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In Košice, 2 May 2022

The Slovak president Zuzana Čaputová supports Government's efforts to compensate forcibly sterilized Romani women

On Friday, 30 April 2022, the President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová, met representatives of the NGO Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradňa) together with a group of forcibly sterilized Romani women in Košice, expressing support for their long-term efforts to achieve justice. Slovakia has not yet fully come to terms with the practice of forced sterilization. Last November, the Slovak government apologized for this illegal practice, but the responsible state institutions are still looking for a way to compensate affected women. The President supports the Government's efforts.

During the meeting with the President, the Romani women survivors shared their experiences and the consequences of their forced sterilization. Together with Roma women, representatives of our NGO the Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradňa), also attended this meeting. Poradňa in cooperation with women promotes the need to compensate the women survivors.

According to the President, it is the engagement of injured Roma women, their mutual support and their ability to find the strength to talk about such a painful intervention into the body and soul in the context that most people do not trust you, is crucial in a very long, almost 20-year-old process of seeking justice.

The President also appreciated that the Slovak government has acknowledged the existence of forced sterilizations, apologized for it and is looking for a way to redress this practice. She said that she supported this effort, which for her is a sign of maturity and respect for the most basic value of respect for the life and human dignity of every human being.

"We liked that the Mrs. President met with us and that she understood us as women. We have been fighting for more than 18 years for redress and we hope we will see it as soon as possible,"

said Kristína - one of the forcibly sterilized Romani women after the meeting.

"By receiving illegally sterilized women, the President has sent a clear signal that, as a society, we must finally come to terms with this practice. In this regard, I consider it crucial that the government's declared effort to compensate the injured women does not stop at discussions and searching for suitable solution. It is necessary for the government and parliament to finally act and take effective measures at government or legislative level to enable the compensation of the women survivors."

said Vanda Durbáková, a lawyer working with the Poradňa, who successfully represented some of the injured women in court proceedings.

Cases of forced sterilizations were documented by our non-governmental organization in cooperation with the international organization Center for Reproductive Rights in 2003 in the published report [Body and Soul: Violent Sterilizations and Other Attacks on the Reproductive Freedom of the Roma in Slovakia](#). Forced sterilizations without informed consent took place in Slovak hospitals until 2004. Many of the injured women, with our support, achieved justice in the European Court of Human Rights

and in Slovak courts. However, in a long term, we are promoting systemic solution of this problem by executive and legislative powers.

In July 2021, in the presence of two Roma women and a representative of our NGO, the Slovak Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and National minorities discussed this issue. In his [resolution](#), it supported the solution of compensation to victims through the adoption of particular legislation and at the same time called on the Slovak government to apologize for this practice. In November 2021, the Slovak government adopted a [resolution](#) condemning the forcible sterilization of Roma women and apologizing to the injured women.

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The Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradňa) is a non-governmental grassroots organization based in Slovakia focused on the protection of human rights with particular emphasis on the rights of minorities and protection from discrimination. Poradna has for a long time worked on the issue of discrimination against Roma ethnic minority in various areas of public life. It has also been active in the protection of reproductive rights and protection from police brutality. Poradna employs strategic litigation to combat discrimination and human rights abuses against minorities. Poradna offers free legal advice to victims of discrimination and in selected cases free legal representation to victims of discrimination before Slovak courts and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It also conducts monitoring in the field, advocacy, and educational activities on the protection from discrimination for lay and expert audiences. Visit us at: www.poradna-prava.sk

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