

Research on the current human rights situation of Roma, including Roma refugees, on both banks of the Nistru river and underlying causes that limit their access to human rights

Concept

Context:

There is a general recognition that Roma is among the most vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova. However, there is limited data and research on human rights situation and underlying causes that limit access to human rights of Roma in Moldova. At the same time there is no publicly available comprehensive research on human rights situation of Roma on the left bank of the Nistru river. However, recent reports suggest that Roma face inequalities in all the areas of public life and access to public services. The COVID-19 pandemic had deepened these disparities between Roma and non-Roma¹. In particular, the OHCHR 2021 survey² confirmed that criteria of socio-economic status, place of residence of Roma created specific vulnerabilities in access to public services during the lockdown period. Additionally, the refugee crisis conditioned by the war in Ukraine, have affected the already fragile social cohesion in the country, with Roma refugees being among the groups that are facing discrimination and are in risk of being left behind.

The aim of the research:

The study will seek to assess the human rights situation of Roma on both banks of Nistru river and the underlying causes that limit access to human rights of Roma. The study will expose vulnerabilities of Roma in the context of different emerging crisis, including energy crisis and associated socio-economic disruptions, as well refugee crisis.

Methodology:

The assessment will have a human rights-based approach applied, which could serve as the basis for the informed decision making of the state, the UN and development partners, contribute to human rights mainstreaming in the development and response plans, including a focus on vulnerable groups, hence addressing inequalities. Intersectionality perspective will

¹ Unequal Moldova, 2021; Impact of COVID-19 on human rights in Moldova, 2021; UNW study on Roma women, 2020; Raportul actualizat privind cartografierea localităților dens populate de romi din Republica Moldova, 2021; etc.

² UN Human Rights Office in Moldova, Study on impact of COVID-19 on human rights, available at: <https://moldova.un.org/en/138288-impact-covid-19-human-rights-republic-moldova>

also be applied in the analysis that will allow analyse of the complexity of specific vulnerabilities of Roma, including Roma women and youth.

The analysis will be focused on general human rights issues faced by Roma, including Roma refugees, identifying major causes that limit their access to human rights on both banks of the Nistru river. The study will be based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Among the preliminary research methods include:

- **Desk review** that will be based on official and publicly available data, cases of discrimination examined by respective institutions, reports of Roma CSOs, NHRIs, UN Agencies and development partners. Additionally, the desk review will focus also on international human rights mechanisms and recommendations received by the Republic of Moldova.
- **Survey** with Roma from different regions of the country, including the left bank of the Nistru river³. The purpose of using the questionnaire is to identify their perception related to underlying causes that limit respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights of Roma.
- **Focus group** – will be conducted with local Roma and Roma refugees on both banks of the Nistru river (with local Roma and Roma refugees, including Roma refugees accommodated in the households and for Roma refugees accommodated in the Refugee Accommodation Centres) to understand vulnerabilities and specific needs. Focus groups are planned to be carried out with the participation of 10 - 12 Roma from both banks for a deeper understanding of the problems, but also to jointly identify the vision of potential solutions (focus group discussion guide will be developed).
- **In-depth expert interviews** – with experts in the field of Roma rights, Roma leaders as well as relevant state stakeholders. Around 10 experts' interviews are envisaged to be conducted on both banks.

The time period covered in the report will be 2019 - 2022⁴ in order to estimate the change in the human rights situation and highlight challenges and issues that Roma faces.

³ The exact sample size will be established together with the selected sociological company. 80% of the total number of questionnaires/interviews will be conducted on the right bank of Nistru river and 20 % on the left bank.

⁴ The exact period will be defined in the process of finalization of the research concept

The main findings recommendations will be consulted with state authorities, Civil Society Organizations and National Human Rights Institutions and the comments will be integrated in the final report.

Research hypotheses:

The Roma population is facing intersectional discrimination, in addition to racial discrimination and social exclusion.

Main research areas: documentation; access to education; social protection; housing; clean water and sanitation; poverty; energy resources; labour inclusion and labour rights and access to justice and others (see Annex 1).

In order to develop the study, OHCHR will contract a sociological company and will hire a consultant to develop the study on the human rights situation of Roma, including refugees, on both banks of the Nistru river human, with relevant skills, experience and knowledge in the field of human rights of Roma.

The findings of the study will be further promoted to relevant stakeholders and could serve as the basis for informed decision-making by the state institutions, the UN Agencies and development partners, and also by CSOs in the field.

Annex 1. The points of reference to SDG indicators relevant for the research

Goal 1. poverty in all its forms

The proportion of the Roma population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, and the poor

The proportion of the population living in households with access to basic services

The proportion of the total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure

Goal 4. Education

The participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

The proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

Goal 5. Gender equality

The proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

The proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

The proportion of women in managerial positions

The proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

6.2.1 Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity

7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex

8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities

8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age

9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing

11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

11.7.2 Proportion of person victims of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months

16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for a

16.3.3 Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism

16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law