

Attacks on the Roma of Bucharest

One Gypsy woman, who asked that her identity not be disclosed, reported to Helsinki Watch that she was at home around noon on June 14 when miners, led by a police officer, entered the courtyard of her house. She ran to the attic with her family and hid.

"The miners entered the house and destroyed everything. They stayed about 10 to 15 minutes and when they left they took all of our blue jeans. These were things which we had bought legally. I suspect that not all of them were really miners. One had a pistol in his belt. I stayed away from home for four days after that because I was afraid to return."

Stelian Ilie told Helsinki Watch that he was at home on June 14 around 12:30 p.m. with his son and his wife, Maria, who was recovering from a heart attack. About 20 miners came to the house with a policeman by the name of Radu Gheorghe.

"The miners looked through the house and took our goods. Then they beat me and my son and took us to the police station for about 1 to 2 hours. When we returned, we found out that my wife had been terribly frightened when the miners ransacked the house and that she had had another heart attack. We went for a doctor, but on Saturday night (June 16) she died. We just buried her.

Ilie's daughter also said:

"Now I am afraid to go on the street to buy bread. I am afraid they will say 'You are a Gypsy' and will kill me."

Source: "Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of the Gypsies of Romania," *Helsinki Watch Report*, September 1991, *Human Rights Watch*, <http://www.hrw.org/> (accessed June 25, 2008).