabriel, his 19-year-old son and his 24-year-old son-in law, while Gabriel's other son and his wife were wounded. After the killing spree, the 51-year-old attacker attempted to commit suicide but police managed to detain him.

The incident took place at around 10.00 AM on the day in question. The shooter walked into the yard of the family's home with an unlicensed gun and opened fire.

According to media reports, a few days after the incident the perpetrator told a judge that "I woke up in the morning with the thought that I have to restore order around them." The Office of the Special Prosecutor reportedly charged the shooter with premeditated murder, violation of the sanctity of a home and carrying a concealed weapon.

15. Three Slovak men verbally and physically attack group of Roma			
Location:	Košice, Ľahaňovce	Date:	March 2012
Sources:	http://kosice.korzar.sme.sk/c/6212717/za-rasisticky-utok-na-romov-nesedi-nikto.html http://tvnoviny.sk/sekcia/spravy/krimi-a-nehody/vytrznici-dostali-za-utok-na-romov-podmienku.html http://www.test.wbn.sk/slovensko/za-rasovy-utok-v-udelili-podmienky-a-u/449521-clanok.html		
<p>Three young Slovak men attacked a group of Roma, including two women, who were collecting leftovers in trash containers. The perpetrators first verbally attacked the Roma, calling them “Gypsy bitches”, threatening to kill them. They then physically attacked the Roma, first tripping and kicking one of the women as she laid on the ground. The attackers hit another other Romani woman in the stomach and on her back, and punched one of the Romani man in the face. According to media reports, the attackers were known to the police as supporters of neo-Nazi groups and they were also suspected of other extremist acts.</p> <p>Following a trial, the Slovak court found the three perpetrators guilty, giving two of them suspended sentences and imprisoning the third for one and a half years.</p>			

14. Molotov cocktail thrown at a house belonging to Romani family			
Location:	Gelnica	Date:	13 January 2012
Sources:	http://tvnoviny.sk/sekcia/spravy/krimi-a-nehody/gelnica-neznamy-gauner-zautocil-na-romov.html http://spisskanovaves.korzar.sme.sk/c/6214657/v-gelnici-hodili-romom-do-domu-za http://krimi.cas.sk/clanok/214828/po-bitke-poziar-pri-izbe-s-detmi-vybuchla-zapalna-flasa.html http://krimi.cas.sk/clanok/214828/po-bitke-poziar-pri-izbe-s-detmi-vybuchla-zapalna-flasa.html		
<p>On 13 January 2012, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at a home inhabited by Roma on Hlavna street in Gelnica. A representative of District Directorate of Fire and Rescue Department in Spisska Nova Ves confirmed that the investigation of the case confirmed that the fire was set intentionally by a Molotov cocktail. The property sustained some damage but no one was injured. According to media reports, a police investigation was underway; the police works with the hypothesis that there may be a connection between the Molotov cocktail incident and a fight at a local casino on the same night.</p>			

13. Driver attacked two Romani children			
Location:	Ďurkov	Date:	30 September 2011
Source:	http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_2860		
<p>On 27 September 2011 in Ďurkov, a driver passing by a 4-year-old Romani boy and a 7-year-old Romani girl playing on the street in front of their home got out of his car and slapped the children. The children fell onto the street. Police arrived at the scene and interviewed the driver, but reportedly did not administer an alcohol test or collect any material evidence. The young girl's mother brought the children to the emergency medical service in Košice for treatment and filed a criminal complaint with the police department in Bohdanovce.</p>			

12. Young men verbally attack Romani family with three children			
Location:	Gbelce	Date:	14 May 2011
Sources:	http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_2455 http://tvnoviny.sk/sekcia/spravy/krimi-a-nehody/opiti-mladici-zautocili-na-romsku-rodinu-odhanali-ich-vidlami.html		
<p>On 14 May 2012, two young men, aged 18 and 19, verbally attacked a Romani woman and her three young children, threatening to kill them. According to media reports, the young men were drunk when they went to the Roman family's house and started yelling fascist slogans. They are reported to have jumped over the fence into the yard of the home. The Romani family grabbed pitchforks and fought off their attackers.</p>			
11. Three Romani families repeatedly attacked over Easter			
Location:	Gemerská Poloma	Date:	22 April 2011
Sources:	http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_2398 , http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_2419 http://roznava.korzar.sme.sk/c/5875416/poslanec-milko-v-gemerskej-polome-tyranizuju-romov.html		
<p>From 22-25 April 2011, three Romani families in the village of Gemerská Poloma in Slovakia's Rožňava district experienced three days of terror. On 22 April approximately 40-50 young men, reportedly skinheads, gathered and attacked the Romani families in their homes, destroying dishes, furniture, windows and tearing doors from their hinges. The attackers also beat some of the residents while small children watched. In his public statement, the Mayor of Gemerská Poloma stated that the Roma had not been attacked without cause and recommended that they lock their doors.</p>			

10. Romani families shot at during eviction

Location:	Prievidza	Date:	14 September 2010
Source:	http://tvnoviny.sk/spravy/krimi/strelba-v-prievidzi-strielalo-sa-v-casti-kde-ziju-socialne-slabsi.html		
<p>During the eviction of several Romani families including seven children and a number of adults, an unidentified perpetrator fired shots on the building from which they were being evicted. The shooter arrived in a white truck and shot into an empty flat through double-glazed windows; the bullets entered the plaster walls. The unknown shooter escaped. Municipal police, present because of the eviction, are reported to have stated that there was probably no link between the eviction and the shooting because the shots were fired on an empty flat.</p>			

9. Gunman kills Romani man and non-Romani family

Location:	Devinska Nova Ves	Date:	30 August 2010
Source:	http://bratislava.sme.sk/c/5526340/strelec-zabil-v-devinskej-sedem-ludi-a-potom-aj-seba.html		
<p>During a shooting spree ending in the suicide of the shooter, seven people were killed in Bratislava, including a Romani man. Six of the victims were members of one family; the father was Romani. The gunman went on a shooting spree in Bratislava's Devínska Nová Ves district before killing himself. Another 15 people were injured, 13 of whom were hospitalised across Bratislava. The incident was originally reported as the killing of a Romani family; only later was it reported that only one of the victims was Romani.</p>			

8. Five Roma injured in shooting

Location:	Dubnica nad Vahom [Vansova street]	Date:	6 June 2010
Source:	http://tvnoviny.sk/spravy/regiony/dubnica-strelba-na-romov-styria-ludia-su-zraneni.html		
<p>A 57-year-old non-Romani man shot at a group of Roma following an argument in his yard over old car batteries. The Trenčín Police Department spokeswoman was quoted in the media as having stated, "the owner of the house sent them away and after that they started arguing. The man started running after them with his gun. His first shot went into an empty area in the garden, but then he turned to shoot at the persons in the street."</p> <p>During the shooting, five Romani individuals were injured: 2 men and a 13-year-old girl were hospitalised with knee, back and head injuries while another man and a boy were treated and immediately released.</p>			

7. Romani man dies after police tear gas incident

Location:	Tornala	Date:	9 May 2010
Source:	http://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/167061/policajny-slzny-plyn-udajne-zabil-muza/		

Following an intervention of the Tornala Emergency Police Unit a 46-year-old Romani man died, reportedly due to extensive inhalation of tear gas. On the day in question, the police were called to resolve a dispute over outstanding energy payments owed to the municipality, during which a large amount of tear gas was used. The Romani man, a representative of the Roma civic patrol, was seeking resolution of the debt: he was taken to a police station where he was interrogated, treated by an ambulance and then sent home in stable condition. A week later, on 17 May, doctors treated the man for breathing problems and deteriorating health conditions: he died in the hospital on the same day.

Police claim that the tear gas was not the cause of the death, linking the death to high blood sugar. People Against Racism, which filed a criminal complaint on behalf of the family, argued that the man did not have a history of diabetes but that the high level of blood sugar was the result of stress. Doctors quoted in the media confirmed the plausibility of this explanation.

6. Romani man assaulted after group refused entry to bar

Location:	Spišská Nová Ves	Date:	11 December 2009
Source:	Testimony from individuals involved, on file with the ERRC.		

In December 2009, a Romani man was attacked by security guards after a group of Romani activists was refused entry to a disco in Spišská Nová Ves. The group called the police to report discriminatory treatment. The police came and spoke with the Roma and employees of the disco. When the police left, several of the security guards attacked a member of the group causing minor injuries.

5. Romani man shot in the head

Location:	Zohor	Date:	7 June 2009
Source:	http://www.diskriminacia.sk/files/SNSLP_Monitoring_medii_1_polrok_2009_0.pdf		

A 20-year-old man shot a 61-year-old Romani man in the face with a gas gun while verbally insulting Roma and shouting Nazi slogans in Zohor. There were no major injuries. According to media reports, police were investigating the perpetrator for disorderly conduct. One week prior to this incident the same young man threatened another Romani family: he chased a group of Romani children in his car and later sent his dog after them.

4. Security guard attacks Romani property, shouting death threats

Location:	Moňov near Košice	Date:	26 April 2009
Source:	http://www.diskriminacia.sk/files/SNSLP_Monitoring_medii_1_polrok_2009_0.pdf		

At 6:00 AM on 26 April 2009, an armed 27-year-old went to the Romani settlement in Monov, near Kosice, entered the houses of the residents, broke windows and kicked in a door. The perpetrator shouted at the residents, threatening them that he would kill them and fired a shot from his gun. The perpetrator reportedly worked in the security service of US Steel Kosice.

3. Skinhead group attacks Romani men

Location:	Bratislava	Date:	5 April 2009
Source:	http://www.diskriminacia.sk/files/SNSLP_Monitoring_medii_1_polrok_2009_0.pdf		

On 5 April 2009 a group of four skinheads attacked 10 Romani men, construction workers from Eastern Slovakia, who were riding the bus in Bratislava. Three of the Romani men were reportedly hospitalised with serious injuries.

2. Police abuse Romani children

Location:	Košice	Date:	21 March 2009
Source:	Romnews.com		

On 21 March 2009 in Kosice, a group of police officers forced six Romani boys aged 11 to 16 in police custody to undress and slap and kiss each other. The officers also set unmuzzled dogs on the boys, some of whom were bitten. Officers recorded humiliating scenes with their mobile phones and cameras during this incident. The video coverage, made public on YouTube, recorded the officers laughing and encouraging the children to punch each other. Referring to the recording, Romnews.com reported that the police shouted and called the boys names, ordering them to undress. An unknown voice on the recording threatened to punish the last one to undress.

1. Group attack of Roma.

Location:	Košice	Date:	September 2008
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Source:	http://korzar.sme.sk/c/5433043/bitka-extremistov-s-romami-sa-skoncila-podmienkami.html
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In September 2008, five persons attacked a group of five Roma. The perpetrators first verbally attacked the Roma and then started to beat them. At one point municipal police arrived at the scene but the perpetrators continued to assault the Roma for some time.