

# ROMANIA 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Romania is a constitutional republic with a democratic, multiparty parliamentary system. The bicameral parliament consists of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, both elected by popular vote. Observers considered local elections held on September 27 and parliamentary elections held on December 6 to have been generally free and fair and without significant irregularities.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the gendarmerie, border police, the General Directorate for Internal Protection, and the Directorate General for Anticorruption. The General Directorate for Internal Protection has responsibility for intelligence gathering, counterintelligence, and preventing and combatting vulnerabilities and risks that could seriously disrupt public order or target Ministry of Internal Affairs operations. The minister of interior appoints the head of the directorate. The Romanian Intelligence Service, the domestic security agency, investigates terrorism and national security threats. The president nominates and the parliament confirms the service's director. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the intelligence service and the security agencies that reported to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Members of the security forces committed some abuses.

Significant human rights issues included: cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the government; widespread official corruption; lack of investigation and accountability for violence against women and girls; and crimes of violence targeting institutionalized persons with disabilities and members of ethnic minority groups.

The judiciary took steps to prosecute and punish officials who committed abuses, but authorities did not have effective mechanisms to do so and delayed proceedings involving alleged police abuse and corruption, with the result that many of the cases ended in acquittals. Impunity for perpetrators of some human rights abuses was a continuing problem.































































































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address underreported labor, in 2017 the government increased the minimum required payroll taxes that employers must pay for their part-time employees to equal those of a full-time employee earning minimum wage. Additionally, the Labor Inspectorate collaborated with the National Authority for Fiscal Administration to conduct joint operations to check employers in sectors prone to underreported labor, including the textile, construction, security, cleaning, food preparation, transportation, and storage industries. These investigations often focused on underpayment of taxes rather than workers' rights.

The government did not effectively enforce overtime standards. Union leaders complained that overtime violations were the main problem facing their members, since employers often required employees to work longer than the legal maximum without receiving mandatory overtime compensation. This practice was especially prevalent in the textile, banking and finance, and construction sectors.

Workers can remove themselves from situations they deemed dangerous to their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. Not all workplace accidents were investigated by labor inspectors. Companies investigate minor incidents, while labor inspectors investigate more severe ones, typically those that result in fatalities or serious injuries. If appropriate, incidents may be referred for criminal investigation. Union leaders often claimed that labor inspectors only superficially investigated workplace accidents, including ones involving fatalities, and inspectors often wrongly concluded that the victims were at fault in most fatal accidents. In 2018, Romania reported 4.33 deaths per 100,000 employees as a result of accidents at work, which is the highest percentage of workplace deaths in the EU.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, additional risk bonuses were awarded to healthcare staff caring for COVID-19 patients or for those involved in pandemic response. Health sector unions and media highlighted cases in which medical staff had limited access to protective equipment. In Suceava county, lack of protective equipment and lapses in protocol led to a disproportionate outbreak among medical staff, prompting the government to implement a range of oversight and lockdown measures to contain and control the outbreak, including placing Suceava's County Emergency Hospital under military management.