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July 15, 2019

For the attention of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Roma department and Congress of local authorities,  
Council of Europe

### **Information**

#### **about the Inter-Ethnic Conflict and the Current Situation**

#### **in the Village of Chemodanovka, Penza Oblast, Russia**

*This report is based on information gathered by ADC Memorial staff during a field trip to Chemodanovka and also on information from open sources.*

#### **Summary:**

*On June 13, 2019, Romani people and other residents of the village of Chemodanovka, Bessonovsky District, Penza Oblast were involved in a mass brawl that ended in the death of a non-Romani man. After local residents took actions against Roma, the entire Roma population of Chemodanovka and nearby Lopatki was forced to flee for other regions of Russia. Almost 900 Roma were left without a permanent residence. In addition, 174 members of the Roma community were arrested as they attempted to leave Penza Oblast and were reportedly treated inhumanely. The authorities opened criminal cases against 28 Roma under various articles of the RF Criminal Code. At the same time, none of the village's non-Roma residents were prosecuted, even though Roma were injured in the brawl. In addition, there is no publicly-available information about the search for or punishment of the people guilty of setting a Romani house on fire and robbing homes abandoned by Roma residents, or about the prosecution of people who incited ethnic hatred.*

## **Context: Recent Similar Displays of Anti-Roma Sentiment in Russia**

Over the past year, several ethnic conflicts have been documented in various regions of Russia. These conflicts have shared the following features: Roma are accused of a cruel crime – fights/pogroms break out – Roma are forced to flee.

In **May 2018**, a fight between Russians and Roma in the village of **Ust-Abakan**, Republic of Khakassia (southwestern Siberia), resulted in the death of a young Russian man. The village's entire Romani population was forced to abandon their homes and flee because of threats of reprisals made by unknown persons. Over the following four days, local residents robbed Romani homes with the full connivance of members of law enforcement and the local administration. When the Roma returned to Ust-Abakan several months later, the local administration filed a claim to deem their homes unauthorized structures. The long trial did not end well for the Roma: On May 30, 2019, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Khakassia granted the administration's claim and forced the Roma to demolish 13 homes as illegal structures, even though these homes were the only residences for the families who lived there. The administration did not offer the Roma any alternative options for resettlement.

In another case, fearing reprisals from Russians, almost 150 Roma fled the village of **Urazovo** in Belgorod Oblast in **August 2018** after a Roma man was accused of raping and murdering a minor. Belgorod Oblast Court found Pavel Belashov, a Rom, guilty of theft (Paragraph b of Part 2 of Article 158, Paragraph a of Part 3 of Article 158 of the RF Criminal Code), rape and forcible sexual acts (Part 4 of Article 131, Paragraph b of Part 4 of Article 132), and murder (paragraphs c and l of Part 2 of Article 105). Belashov was given a 23-year sentence, but he was found dead in the maximum security Prison No. 7 (Valuyki, Belgorod Oblast) on April 20, 2019. The results of a check conducted by the Investigative Committee, which was first reported by the media, are unknown. The opinion that Belashov was killed by other prisoners was mentioned in open sources.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, a similar situation occurred in the village of **Chemodanovka, Penza Oblast in June 2019**.

### **Conflict of June 13, 2019 in Chemodanovka**

A Roma community of almost 1,000 has lived in Chemodanovka and neighboring villages (Lopatki and others) for at least 50 years; until the conflict, this community co-existed in relative peace with non-Roma neighbors of different nationalities, and Romani homes were scattered among the homes of non-Roma neighbors. Even though the Roma have lived in Penza Oblast for a long time, they have never been well integrated into village life. When an ADC Memorial expert visited the village in 2017, local Roma complained that few employers would agree to hire them even for the lowest-paying jobs, so no Roma worked at the local poultry farm, in stores, or at the school. Instead, they worked mainly in animal husbandry, breeding and reselling cows, pigs, and chickens, or at private service stations or the market. Most of the Roma in Chemodanovka were low-income and had no social protections; some lived in extreme poverty.

Beyond this, the village school had an acute problem with segregation. In 2017, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reviewed Russia's implementation of the corresponding convention. As part of this review, ADC Memorial submitted an alternative report that mentioned Chemodanovka's school as one of dozens of schools that segregates Roma children by instructing them separately from other children.<sup>2</sup> At the time, this school had Roma classes for first through fourth grades. One or two Roma children were in general classes in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, and there were no

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<sup>1</sup> "V kolonii pod Belgorodom nayden mertvym ubiytsa rebenka iz sela Urazovo," [In a colony near Belgorod, a murderer of a child found dead] *Kommersant*, April 23, 2019, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3953932> [in Russian]

<sup>2</sup> "Racism, Discrimination and Fight Against 'Extremism' in Contemporary Russia and its Controlled Territories." Alternative Report of ADC Memorial, CrimeaSOS, SOVA Center, together with FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by the Russian Federation. For the 93rd Session of the UN CERD, July 31 – August 11, 2017. <https://adcmemorial.org/www/publications/racism-discrimination-and-fight-against-extremism-in-contemporary-russia-and-its-controlled-territories?lang=en>

Roma children at all in the upper grades. Because of overcrowding (the school has two shifts and construction of a new school is only scheduled to begin in 2020), the school was not able to accept 10 Roma children for first grade; these children were sent to a different village school, whose director told parents that she had to accept them, but that “we have Mordvins here, they won’t let you live.” In the end, these 10 children stayed home, hoping that there would be spots in Chemodanovka’s school the next year.

According to local residents, there had never been any obvious or severe conflicts in Chemodanovka:

*“I only heard rumors [about minor conflicts]. Once someone took a neighbor’s bike to ride around. They took it and repainted it. Then they returned it—it was broken. They say the Roma kids are bullied in school. No one would ever dream of being friends with them, of course, like how the Russians hang out in the courtyard and play soccer. The Roma were separate.”<sup>3</sup>*

Like the authorities throughout Russia, authorities in Penza Oblast have not developed any targeted policy to support or integrate Romani people. When responding to questions from the media following the conflict, Penza governor Ivan Belozertsev rejected the need for these measures:

*“A special state program to integrate the Roma in the oblast is not necessary. People are getting along well enough; the accident in Chemodanovka is just an exception.”<sup>4</sup>*

## Causes of the Conflict

Different sides present the causes of the conflict and brawl differently.

### *Opinion of the authorities, as reported in the media*

Penza Oblast governor Ivan Belozertsev hastened to accuse “America, the West” of the events because they “shepherd huge amounts of money through to prepare people” to “destabilize the situation.”<sup>5</sup> Later Belozertsev indicated that the conflict was caused by everyday matters and denied that it was ethnic in nature.<sup>6</sup>

### *Opinion of non-Roma locals appearing in the media and later dismissed by the Investigative Committee*

Local non-Roma people told journalists that the brawl started on the evening of June 13, 2019 after approximately 15 non-Roma men went to speak with members of the Roma community about how two Roma boys allegedly attempted to rape two non-Roma girls at a local beach after making advances. The girls were able to run away, but, upon learning of the incident, their parents and friends of their parents gathered and went in search of the parents of the Roma children. According to the non-Roma, instead of starting a dialogue, several dozen Roma attacked them with cold weapons, resulting in a mass brawl.<sup>7</sup> Non-Roma informants who did not participate directly in the brawl told ADC Memorial that they believed that the aggressive people who arrived in Chemodanovka in cars were Roma, and that they were the ones who started the brawl.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Interview with a non-Romani resident by ADC Memorial, June 25, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> “‘Nikto nikogo ubivat’ khotel’: iz-za chego proizoshel mezhetnichesky konflikt v Chemodanovke,” [Nobody wanted to kill no one: what are the reasons of the inter-ethnic conflict in Chemodanovka] *RT*, June 22, 2019, <https://russian.rt.com/russia/article/643451-massovaya-draka-russkih-s-cyganami-v-chemodanovke> [in Russian]

<sup>5</sup> “Gubernator Penzenskoi oblasti svyazal volneniya v Chemodanovke s vliyaniem SShA,” [The governor of Penza Oblast connects the riots in Chemodanovka with the influence of the USA] *Gazeta Vedomosti*, June 16, 2019, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2019/06/16/804274-gubernator> [in Russian]

<sup>6</sup> “Gubernator Penzenskoy oblasti obyavil, chto prichina konflikta v Chemodanovke – bytovoy vopros, nikakoy etnicheskoy neterpimosti,” [The governor of Penza Oblast said that the reason of the conflict in Chemodanovka is an everyday matter, no ethnic intolerance] June 19, 2019, [https://www.newsru.com/russia/19jun2019/no\\_ethnic.html](https://www.newsru.com/russia/19jun2019/no_ethnic.html) [in Russian]

<sup>7</sup> Report of special correspondent Ivan Zhilin, “Chemodanovka doshla do ruchki,” *Novaya gazeta*, June 18, 2019, <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/06/18/80940-chemodanovka-doshla-do-ruchki> [in Russian]

<sup>8</sup> Interviews with non-Roma local residents by ADC Memorial, June 25, 2019.

Later, Dmitry Matushkin, head of the Investigative Committee for Penza Oblast, told a *Novaya Gazeta* journalist that the Investigative Committee studied the “situation with advances at the pond,” but did not find anything criminal in it.<sup>9</sup>

***Opinion of Romani people (field information of ADC Memorial)***

Members of the Romani community assert that the initial cause of the conflict was an argument between two Romani people that took the form of verbal confrontation and destruction of property. The instigators of the fight were non-Romani people who decided to side with one of the Roma, even though they were asked not to get involved.

*“The brawl that occurred on June 13 was preceded by a conflict between two Romani men from Chemodanovka — Grigory M. and Lasho Yu. They have neighboring plots. Yu. asked M. to sell him his plot. M. refused several times. He refused again on June 12 and demanded an amount much greater than what Yu. could offer. This drove Yu. into a rage, and an argument broke out between them. That evening, Yu. went to M.’s house to have it out with him; when he did not find him home, he smashed the windows of M.’s car and left.*

*“M.’s home is on a street with mostly non-Roma residents. Some of them saw how Yu. smashed the windows of M.’s car. When M. returned home with his family, some of his neighbors approached him and told him who had come and damaged his car. They proposed going and “sorting things out” with Yu., but M. refused and asked them not to get involved in his personal problems. This did not satisfy the neighbors, who said that they would get to the bottom of things with Yu. M. asked them not to do anything. They did not listen.”<sup>10</sup>*

According to one member of Chemodanovka’s Roma community who was injured during the brawl, about 60 men in 10 cars, many of them drunk, drove up to Yu.’s house at approximately 6pm on June 13, 2019. They used their cars to block off the exit from the settlement. Yu., however, was not home at that time. Several members of his family—his wife, daughter-in-law, and children—were working on his plot. The men demanded that these family members summon Yu. They were behaving in an extremely aggressive manner and threatened to drive all the Roma people out of the village.

*“When we arrived, about 50 men were standing there. Most of them were drunk. They blocked the exit from the village with their cars so that no one could enter or leave. There were about 10 Romani people, both men and women. I went right up to the men and asked them what was going on. They said that they would smash everyone to smithereens unless we handed over the person who broke the car windows the day before. Another man said that we, Roma, had gone too far, that our children were swimming naked in the river, and that our young men had come on to Russian girls who were swimming and tried to take off their bathing suits.*

*“I asked them to calm down and leave before they really messed things up. I told them to come back and discuss everything the next day, when they were sober. Some of them agreed, but there was one person who started to provoke the others. He went up to one of Yu.’s relatives and told him to summon the person who smashed up M.’s car right away. That person responded that he did not know where Yu. was. Right after this, someone hit him in the face, sparking the brawl. I was also hit in the face and stomach. They started to beat my brother, who is 64, and his son. The three of us ran to our cars and drove off. When we returned with a patrol officer, there were already 50 people on each side. The brawl was ending, but stones were still flying in one direction or the other. Someone was lying on the ground.”<sup>11</sup>*

By various estimates, from 150 to 200 people took part in the mass brawl, which ended in the death of 34-year-old Vladimir Grushin (he was taken away in an ambulance with a head injury, but passed away on the evening of June 14). The driver of the village school bus, Sergey Pugachev, ended up in the hospital’s

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Chemodanovka Roma resident P. by ADC Memorial in Penza on July 2, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Chemodanovka resident N. by ADC Memorial in Penza on July 2, 2019.

ICU. On July 1, Dina Cheremushkina, press secretary of the oblast governor, announced that Pugachev's condition had stabilized and that he had been taken off a ventilator. There were also victims among the Romani population, but their exact number is unknown: Only non-Roma victims were mentioned in official and media reports.

Police officers who arrived at the scene dispersed the brawlers. Three men were arrested immediately as part of a criminal case; they were all Roma.

## **Anti-Roma Acts of Local Residents, Flight of Roma, Reaction of the Authorities**

### ***People's Gathering, blocking of federal highway with the demand to evict all Romani people***

The next day, June 14, 2019, almost 1,500 Chemodanovka residents came to the People's Gathering to demand the eviction of all Romani people from the settlement. Governor of Penza Oblast Ivan Belozertsev also attended and announced that all the guilty parties would be punished. His speech, however, did not satisfy the people at the Gathering, who proceeded to block federal highway M-5 Ural, which passes through the settlement, and continued to insist on the Romani people's eviction. It was only after one hour that OMON and Russian National Guard units were able to drive the protesters off the highway. No one was detained, however,

Fearing pogroms and revenge, several hundred Roma living in Chemodanovka and neighboring Lopatki fled during the night following the brawl. The remaining Roma left after the meeting of June 14. A total of 900 people fled both settlements, leaving their personal property and livestock behind.

The following is testimony about this hurried departure from an elderly man who lived in a Romani home and helped with the animals:

*"I lived in a Romani family as a worker. They registered me here and helped me get my pension and disability. I fed the pigs, the hens, the calves. They gave me food and drink and paid me 5,000 rubles a month.*

*"The brawl started at the far end of the street. The Russian youth was running wild, they had knives. The police took away their weapons when they arrived. A rumor spread that these young people were going around to Romani houses, saying 'Now we'll kill them.' My Romani family left right away. The children were most afraid of all, they were almost hysterical. The entire family was home during the brawl—the husband, wife, and six children.*

*"I don't know where they went. They definitely won't come back—they're scared they won't be allowed through. Now they're calling the neighbors, asking 'feed our worker.'"<sup>12</sup>*

Sergey Fadeev, head of the Chemodanovka Village Council, asserted during a meeting with the local population that all Romani people from Chemodanovka and Lopatki **were forcibly evicted from their homes under a decision of the authorities** and taken to Volgograd Oblast, where the local "Romani diaspora" had supposedly agreed to take them in.<sup>13</sup> Later, his words were refuted by Dina Cheremushkina, who told a *Novaya gazeta* journalist that the Romani people **left their homes voluntarily**.<sup>14</sup>

During the field mission, ADC Memorial found no direct evidence that the Roma were taken out of the Penza region during a specially action organized by the authorities. Informants of ADC Memorial left the place of residence on their own, but there is no doubt that they had to flee as it was dangerous for them to remain in Chemodanovka and Lopatki.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview, June 28, 2019, ADC Memorial archives.

<sup>13</sup> "Sotni tsygan iz Chemodanovki prinuditel'no peremestili pod Volgograd" [Hundreds Roma were forcibly moved from Chemodanovka to Volgograd outskirts], *News.ru*, Jun 17, 2019, <https://news.ru/rossiya/sotni-cygan-iz-chemodanovki-prinuditelno-peremestili-pod-volgograd/> [in Russian]

<sup>14</sup> Report of special correspondent Ivan Zhilin, "Chemodanovka doshla do ruchki," *Novaya gazeta*, June 18, 2019, <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/06/18/80940-chemodanovka-doshla-do-ruchki> [in Russian]

## *Detention of Roma*

Following the mass brawl, police and Investigative Committee officers arrested 174 people who tried to leave Penza Oblast. All the people arrested were Roma.

What follows is the testimony of these people. They report that they were treated inhumanely by law enforcement officers both when they were arrested and during their interrogations.

*“We understood that we would not be allowed to live here after what happened, so we decided to leave immediately and wait until everything quieted down. About 30 of us sent our children to relatives, gathered some of our things, got in our cars, and set off in the direction of Shemyshy, which is about 70 km from Chemodanovka. We stopped in a forest belt for the night. We slept right in our cars.*

*“At 4am on the morning of June 15, we were awoken by officers of the Investigative Committee. They started beating the men, twisting their arms, and putting them in their cars. All of us, including women, were taken into the precinct. Some people were released almost immediately following the interrogation and document check, while others are still in custody. My nephew Grigory was among those released. He said that he was severely beaten during his interrogation, that he was strangled, and that his face was wrapped up in plastic wrap.”<sup>15</sup>*

*“Several dozen Romani people, including many of my close relatives, set off for the village of Peschany in Saratov Oblast on June 14, but they never made it. They were arrested by traffic police on the highway in Petrovksy District, Saratov Oblast. At first they were sent to the police precinct, but then they were loaded onto a bus and returned to Penza under guard. Now, of the 28, 13 are under arrest. These are my close relatives, some of whom did not participate in the brawl at all.”<sup>16</sup>*

Vadim Kovtun, deputy head of the Penza Oblast Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, said that a DNA sample would be taken from all the Romani people detained, including women, to determine if they had participated in the brawl:

*“We opened a DNA lab last year. We can conduct, on our own, forensic tests to determine genotype, DNA. So [samples will be taken] from all the Romani adults arrested—that’s 174 people, including women and men. Anyone who tried to hide, anyone who had any relationship to these events—they are all here. They will all be here until each one is questioned, interviewed, and evaluated.”<sup>17</sup>*

Most of the people arrested were released after several hours. At present, 28 members of the Roma community are in custody at the pretrial detention facility in Penza. Cases have been opened against them under various Criminal Code articles, including Part 2 of Article 213 (collusion by a group of people to commit hooliganism), Part 3 of Article 30 and paragraphs a, h, and k of Part 2 of Article 105 (attempted murder of two or more people by a group of people in previous concert out of mercenary motives), and paragraphs h and k of Part 2 of Article 105 (murder by a group of people in previous concert). Among the detained are people who did not participate in the brawl and whose relatives say have an alibi in the form of witness testimony, and an elderly man named Grigory Ivanovich Ivanov, born August 22, 1957, who was present at the brawl but who did not participate and who had suffered a heart attack several months previously. Romani people are concerned about their relatives who have been arrested, including Vasily Ivanovich Ivanov and Nikolay Ivanovich Ivanov.

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Chemodanovka Roma resident N. by ADC Memorial in Penza on July 2, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Chemodanovka Roma resident P. by ADC Memorial in Penza on July 2, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> “Chemodanovka: ‘Poka vsekh 174 ne doprosyat, oni budut nakhodit’sya tam,’” [Chemodanovka: they will be detained until all 174 people will be interrogated] *Radio Svoboda*, June 15, 2019, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/30001340.html> [in Russian]

### ***Vandalism and Pillaging of Romani Homes***

Several days after the Roma fled, law enforcement officers recorded acts of vandalism and theft in their abandoned homes. On the evening of June 15, 2019, unknown persons set fire to a Romani home in Lopatki.<sup>18</sup> Windows were broken in some homes and “Get Out!” was scrawled on some fences.

On June 24, 2019, officers informed the owners of five homes that they had been robbed. One of the victims was N., a Roma man. His testimony follows:

*“We have a good relationship with our patrol officer, so he called me as soon as it was found that someone had been in our homes. We went there with the police. Of our things, we lost a new gas boiler, a television, four stainless steel containers, and some other things. Another four Romani homes were robbed in addition to ours. The police caught a neighbor who was found with the stolen items.”<sup>19</sup>*

### ***The Plight of the Roma who Fled***

Ninety Romani homes in Chemodanovka and Lopatki are currently vacant. Approximately 900 Roma are in Astrakhan and Volgograd oblasts and other regions. Several dozen people are in hiding in Penza or living in tents in the woods. They all want to return home, but do not out of fear for their lives:

*“My wife, kids, and I have been moving around the city for two weeks. We spend the night with one acquaintance or the other. I’m always wearing the same clothes—a shirt and pants. I have nothing to change into—everything is at home, and I can’t return there without a police escort because people there will kill me.”<sup>20</sup>*

According to Romani people who have had to move around like this, the local authorities do not guarantee their safety and talk them out of returning home:

*“After I was released, I went to see Deputy Governor Troshin during reception hours. He was respectful of us, but he said it would be better if we didn’t return to Chemodanovka, at least until the second victim in the brawl, who is in a coma, regains consciousness. Troshin said that if we return now, this could set off a new conflict and the authorities could not guarantee our safety.”<sup>21</sup>*

### **The Situation in Chemodanovka as of this Report’s Writing**

The situation in Chemodanovka and Lopatki has still not normalized, even though one month has passed since the brawl. Russian National Guard units were deployed to both villages, and the streets are patrolled day and night by OMON troops and police officers, who do not allow outsiders into the villages. Officers also conduct active surveillance of journalists and human rights defenders. In one case, an ADC Memorial expert was detained by MVD officers after interviewing members of the Romani community. This prevented him from collecting information.

Some local residents state that they do not want to live with Roma and threaten to drive them out by any means if they return to their homes:

*“I know of only three families with normal Roma who worked. The rest, they weren’t normal. And they considered themselves to be masters here. They don’t work anywhere in the world. Look at the map! Where are they? They’re not anywhere. They won’t come back here. I’m telling you: if they will be here [if they return here], then they won’t be here.”<sup>22</sup>*

For their part, the authorities of Penza Oblast initiated a check of the legality of the presence of Romani households in Chemodanovka and Lopatki. The authorities are likely hoping that a court will deem the Romani houses “illegal structures.”

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<sup>18</sup> “Pod Chemodanovkoy sozhgli tsygansky dom, zaderzhany 15 chelovek,” [A Roma house burnt near Chemodanovka, 15 people detained] anews.com, July 16, 2019, <https://www.anews.com/p/112181610-pod-chemodanovkoj-sozhgli-cyganskij-dom-zaderzhany-15-chelovek/> [in Russian]

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Chemodanovka Roma resident N. by ADC Memorial in Penza on July 2, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Words of an aggressive local resident. Interview by ADC Memorial, June 28, 2019.

## **Conclusion**

Local and federal authorities have not handled the chronic problems typical of Russia's Roma community properly for decades. The absence of proactive integration measures, segregation in schools as part of structural discrimination, and the lack of measures to prevent ethnic tensions are all factors that make it easy for an interpersonal conflict about an everyday matter to explode into an ethnic conflict.

Government and law enforcement bodies have acted selectively and with bias in a clear demonstration of their prejudiced attitude towards the Romani minority. No legal assessment has been made of the people who blocked the federal highway with the demand to "evict the Roma," and no information has been provided about prosecution for inciting hatred of Roma or about an investigation into the crimes against these people (thefts, injuries received during the brawl). The only people who have been arrested are Roma, including those who, according to relatives, did not participate in the brawl and have alibis. Relatives also say that officers treated detained people inhumanely during their arrests and interrogations. Finally, statements made by the deputy head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs about taking DNA samples from Romani people, including women, to establish if they participated in the brawl should be questioned.

There is no direct evidence that the eviction of the Roma was forcibly organized by the authorities, but there is little doubt that their mass departure was coerced.

The authorities are not guaranteeing the safety of Roma who would like to return to their homes. Thus, hundreds of people, including children, have been forced to move around and live in poverty, since they had to abandon all their property, including their livestock, which is their source of income.

The level of ethnic tension in Chemodanovka remains high; some non-Roma residents have expressed an intolerant attitude towards the Roma and protest against their return home. Officials have not taken any measures to cope with the post-conflict situation and reconcile the parties.

## **Recommendations**

Officials must conduct an objective and impartial investigation of the event and observe all procedural norms. This includes an investigation into the immediate circumstances of the brawl, whose victims clearly included Roma, instances of incitement to hatred (including during the People's Assembly and the blocking of the highway), crimes against Romani property, and the inhumane treatment of Roma during arrests and interrogations.

Officials must ensure the safety of Roma who wish to return to their only homes and take special measures to overcome the consequences of the conflict and reconcile the parties with the help of conflict resolution specialists. They must also clearly voice the position that the eviction of Roma is not a way to solve the situation and that this kind of demand is illegal and untenable.

Local and federal officials must take systemic measures to improve the situation of the Roma ethnic minority regarding provision of personal documents; guarantee of the right to housing, guarantee of the right to a high-quality education without discrimination or segregation; a solution to unemployment and improvement of their material state; and guarantee of social security and medical care. Outreach work to restore ethnic peace and harmony is particularly important. These measures must be funded by and logically summarized in a special state support program.

Human rights structures of the Council of Europe must be conscious of the situation in Chemodanovka and similar conflicts, assess this situation, and put the situation of the Roma minority on the agenda of negotiations and other communications with the Russian Federation.