

Zaporizhzhia Roma Center Lacho Drome

Thank you Madame Chair.

I represent the NGO of Zaporizhzhia Roma Center Lacho Drome, which works to protect the rights of the Roma community in the Zaporizhzhia and Zakarpattia regions of Ukraine. My statement will address the hate speech against Roma minority on social media platforms in Ukraine by public officials and those charged with public security, as well as the role of human rights organizations in creating a safer space for national minorities.

According to a report by the OHCHR, there is an estimated usage of hate speech on social media against Roma by the members of the municipal guards paramilitary. The municipal guards have delegated powers from Kyiv City State Administration, who coordinate the activities of this organization and entrusted powers of maintaining public order. The Report shows that a significant number of members of the far-right C14 movement are also members of the municipal guards, demonstrating how far right groups are well infiltrated into the public office and security overall.

I also want to highlight the cases of hate speech in the statements of politicians. On April 22, 2020 the Mayor of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ruslan Martsinkiv, gave an illegal order to deport the people of the Roma nationality out from the city borders. This was announced in the weekly operational meeting that we were making. During his speech he repeatedly used hate speech to step up ethnic hatred against Roma in Ivano-Frankivsk. We are confident that such statements from politicians are one of the most dangerous tools for spreading hate speech, because they got broadcasts on central channels and then are disseminated quickly reaching a wide target audience through social media, contributing to growing racism and discrimination, undermining the respect for human dignity and the protection of the rights of minorities. Nevertheless, we are grateful to the work of the Ombudsman, who systematically reacts and condemns manifestations of hate speech towards Roma and we expect the same positive response from the newly created State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Consistence on the formation of inter cultural dialogue. Recalling the recommendations of Roma NGOs in Ukraine:

1. We invite UN OHCHR to ask Ukrainian authorities to institutionally respond to hate speech, manifestation of racism and intolerance, increasing racially motivated violence with the involvement of the extreme right groups.

Thank you!