

Mr Thobjørn Jagland
Secretary General
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

Cc: Special Representative of the Secretary General
for Roma Issues
European Commission against Racism and
Intolerance

8 April 2014

Dear Secretary General,

Ref: B1548

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS OFFICE

WE ASK FOR JUSTICE: EUROPE'S FAILURE TO PROTECT ROMA FROM RACIST VIOLENCE

To mark International Roma Day, Amnesty International would like to draw your attention to our report [*"We ask for justice: Europe's failure to protect Roma from racist violence"*](#), published today (please find enclosed). It examines cases of hate motivated violence and harassment perpetrated against Roma by state and non-state actors in the Czech Republic, France and Greece.

The report illustrates widespread anti-Roma violence in Europe. The overall response by local, national and European authorities to this alarming phenomenon has been woefully inadequate. Racist attitudes remain entrenched within many police and law enforcement agencies which are failing to prevent attacks and ensure that hate motives are properly investigated. National authorities have been reluctant to acknowledge the extent of the phenomenon and often lack commitment to combat it. They have also pandered to the prejudices fuelling anti-Roma violence. For its part, the European Union (EU) institutions have been reluctant to challenge EU member states on the systemic discrimination of Roma.

Amnesty International took note of your statement issued yesterday and urges you to ensure that the Council of Europe raises these concerns with member states and effectively addresses the issue of hate motivated violence perpetrated against Roma in the context of its work on the rights of Roma people.

Council of Europe member states should be asked to:

- Condemn hate crimes when they occur and make clear that crimes targeting people for discriminatory reasons will not be tolerated
- Ensure that domestic legislation prohibits crimes perpetrated with any form of discriminatory motive and that suspected hate crimes are promptly, impartially and thoroughly investigated
- Ensure that the police refrain from using force unnecessarily or disproportionately during police operations in informal settlements and that allegations of harassment or unlawful use of force perpetrated by the police are thoroughly investigated
- End forced evictions and segregation in education without further delay

Thank you for your attention. We remain at your disposal should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director
Amnesty International European Institutions Office