

Statement: Lina Kondur, representative of ICO Roma Women Fund Chiricli from Ukraine. (Kiev)

Thank you, chair.

I represent ICO Roma Women Fund Chiricli from Ukraine.

The topic of my statement is discrimination of Roma with disabilities in Ukraine.

Multiple studies in Ukraine recognize Roma as minority and the most marginalized group in Ukraine. There are about 400 000 of Roma living in Ukraine but there are no official statistics on the number of Roma with disabilities. Fund Chiricli monitored the discrimination of Roma with disabilities in regions of Ukraine during the last three years. It is positive that Ukraine recently adopted a new Strategy on Roma Integration¹, but this did not include necessary provisions for persons with disabilities.

During our working activities in Odessa², Kirovograd, Charkiv and Zaporishya regions in Ukraine, Fund Chiricli identified that local state administrations discriminate Roma with disabilities in receiving humanitarian aid, essential medical equipment and mobility aids. Roma with disabilities and their children cannot access bombproof shelters because they are inaccessible. There have also been incidents where state representatives refused to evacuate Roma families with many children. We identified that 75% of Roma with disabilities need medical help as a result of the conflict³. The current situation in Ukraine shows violation of many international laws including the Declaration on Minorities⁴.

ICO Roma Women Fund Chiricli recommends to the UN to reform the UN Declaration on Minorities, to elaborate on intersectional discrimination, specifically including minorities with disabilities. Specific changes are suggested to Article 1 regarding the protection of the existence of minorities and Article 5 on national policies and programmes.

We also recommend the Ukrainian Government to include provision on “Roma with disabilities” in both the National Strategy for Roma 2021-2030 and national laws for persons with disabilities. The Government must also take urgent actions to avoid discrimination against Roma with disabilities in receiving of humanitarian aid⁵.

Thanks you for attention.

¹ See https://www.mdsocialesa2030.gob.es/derechos-sociales/poblacion-gitana/docs/estrategia_nacional/Estrategia_nacional_21_30/Estrategia_aprob_cm_2_nov_ENGLISH.pdf

² Villages: Petroverovka, Poplavka, Korsunci, Beresovka, Bolshevik in Odessa region.

³ Monitoring of problems of Roma with Disabilities in Ukraine. 41,7% of Roma need access to use their pension cards, 44,4% need to receive pensions cards, 45,1% are out of state assistance, 40,3% of Roma do not receive state social assistance during a war, 54,2% of Roma with disabilities stated they faced direct discrimination and disability discrimination.

⁴ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, articles 3, provision:” violation of right to equality of opportunity and accessibility” ; article 8, provision : “ States Parties shall also recognize the right of persons with disabilities to social protection and to the enjoyment of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability” . Besides, article 14 of European Convention on Human Rights and article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union are violated because discrimination of Roma with disabilities are based on direct discrimination. Moreover, article 2 of Universal Declaration on Human rights is also violated in the same point.

⁵ Especially in Odessa region.