**Description of the issue**

Center for Roma Initiatives conducted a national survey on the problem of child, contracted marriages in four municipalities of Montenegro: Niksic, Podgorica, Berane and Ulcinj on a sample of **643** members of Roma and Egyptian population. The fact that the child, forced and arranged marriages are still a major problem in the Roma and Egyptian communities, is confirmed by the following data: in 59,1% of child contracted marriage cases, decision has been made by girls' parents, in 52% they don't choose the partner, nor they decide on the moment they will enter the marriage, but their parents, families and community representatives make decision on their behalf. 44,2% of girls haven't met their future husband before wedding. Concerning fact is that this research confirms that 72,4% of interviewed girls have entered the marriage before they were 18 years old. This data show that within RE community, juvenile contracted marriages are not a coincidence, but common model of behavior which starts the whole string of far reaching consequences, especially for RE girls and women.

It is evident that during arrangement of child marriage certain amount of money is given and according to the responses of respondents, it ranges usually from 200 to 4000 Euros, while in 25.3% of cases it is higher than 4000 Euros.

The research results show that female respondents in 75.8% of cases considered that the State and its institutions should participate in the fight against arranged marriages while unmarried female respondents, even in 81.3% of cases expressed affirmative attitude towards the possibility of involvement of state institutions in the process of preventing of such marriages.

**The number of reported and prosecuted cases:**

In the period from 2012 to October of 2015, to activists of CRI 23 cases of arranges and child marriages were reported that were processed according to the relevant state authorities. Solving upon specific reports, state authorities prosecuted 1 criminal charge, 1 misdemeanor, while in three cases the authorities prevented the establishment of a common law marriage that was planned abroad by applying the provisions of the Family Law which supervise the parental rights by a welfare authority but without initiating of legal procedures. Other cases have not experienced legal concretization due to the lack of clearly specified legal mechanisms in the section of the Criminal law, especially in criminal offenses under Art 221 and 444 of the Criminal Code of Montenegro (Extramarital community with a minor and Trafficking of Human Beings).

Roma and Egyptian female activists through daily work with victims of domestic violence and direct conversations with women from these communities come to the conclusion that Roma and Egyptian females during reporting of domestic violence cases to police organizations, centers for social work and other state bodies face discriminatory treatment especially in the assessment of justifiability of their reports and undertaking of measures of warnings.

Some of the examples of Roma and Egyptian women are as follows: "A social worker says to me here, there, a catastrophe", "You should go home now and we will warn your husband," "Maybe you did not sleep with him," "The police is not interested in what I speak" ....

What is worrying is the fact that Roma and Egyptian women who are victims of domestic violence face very often with the excuse of lack of capacity for their accommodation in existing services for protection.

Some of the examples of women are as follows: "She only wants to survive the winter," "Maybe they do not have health insurance book so they want to give birth here ..." and the like.

Women victims of violence for a very short period become beneficiaries of these services; appropriate legal proceedings are not often run due to lack of psycho-social assistance to victims of violence and as a rule victims always come back to the perpetrator.

**An example of the prevention of arranged, child marriage**

CRI and Women RAE Network “FIRST” in June of 2014 held a summer camp (within USAID project) in an ethno village for 30 Roma-Egyptian boys and girls of secondary school age on the topic of education and health. One theme of the camp was arranged marriages and as guests presented were two women who shared with participants their own life stories. One of the women pointed out that even today these things happen in their communities. A representative of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and a member of the Coalition of multi-sectoral team, Mr. Slavko Milic take participation at the summer camp, although he was officially on vacation.

After two days, when the coordinator of CRI returned home, her mother said her that they were invited by the neighbors that evening to celebrate the occasion of engagement, as a bride should have gone on the next day with the groom for Belgium. As the coordinator of the CRI (hereinafter Fana Delija) knew the family and the girl who had not yet turned 16 years old, she immediately informed Mr. Milic about this, and he gave her advice on how to proceed, so the reporting process of the crime could go in the official way. Fana Delija went to the office of CRI and from the official phone called the police in Niksic and reported the case as an anonymous (Ministry of Interior is obliged to keep the anonymity to protect persons who report events). MIA immediately responded in accordance with the regulations, and urged Mr. Milić from vacation to go in the field. The police officers informed the staff of the Centre for Social Work in Niksic, with whom they together went out into the field.

Social worker and Mr. Milic and four uniformed police officers in an hour were in front of the house of the family, and called father of the girl to talk with. The important fact is that the police under the Criminal Procedure Code without a warrant may not enter alone and uninvited in the house, so it was very important that the social worker was there with them, because she could come in and talk to the girl and family members. Mr. Milic entered the house after girl's father called him to do so. Celebration - engagement was supposed to be held that night, a tent was set up in the yard and everything was prepared for the arrival of guests. The social worker talked privately with the girl, and then the father repeated what she said i.e. that she wanted to marry. The bridegroom, who lives in Belgium, she met via Skype and she had never seen him before. There were also present three other girls from the family, one of them who married ten years ago (when she was 14) said: "All three of us are married and we have children, she wants to do the same thing."

Father denied that he would receive or give money and this fact was not officially confirmed, although members of CRI and the Women RAE network “FIRST” heard in the community that the amount of EUR 3,500 father should have gotten from broom’s parents.

Social worker and Mr. Milic explained to the father that the marriage of a minor is illegal and that they must take away the passport from her, because their main task is work in the best interest of the child. Father nevertheless threatened social worker that he would sue her. As Mr. Milic said if they had not seized the passport, they would send the girl to Belgium and said that she went to a cousin, as it happened in some previous cases.

The celebration was not held nor the engagement. The girl (bride) remained with her parents at their home. Parents and the girl on the next day visited Mr. Milic at the police station and asked for passport back, claiming that the girl threatened to kill herself if they did give her back the passport (which was probably not true, but it was assumed that the father decided to invent this story to get the passport back so that the plan could be implemented). Mr. Milic explained that in that case he would have to send the girl to the hospital in psychiatric department for examination and possible treatment and hospitalization. Only when they heard this, parents have given up further pressure.

Although officially the report of CRI was anonymous, it was assumed that Fana Delija reported the case, and because of that within the settlement people began to rumor that "They will intercept and beat up her, that they will stop her car and invite women to beat her." Threats came to Fana's brother, and he told his family about this, then all of Fana's brothers went to talk to the father of the girl, in order to calm the passions. Further pressures and threats on Fana or members of CRI and Women RAE Network "FIRST" of this case did not occur.