



INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON EVICTIONS

(Milan, Italy, 9th-10th october 2014)

General Information

1. Country Romania
2. City Bucharest
3. Neighbourhood Sector 3, Unirii neighbourhood
4. Community or family group threatened by evictions Community of 27 families evicted. 15 families remain in the street.

Description of case of forced evictions

5. State of forced evictions 1 (already taken place)

6. History and precedents to case The land corresponding to Vulturilor 50, with an approximate surface of 2300 square meters, was returned in July 2002 to former (before socialist nationalisation in 50's) owners, on the basis of restitution law 10/2001. In 2002, the owners concluded lease contracts with all former state tenants living in the houses, in accordance with the provisions of Government Emergency Decision 40/1999 concerning the protection of tenants. The new lease contracts were concluded for a period of 5 years. In 2007, the owners sold the land and the litigation rights to the consultancy firm SC New Bridge Partners SRL, managed by a Norwegian citizen. In 2008, the firm brought eviction suits against the tenants. It won in 2009 with the court ordering the eviction of the tenants. The decision was not contested by the latter owing to their lack of any kind of legal expertise and the insufficient funds for hiring a lawyer. Most of the tenants have been living in the Vulturilor yard for 20 years, having been assigned there in the beginning of the 1990s by the state companies for which they worked. Since the 2009 expiry of the new contracts concluded with the owners and up to now, the tenants have been living in those homes without legal documents. Not having the possibility of renting or buying apartments on the market, the majority continued to live in the houses from which they had been told they were going to be evicted. The requests for social housing, submitted to the district city hall and renewed throughout the 12 years since the restitution of the land, were left unsolved. The requests submitted to the capital (central) city hall were redirected to the city hall of District 3. The tenants began receiving walking summons in 2011. They continued to live in the houses in the absence of an alternative for living spaces and abandoned by local authorities. The new owners limited their proceedings to those summons and did not approach them formally for several years. This account is only one example of many, considering that Romanian local authorities have no concern or respect for housing rights. As a matter of fact, the Third District City Hall allocated in the last 9 years only 33 social houses, while currently they have 3150 such requests registered. This is part of a wider process of destroying a social category of people benefitting from social housing. The policy on social housing has been considered irrelevant since the 90s and laws like Law 10 have thrown this category into the street. Racism and criminalization of the poor are at the heart of this process. In this respect, the Vuturilor case is paradigmatic.

7. Estimation of number of people affected (figure). Percentage of women and children? 27 families, formed of 145 persons evicted. 15 families formed of 65 persons on the street from which 27 women and 22 underaged.

8. What are the motivating reasons behind the evictions? (official and unofficial) Official: the Restitution Law (Law 10). Unofficial: a) gentrification, the area is close to the city center, already including hotels, big law institutions, firms, etc. b) racism and criminalization of the poor - the neighbourhood must be "cleaned up" of unwanted residents.

9. Main incidents related to the evictions (dates and times) On Monday, Sept 15 the community on Vulturilor street has been evicted against their will by court officers assisted by riot police. Forcing their way in the courtyard and hitting several protesters, the riot police flooded the homes and continued to insult and intimidate the people into leaving. By way of threatenings, the people at Vulturilor 50 were forced to sign the eviction papers. The local authorities, present through one employee communicated that the evicted were expected to relocate, separately, to men's and mother-and-children night shelters, a provisional solution which they refused. Starting with 2 pm, people at Vulturilor were gradually emptying their former homes. This process did not finished when the security firm employed to guard over the propriety showed up. They threatened to attack the people if they would not comply with leaving the premises. Next, the guards sealed the gate and started destroying the improvements made by the former residents. A lot of the belongings remained in the houses, only to be destroyed and confiscated by the security firm. On Sept 16, at 9:00 o'clock, after a first night spent in the street in front of their former homes, part of the community on Vulturilor 50 set out to protest in front Bucharest's City Hall. Equipped with signs, banners, and megaphones, people demanded their rights: homes for everyone. For several hours, people demanded that the mayor or other relevant authorities show up, but their demands have been completely ignored. Around 12 o'clock, while part of the evicted community was protesting in front the City Hall, the Local Police showed up on Vulturilor with 7 vehicles, 2 vans belonging to the military police (Gendarmerie), and 5 trucks from Rosal (garbage collecting company), to collect the possessions people were storing on the street, under the claim that they obstruct public space. People opposed this action, saying that that was their camp, set up for shelter and protest. Still, people's furniture and other belongings were taken by force and moved to Rosal's warehouses, against their owners' wish. They will be kept there for 15 days, then they will be thrown away unless the owners reclaim them. But where are people going to take them? While opposing eviction and, later, confiscation, several people were pushed and hit by employees of the Local Police. The victims included children and teenagers. One of the children was also insulted by a member of the Local Police. Under threats of beatings and more confiscations, the street was eventually mostly cleared. But the community stayed, people being determined to maintain the camp, despite cold weather and lack of supplies. Each time the evicted protested in front of the city hall, the local police force showed up intimidating the community on Vulturilor. People are getting punished for resisting their exclusion, the social cleansing and the racist policies.

10. What are the damages? (Considering only material damages) All of the improvements that the evictees have made to their former homes remain lost investments. A considerable part of the belongings of the evictees has been either seized in the former homes or deposited on a short term basis. The rest has been partly affected by weather conditions.

11. In what respect are women and children particularly affected by the evictions? Children are probably the most affected. This comes down to: lack of proper hygiene and rest, inconsistent ambiental temperatures including cold nights, lack of available clean and dry clothes. All of these having major contributions to their health and proper school attendance. Women are affected by the eviction in the way they attend the children. There are also a considerable number of ill and disabled people that suffer severely because of the conditions.

12. Who are the authorities planning and/ or executing the evictions? The eviction has been made by the law firm hired by the owner. The team of persons from the law firm came with several brigades of the local

police and several brigades of riot police, most of them wearing light armour (semi-turtle) and light weapons (batons, sticks, sprays). This is standard procedure in every case of eviction by Law 10.

Support, measures taken and follow up

13. Are those evicted or threatened with eviction supported by local and/ or international organisations? si (yes: which?)

Firstly, there is the Common Front for Housing Rights that has attended the community before the eviction. The Front was joined by Carusel, CeRe, ActiveWatch and Romani Criss. Secondly, there is a coalition of about 50 Romanian NGOs committed to supporting the cause to authorities. Thirdly, on an international level, there is the support from the European Coalition of Housing Rights (reclaiming-spaces.org), LeftEast. We are currently working on other support.

14. What measures have the evicted persons and supporting organisations taken to impede evictions? The Front is committed to assisting people threatened with evictions by legal procedures, protests and redistribution of resources. Also, the main working directions of the Front are building a network of solidarity amongst affected people and putting the housing issue on the public agenda of civil society, authorities and media. In the Vulturilor case, the community tried to resist the eviction but ceded under the threatenings, insults and physical agressions of the police force.

15. What measures have the evicted persons and supporting organisations taken to reduce its' effects? Building the camp as solidly and efficiently as possible. The camp faces lack of proper hygiene, proper shelter against rain and security. All the material resources gathered since the 15th have gone into addressing these priorities, plus buying and administring treatment drugs for those who got flu, sore throats, etc, due to the conditions.

16. What measures have the evicted persons and supporting organisations taken to claim compensation? A judicial process is underway against the eviction.

17. Did those evicted or threatened with eviction have organisations that support the possibility of proposing alternatives? extra (yes: which?)

Yes, the Common Front for Housing Rights together with Carusel and CeRe are considering housing alternatives. However, pursuing the authorities to act is the prioritized strategy at this moment.

18. What alternatives or viable solutions were proposed by the local authorities to the affected communities/ people? The only proposition consisted in several places at two shelters: for women and children, at a local shelter for women who have suffered domestic abuse and for men, a night shelter for homeless adults. This proposition was strongly refused by the community.

19. What are the strategies and measures already in place and/ or expected to face the situation? 1. Maintainance of Resistance camp, as the main leverage of pressure on local authorities. 2. Legal requests, letters, memoirs sent to city officials. Some formal meeting is expected to happen this week. 3. Media coverage. Efforts are being made to keep the subject in news and in social networks. 4. International call for support and solidarity directed towards embassies, formal NGOs and grassroots organizations. 5. Organizing a big protest at the beggining of October with all evictees and people affected by housing injustice in Bucharest.

20. Can you explain what it is about and when it will take place: day, month, year? Point 5. at the previous question refers to a protest as massive as possible to gather various people affected by housing injustice

with the paradigmatic case of the Vulturilor eviction in the forefront. A message of "No forced evictions" "No to housing injustice" "No to high rents and restitutions".

Details of the person registering information

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Documents (to upload)

31. Videos Nessun file multimediale disponibile.

32. Pictures Nessun file multimediale disponibile.

33. Files Nessun file multimediale disponibile.

Publication Conditions

34. Do you accept that this information be made public? si (si)

35. Would you be willing to present your case in public during the fourth session of the International Tribunal on Evictions (Milan, Italy, October 9th to 10th 2014)? si (yes)