

Amnesty International

*Oral statement on the outcome on the Czech Republic under the UPR*

*11 June 2008*

*Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the focus in the review of the Czech Republic on the issue of discrimination against ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups. In particular, we support suggestions to ensure that Roma should not be discriminated against in the area of employment, healthcare, education, housing and access to justice.

Roma continue to suffer discrimination at the hands of both public officials and private individuals. Discriminatory practices in public and private rental markets mean that Roma can frequently not obtain housing, even when they are able to present financial guarantees. As a result they often live in segregated sub-standard housing. Ostensibly neutral requirements, such as a certain level of education disproportionately affect Roma whose level of education is often lower than that of ethnic Czechs. Segregation in the education system is widespread and Romani children are frequently, and without justification, placed in special schools for children with mental disabilities.

Incidents of violence against Roma are reported to have been perpetrated by youths with extreme racist views, some of whom had previously been convicted for similar offences, but received only light or suspended sentences.

Amnesty International is also concerned that Roma women have been subjected to sterilization procedures without their full and informed consent. This concern was also raised by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2006, which noted that state had not taken sufficient action to abide by its positive obligation to impede the illegal performance of such operations by doctors. Amnesty International urges the Czech Government to take concrete action to stop the practice of forced sterilization of women and to enact relevant legislation providing for adequate compensation.

Amnesty International urges the Czech Republic to give prompt effect to the recommendations addressing discrimination against ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups.

Thank you, Mr President.