



## **ASSOCIAZIONE 21 LUGLIO ONLUS**

### **Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing**

#### **Roma informal settlements and human rights in Italy**

**Associazione 21 luglio Onlus** – [www.21luglio.org](http://www.21luglio.org)  
Via Bassano del Grappa, 24 – 00195 ROMA  
Tel. e Fax: 06 64815620  
email: [info@21luglio.org](mailto:info@21luglio.org) pec: [associazione21luglioonlus@pec.it](mailto:associazione21luglioonlus@pec.it)



Associazione 21 luglio Onlus is an independent<sup>1</sup> non-governmental organization committed to the protection of the individuals and groups in extreme segregation conditions mainly through the protection of children's rights and the fight against any form of discrimination as well as to the promotion of Roma and Sinti rights in Italy as they are one of the most marginalized and discriminated group living in Italy. The Association's main activities are human rights research and advocacy, human rights education and strategic litigation. Associazione 21 luglio was established in Rome on 6 April 2010 and is registered in the National Anti Discrimination Office's register of anti-discrimination organizations. Associazione 21 luglio is also member of: European Roma Information Office (ERIO), FRA's Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP), Italian Coalition for Civil Rights and Freedoms (CILD), Gruppo CRC (Working Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and Associazione Carta di Roma.

Associazione 21 luglio, as a member of the civil society, submits this contribution to the kind attention of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing in preparation for the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly in October 2018. Associazione 21 luglio submission focuses on issues concerning Roma communities living in informal settlements in Italy, providing first-hand information and highlighting the main factors of concern in relation to informal settlements and human rights as well as to adequate housing issues.

### **Roma informal settlements and human rights**

Italy does not have reliable data on the ethnic composition of the Roma and Sinti population present on the national territory. The only numbers relating to the total population are extremely approximate estimates, not supported by analyses, studies and research. Already in December 2016, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had expressed its concern about the absence of a system for collecting this type of information<sup>2</sup>. In August 2017, the European Commission underlined the persistent lack of data, indicators and effective monitoring mechanisms capable of investigating the extent of the impact on actions to combat discrimination<sup>3</sup>.

The presence in Italy of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti is estimated by the Council of Europe in a very wide range between 120,000 and 180,000 people, which would still be one of the lowest percentages registered in the European continent<sup>4</sup>. In 2017, an analysis effort was finalized through a report issued by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) in collaboration with the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR). The final text compiles two researches

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<sup>1</sup> In order to maintain its independence, Associazione 21 luglio cannot access Italian public funding by statute.

<sup>2</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations on Italy, December 2016, para. 8, available at: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/CERD\\_C\\_ITA\\_CO\\_19-20\\_26015\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/CERD_C_ITA_CO_19-20_26015_E.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> See the Communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament and the European Council, COM (2017) 458 final, *Midterm review of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies* of 30 August 2017, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?action=display&doc\\_id=46282](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=46282).

<sup>4</sup> See European Council, *Estimates and official numbers of Roma in Europe*, July 2012; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Roma Pilot Survey*, see: <http://fra.europa.eu/DVS/DVTroma.php>.

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presented on 6 February 2017: “Designing a pilot information system for monitoring the social inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti populations”<sup>5</sup> and “The Roma, Sinti and Caminanti settlements in Italy”<sup>6</sup>. This work has not always taken into account the socio-economic variables and the range of housing solutions chosen by the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti in Italy<sup>7</sup> and it includes information and data on individuals and communities which are “hypervisible” as they are present in formal or informal settlements.

According to the mapping conducted in 2017 by Associazione 21 luglio, published in its Annual Report<sup>8</sup>, while the number of people belonging to the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities present in Italy is unknown, it is possible to quantify in approximately 26,000 units the Roma and Sinti people who are living in a condition of housing emergency, and more specifically in formal slums, in informal slums, in micro settlements and in Roma collection centres<sup>9</sup>.

The informal slums that Associazione 21 luglio has been monitoring, inhabited by people of Roma origin, are spontaneous and mono-ethnic settlements that develop on public areas. In everyday language they have often been called “illegal camps”. They consist of precarious homes (caravans, tents, shacks built with waste material, metal sheets or wood) where running water, heating, a water supply, sewerage and lighting are absent. Because of the repeated forced evictions, the number of inhabitants present in the various slums has become so tiny that, in some cities, what is left is almost exclusively an informal micro-settlements. In the year 2017, according to data gathered through a mapping exercise conducted by Associazione 21 luglio, in Italy there were 148 formal settlements, inhabited by approximately 16,400 people, and 2 reception centres accommodating about 130 individuals as well as the estimated number of Roma present in informal settlements and micro settlements in 2017 is approximately 9,600<sup>10</sup>. In the Roma informal slums and micro-settlements 86% of the inhabitants are Romanian citizens and the rest are mostly Bulgarian nationals. Usually the Roma people living in the Italian slums are searching for low profile jobs, often as migrant workers<sup>11</sup> and in absence of those requirements needed to be legally resident. Due to also

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<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.slideshare.net/slideistat/c-freguja-progettazione-di-un-sistema-informativo-pilota-per-il-monitoraggio-dell'inclusione-sociale-delle-popolazioni-rom-sinti-e-caminanti>.

<sup>6</sup> See: [http://www.cittalia.it/images/Gli\\_insediamenti\\_Rom\\_Sinti\\_e\\_Caminanti\\_in\\_Italia.pdf](http://www.cittalia.it/images/Gli_insediamenti_Rom_Sinti_e_Caminanti_in_Italia.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*. According to this research, analysing the data on the RSC populations residing in the camps (*ranging from the large “villages of solidarity” where the residents are periodically registered by the municipal administrations, to the most inaccessible “spontaneous camps”, deprived of any kind of services or interventions*) overall there are 23,277 people surveyed, 28,360 estimated and 24,248 actually present.

<sup>8</sup> See: [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto\\_Annuale-2017\\_web.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto_Annuale-2017_web.pdf). The English version will soon be available.

<sup>9</sup> The constantly updated data relating to the mapping, conducted by Associazione 21 luglio, are not entirely public mainly due to concerns linked to security. The data presented did not include or take into consideration the so-called “micro-areas”. The mapping involves 18 regions, excluding Val d'Aosta and Basilicata, where it was not possible to compensate for the absence of reliable sources and data.

<sup>10</sup> This estimate is the result of the constant monitoring work of Associazione 21 luglio. The fragmentary nature of the settlements and the eviction have changed during the year the number of presences that are believed to move within a range of between 8,600 and 10,600 units.

<sup>11</sup> Italy has not signed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; thus no protection mechanism nor guarantees are adopted by Italian authorities regarding migrant workers.

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the black labour as well as to the impossibility to find a regular job that allows the people coming from other EU countries to obtain the Certification of the legal basis for residence for EU citizens<sup>12</sup> and to the high cost required for a work licence, most of the Rumanian Roma people do not have the possibility to stipulate a rental lease and are forced to live in informal settlements.

In areas where formal and informal settlements exist and inclusive policies are inexistent or weak, where exchanges and relations are suffocated by spatial isolation and discrimination<sup>13</sup>, it is certainly easier to detect words that unmask an attitude of intolerance and open hostility. This is because where numerous informal settlements exist and forced evictions occur, a greater level of antigitanism develops proportionately, which in turn raises the pressure on local administrators who feel so legitimated in persevering in policies with security approaches, characterized mainly by eviction actions.

The risk that one can envisage is that “upgrading” informal slums may also have a strong impact in increasing intolerance and violence against Roma communities in Italy. In 2017 there were a number of violent incidents in Italy that targeted Roma and Sinti<sup>14</sup>. In most cases, investigations to identify those responsible are still ongoing, such as the case that occurred on the 27 and 28 August 2017 in Scampia neighbourhood, in the City of Naples. On 27 August a fire was set in the vicinity of the Cupa Perillo informal settlement. The blaze affected a part of the “camp” involving five housing units. The authors who set the fire in the undergrowth surrounding the dwellings are unknown. However, also following the public denunciation of the residents of the slums to the competent authorities, the police decided to start an investigation. It is assumed that the act may have been carried out with an intimidation intent, connected with the possible evacuation of settlement, or in retaliation following complaints of the residents of the slums to the competent authorities regarding the spillage of waste and dumps by unknown persons in the vicinity of the “camp”. It should also be noted that the day after the fire, on 28 August, approximately 5 scooters passed through the slum publicly threatening the residents with intimidating invectives and threats: “We'll burn all of you”, “We'll set you on fire”<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> See: Italian Legislative Decree No. 30/2007 on the implementation of the EU Directive No. 38/2004 regarding the right of EU citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the EU territory.

<sup>13</sup> In 2017 the Observatory 21 luglio registered a total of 182 episodes of hate speech against Roma and Sinti, of which 51 (28.1% of the total) classified as episodes of a certain gravity. See: [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto\\_Annuale-2017\\_web.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto_Annuale-2017_web.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> In 2017 the Observatory 21 luglio registered a total of 6 violent incidents against Roma and Sinti communities. See: [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto\\_Annuale-2017\\_web.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto_Annuale-2017_web.pdf). The Observatory 21 luglio points out how the discriminatory and violent incidents with an “ethnic” basis, specifically aimed against Roma and Sinti people in Italy, reported and officially registered by the competent authorities, are difficult to interpret. Although there are traces of discriminatory and violent episodes against Roma and Sinti, especially of those living in informal settlements, often the total number of discriminatory and violent acts that can be recorded and prosecuted appears to be an underestimation due to the scarce sanctioning tools available, their low incidence, the high rate of interpretative uncertainty of the cases themselves and the difficulty for those Roma living in informal settlements to access legal actions.

<sup>15</sup> Direct testimonies from the European Roma Rights Centre and Associazione 21 Luglio.

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## Forced evictions and informal settlements

Throughout 2017, in many Italian cities there was a high number of forced evictions<sup>16</sup> of Roma communities from the informal slums and micro-settlements in which they were living. Italy still lacks a clear regulatory framework on evictions from informal settlements, with the consequence that these operations continue to be conducted by local authorities in a discretionary manner, often in disregard of procedural safeguards provided for by international law, which turn them into clear human rights violations<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, what should not be underestimated is the fact that forced evictions, despite involving high costs<sup>18</sup>, never address the issue of inadequate housing<sup>19</sup>; they produce the opposite outcome, that of replicating the same inadequate housing conditions elsewhere, thereby consolidating the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion<sup>20</sup>.

Associazione 21 luglio, through its constant monitoring activity, has recorded for the year of 2017 the following evictions of Roma families from informal settlements: 96 in Northern Italy, 91 in the Centre and 43 in the South<sup>21</sup> for a total of 230 forced evictions. The overall picture shows that the practice continues to be widespread and reiterated throughout the country and in most cases it involves medium-small size slums, micro camps and micro settlements. Forced evictions involving the largest number of people documented by Associazione 21 luglio in 2017 were: via Bruzzo, Genoa (approximately 30 families<sup>22</sup> - 9 May); Borgo Mezzanone, Foggia (approximately 100 people - 20 July); via Brecce di Sant'Erasmo, Naples

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<sup>16</sup> Forced evictions constitute “a clear violation of human rights, in particular of the right to adequate housing” and are defined as ‘the permanent or temporary removal of persons, families or communities against their will from the housing and / or land they occupy, without being provided and having access to appropriate forms of legal protection or other safeguards’. See: UN Commission on Human Rights, Resolution 77/1993, 10 March 1993 and General Comment No. 7/1997 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on forced evictions “The right to adequate housing” (Article 11 (1) of the Covenant): Forced evictions”, FORCED EVICTION INT\_CESCR\_GEC\_6430\_E.

<sup>17</sup> See the Concluding Observations adopted on 9 December 2016 during the ninety-first session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, following the monitoring cycle on Italy (CERD / C / ITA / CO / 19-20), [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/CERD\\_C\\_ITA\\_CO\\_19-20\\_26015\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/CERD_C_ITA_CO_19-20_26015_E.pdf); See also Associazione 21 luglio, *Beyond the slums*, op. cit.; Associazione 21 luglio, *Capital Sin*, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> See Berenice, Lunaria, Compare and Osservazione, *Segregating costs*, op. cit.; Associazione 21 luglio, *Nomad Camps Ltd*, op. cit.; Associazione 21 luglio, *Collection Centers Ltd*, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> See also: United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Italy*, October 2015 in correlation with the General Comment No. 4/1991 on adequate housing of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47a7079a1.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> However it must be stressed out that a slight improvement has been made: on 5 December 2017, the Judgment of the Court of Milan no. 2518/2017 concerning the acquittal of 7 Roma people prosecuted by judicial authorities for living in a piece of an abandoned public land, known as the informal settlement of via Cima in Milan, has stressed out that the housing right is subsumed within the primary needs of a person. The Judgment, curtailing a public property right in favor of the housing right, is the first judicial sentence in Italy related to Roma people living in informal settlements that has justified the encroachment of the public right by recognizing housing and social needs of the Roma people that were living in the via Cima informal settlement. The relevant documentation is available in the archive of Associazione 21 luglio.

<sup>21</sup> The data on the number of evictions in Northern, Central and Southern Italy are the result of the constant monitoring activity by Associazione 21 luglio.

<sup>22</sup> Only the number of Roma families affected by the forced eviction is available.

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(approximately 1,200 people - 7 April); via Menotti, Cinisello Balsamo (approximately 150 people - 18 April), via Newton, Rome (approximately 80 people - 18 December).

The Circular of the Ministry of the Interior N. 11001/123/111 (1) of 1 September 2017<sup>23</sup> has recognized the need to protect the most vulnerable households in conditions of serious economic hardship living in occupied buildings as well as establishing that “the protection of households in situations of economic and social hardship has become, with the law of conversion of the decree, a priority condition for the definition of the execution methods for the eviction operations”. Therefore the eviction operations carried out by the public authorities must necessarily “guarantee public order, security, safety and public health, as well as the housing safeguard of those entitled in relation to each planned eviction action”. According to Associazione 21 luglio the Circular of the Ministry of the Interior should be extended to informal settlements in order to guarantee effectiveness of the international and European safeguards related to the use of eviction actions by public authorities.

As noted several times over the years by international and European human rights bodies, the failure to provide adequate alternative housing by the Italian authorities in cases of forced evictions, often risks exacerbating the condition of those already vulnerable<sup>24</sup>. Minors and women continue to suffer the most obvious consequences of forced evictions, in particular in terms of impact on educational and schooling pathways and integration into the social and urban fabric. The discriminating and segregating housing conditions in which Roma children and women live, the chain of vulnerability perpetrated and repeated through forced eviction operations, affect the schooling rates and overall the educational pathways<sup>25</sup>.

Emblematic in this regard, stressing out the need to implement the abovementioned Circular of the Ministry of the Interior, are the events related to the forced eviction from the Roma informal slum located in the Gianturco district of the City of Naples (where, approximately 1,200 people lived permanently for years until the early months of 2017) and the “downgrading” of the Camping River institutional slum in Rome to “informal settlement”.

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<sup>23</sup> See: [http://www.halleyconsulenza.it/sites/default/files/circolareInterno11001\\_1Set2017.pdf](http://www.halleyconsulenza.it/sites/default/files/circolareInterno11001_1Set2017.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has explicitly defined the meaning of “adequate housing”. See: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47a7079a1.pdf> and [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21\\_rev\\_1\\_Housing\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> See Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, *The rights of children and adolescents in Italy*, 3rd Supplementary Report to the United Nations on the monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Italy, November 2017, <http://www.gruppocrc.net/IMG/pdf/rapportocrc-x2017.pdf>; Concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 24 July 2017, <http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsgA84bcFRy75ulvS2cmS%2f%2bggWNcU4%2flgn%2bZiHvEZQc5SEWgcHa%2f%2bgSomFFruJyt%2fajkB5IO3%2fHDJ86%2fVRXmK72WeXGB9aYXQX5DqYUGqKWwW;> Associazione 21 luglio, *Going out to dream*, November 2016, [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/uscire-per-sognare\\_3\\_4-11\\_web.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/uscire-per-sognare_3_4-11_web.pdf).

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## The “diaspora” of the Roma from Gianturco - Naples

The eviction in the neighbourhood of Gianturco in Naples has its genesis on 22 March 2016, when the competent authorities notified approximately forty people with a report enforcing the Decree on Preventive Confiscation of the area between via Breccie di Sant’Erasmus, 106/108 and 123, issued on 23 January 2016 by the Criminal Court of Naples<sup>26</sup>. Several informal slums inhabited mainly by Roma families originating from Romania were set up around these areas<sup>27</sup>.

Following several postponements of the enforcement of the eviction, the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Criminal Court of Naples had indicated that the deadline for the evacuation of the informal slum in Gianturco was 10 January 2017. However, by the time the deadline expired, neither had the slum been dismantled nor had a further postponement been granted. Starting from January 2017, public authorities and law enforcement agencies decide to start exercising different types of pressure (such as forbidding the local market, seizing carts, cars and vans, constantly having local municipal police patrolling the areas next to the entrances to the “camp”, occasionally prohibiting the delivery of meals provided by Caritas<sup>28</sup> inside the slum, providing oral notices of imminent eviction) that make the concerns of the Roma communities of an imminent eviction greater and more tangible. This activity means that dozens of families decide to leave the settlement autonomously, in the absence of adequate alternative housing arrangements by the municipal authorities, in a dynamic that can be qualified and assimilated to an “induced eviction”.

In Spring 2017, authorities repeatedly warn the inhabitants of the slum in Gianturco about the eviction that actually takes place on 7 April 2017, in the absence of any suitable alternative offers. Roma families disperse in a real “diaspora” throughout the city. Approximately 200 people are temporarily transferred to the temporary reception centre of via del Riposo, an institutional mono-ethnic settlement built a short time earlier by the Municipality of Naples to host only selected Roma families. Other families, whose situation is more precarious and fragile, are offered the possibility of moving to the “Grazia Deledda” reception centre, a mono-ethnic structure falling short of international standards that hosts approximately 100 people.

It is interesting to understand and highlight that the “diaspora” produced by the forced eviction from the slum of Gianturco was fragmented on the territory of the city of Naples, replicating elsewhere, if not in a worse form, the situation of vulnerability of the Roma families evicted. In the days immediately following the eviction, in the absence of alternative solutions, approximately 160 people including women and minors coming from the slum in Gianturco, seek refuge in a disused private factory called “former Manifattura Tabacchi” and located in via Ferraris in the Municipality of Naples, not far from the previous

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<sup>26</sup> The relevant documentation is available in the archive of Associazione 21 luglio.

<sup>27</sup> An historical review of the presence of the settlement<sup>27</sup> and of the chain processes produced by the periodic forced evictions carried out by the Authorities in the Municipality of Naples, shows that with time the slums grew bigger. Additional families affected by the forced evictions of Ponticelli in 2008, Parco della Marinella in via Marina in 2012, via Maddaloni in 2013, via Santa Maria del Pianto in 2014, via Galileo Ferraris former Manifattura Tabacchi area in 2015, and again Ponticelli in 2016 went to live there.

<sup>28</sup> Caritas is a Catholic organization that promotes charity and social justice among those in need.

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informal settlement. The building, consisting of multiple sheds, does not meet the minimum requirements for habitability and is lacking basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity. After the inspections carried out by the Fire Brigade and the Public Authorities, on 6 July 2017 the Local Police of the Municipality of Naples warn the occupants to immediately free the premises in question due to the danger of rubble collapsing from the roof. Following the abandonment of the site “former Manifattura Tabacchi” by the occupants, as a consequence of the numerous pressures by the public authorities, approximately 250 people - the same 160 people present in the building of the “former Manifattura Tabacchi” together with other people evicted from the Gianturco settlement - seek refuge in the area located between via Ausilio and via Gianturco, called “former fruit and vegetable market”, which is managed by a private company and is surveilled by a private security company.

On 3 August 2017 the Criminal Court of Naples orders the preventive seizure of the area due to the fact that it is occupied without authorization and because the health and hygiene situation is extremely critical. The order is notified only to some families present within the “former fruit and vegetable market” while on 14 August 2017 the final deadline for the relocation from the area is set for 8 September of the same year. On 11 September the Authorities issue a decree postponing the execution of the decree for the preventive seizure of the area known as “former fruit and vegetable market”. The eviction continued to be postponed until the community that was leaving within the “former fruit and vegetable market” sought refuge on 6 November in the abandoned buildings of the former factories of the industrial zone, triggering discontent among the residents of the neighbourhood, where approximately 250 Roma found shelter in the area called “ex Frigoriferie”.

### **Camping River: from “equipped village” to informal settlement - Rome**

Listed since 2005 as an “equipped village” (or “village of solidarity”) by the successive administrations in the city of Rome, Camping River, until 30 September 2017 was considered a private campsite for the reception of Roma families thanks to an agreement between the managing body and the Municipality of Rome, which was periodically renewed. The site, with an area of 11,151 square meters, is located in the XV District and has been allocated to the reception of Roma families mainly from Bosnia and Romania. At the beginning of 2017, the Municipality of Rome, after the survey carried out by the local police, has assessed its population in 420 people.

After resolution no. 105 of 26 May 2017<sup>29</sup>, with which the Municipality of Rome had set out the “authorization, on an experimental basis, for actions and interventions provided for in the Guidance Plan, to be implemented in “La Barbuta” and “La Monachina” camps», the same Municipality has extended the measures for the dismissal of “camps” to the Camping River settlement on 15 June 2017, with resolution

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<sup>29</sup> See the “Guidance Plan for Rome for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Populations”:

[https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Del\\_G\\_C\\_105\\_26\\_maggio\\_2017.pdf.pdf](https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Del_G_C_105_26_maggio_2017.pdf.pdf)





no. 146<sup>30</sup>. The economic and social inclusion measures provided within the *Plan* do not include upgrading activities for informal settlements, leaving the issue unresolved. The actions promoted by the Roman Council have highlighted the fragility of a “Plan” that immediately revealed its first internal contradictions with the - tragically failed - pilot project at the Camping River settlement, which ended up being simply “downgraded” to informal settlement.

On 4 July a letter is sent to each of the Camping dwellers with the object “Closure of the Camping River Equipped Village on the date of 30/09/2017. Communication of dismissal”. “People in need - as stated in the text - will have access to the support measures provided for in the Plan”. At the same time, the Guardia di Finanza (the Financial Police), thanks to a MoU signed with the Municipality, conducts economic investigations on the 250 adults. This survey will lead to the identification of a dozen adults lacking the requirements for accessing the support for inclusion provided for in the “Plan”.

From mid-August - and until 12 October - each family is called by the social workers of the Municipality of Rome and they are granted indefinite support on condition that the family, counted as lacking stable employment and resources, provides “a property rental agreement” or “a preliminary agreement for the rental of a building” or “a booking agreement with a reception facility”. The families were unable to sign such agreements due to their lack of documents ensuring their adequate and sustainable solvency (with the exception of five families that will therefore benefit from public aid), hence, they are forced to stay in the campsite which, as of 1 October 2017 is no longer considered an “Equipped village” but an illegally occupied private area.

During the last weeks of 2017, the managing body abandons the settlement, which therefore lacks any service within it and is definitively “downgraded” to informal settlement. However, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, with an order, the Roman Administration ordered the maintenance of the functionality of the water and wastewater purification systems as “it is necessary to continue to maintain suitable health conditions in the private area until 30 June 2018”.

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<sup>30</sup> See:

[https://www.comune.roma.it/pcr/do/jacms/Content/edit.action?contentId=NEW745985#!U;https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Del\\_G\\_C\\_105\\_26\\_maggio\\_2017.pdf.pdf!#](https://www.comune.roma.it/pcr/do/jacms/Content/edit.action?contentId=NEW745985#!U;https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Del_G_C_105_26_maggio_2017.pdf.pdf!#)

**Associazione 21 luglio Onlus – [www.21luglio.org](http://www.21luglio.org)**

Via Bassano del Grappa, 24 – 00195 ROMA

Tel. e Fax: 06 64815620

email: [info@21luglio.org](mailto:info@21luglio.org) pec: [associazione21luglionlus@pec.it](mailto:associazione21luglionlus@pec.it)



## Upgrading Roma informal settlements

During 2017 no plan as well as no legislative steps were undertaken to implement international standards on forced evictions in the Italian legal system nor to ensure the upgrading of Roma informal settlements. Italian Constitution includes the right of residence in its core and protected rights, however there is still no national legislation that safeguards the informal settlements in order to prevent social and housing exclusion.

According to Associazione 21 luglio, In light of the present and past experiences in Italy, “upgrading” activities resulted in Italy in formalizing informal settlements in a “non-temporary” manner<sup>31</sup>. The need to have better living conditions, recognized by International and European human rights standards, for those who are living in informal settlements through “upgrading” activity, that is providing essential services, can be implemented by the means of its transitory approach. This kind of approach relies on and is linked to the expectancy of reallocating the people living in informal slums to adequate housing, although in Italy upgrading informal slums has not meant overcoming them but facilitating the permanently formalization of new formal or tolerated slums.

It is also relevant to highlight the need to recognize the housing right of those who live in informal settlements, such as the Roma people, as well as the necessity to halt the construction of mono-ethnic settlements by “upgrading” informal slums in order to ensure international and European standards to all the people living in Italian slums. Furthermore, what should be taken into account is the fact that forced evictions never address the issue of inadequate housing but replicate the same inadequate housing conditions elsewhere; thus in order to upgrade informal slums there is the need to envisage an inclusive approach as well as safeguarding Roma people by preventing social and housing exclusion.

## Recommendations

In order to build an all-encompassing family-by-family approach based on the real needs of people living in informal settlements and in order to implement an effective policy of overcoming Roma slums by an inclusive approach, Associazione 21 luglio deems necessary the following:

- Implement the International, European and national guide-lines on eviction, by halting forced eviction procedures for those who live in informal settlements as well as for those who are evicted;
- Advocate Italy in order to sign the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, rendering binding the guarantees adopted by the Convention regarding migrant workers and providing a variety of housing integration tools with adapted and customized solutions to offer;

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<sup>31</sup> See: [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RAPPORTO-ANNUALE\\_2016\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RAPPORTO-ANNUALE_2016_WEB.pdf) and [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto\\_Annuale-2017\\_web.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rapporto_Annuale-2017_web.pdf).

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- Regularize individual legal and administrative situations in order to implement effective inclusion policies involving Roma people that are excluded from the access to services as well from housing, education, health and work policies;
- Build consensus favoring those working in the media and for the society in order to weave networks and solidarity.