

**Roma and War in Eastern Ukraine**

**Refugees, Displaced Persons, Victims of Violence**

A new report entitled “The Roma and War” prepared by the Brussels-based Anti-Discrimination Centre “Memorial” provides a first-hand account of the alarming situation of Roma who have been displaced by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The 60-page report will be presented by the authors, who travelled to parts of Ukraine and Russia where displaced Roma persons and refugees have sought shelter, at a press conference held in the premises of the Open Society Policy Institute. The press conference will be held on the day marking the end of World War 2 in Europe, which provides a symbolic framework for the discussion of this important aspect of the current Ukraine conflictand underscores the need for enhanced efforts to bring an end to the violence and suffering in this European country.

When: **Friday 8 May at 10.30-12.00.**

Where: **Rue du Trône 130, Brussels B-1050, Belgium**

Despite the shaky cease-fire brokered in February in Minsk, fighting continues between Ukrainian forces and the Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, further adding to the death toll in a conflict that has already claimed more than 6,000 lives and displaced almost a million civilians. Several million people remain in the conflict zone, enduring the cold, hunger, lack of medical care and various forms of violence: shelling, raids and ill-treatment by the unlawful and unrecognized local authorities.

Lack of government-provided funds to support internal migrants, the absence of anappropriate legal framework to guide the mass resettlement within Ukraine, as well as lack of coordination have left several hundred thousand internally displaced persons in Ukraine without any sustainable support and forced many to return to the conflict zone.

Issues of xenophobia and stereotyping against the Roma that plague society in both Ukraine and Russia, where residents of eastern Ukraine also have fled, make this group one of the most vulnerable among displaced persons and refugeesin receiving aid. Back in eastern Ukraine, ethnically motivated raids, property appropriation and treachery accusations targeted specifically at the Roma keep those who remain there or who have returned in aconstant grip of fear.

At the presentation of “The Roma and War” report, the ADC mission team will share their first-hand encounter with the many difficulties faced by Roma in the context of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. They will also provide insights on possible future scenarios and draw on their views and experience in formulating a strategy to address these issues, including with respect to how the EU and the rest of the international community can help protect Roma displaced persons and refugees and assist those who have returned home in settling back into their lives.

**The “The Roma and War” report is available at**[www.adcmemorial.org](http://www.adcmemorial.org)

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