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Ministry of the Interior
National Police Board
Helsinki Police Department

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman's recommendations regarding the Helsinki Police Department's crime prevention and information gathering operation targeting Roma

On 23 November 2023, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman organised a round table discussion about the Helsinki Police Department's Kuri1 crime prevention and information gathering operation targeting Roma in 2013–2015, and the questions raised by the National Police Board's decision made in 2023.

The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman has issued a [statement and recommendations](#) to the Ministry of the Interior and National Police Board due to the operation on 21 December 2021. The Ombudsman found that the Kuri1 crime prevention and information gathering operation conducted by the Helsinki Police Department against Roma gave rise to an assumption of discrimination based on ethnic origin. Judging from the guidelines for the operation, it was based on an instruction to discriminate, prohibited under the Non-Discrimination Act. The guideline's description of the Roma who were to be subjected to intensified monitoring and surveillance could be understood to mean that the operation targeted all people assumed to be Roma by the police and travelling by car or in a group. In their statement, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman stressed that this incident must be taken seriously, since discrimination based on ethnic origin is an especially serious form of discrimination.

The purpose of the discussion organised by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman on 23 November 2023 was to facilitate forward-looking discussion of the Kuri1 operation and the issues that have arisen in the follow-up investigations of the operation. In addition to the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, the round table was attended by representatives of, for example, the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior, the National Police Board's legality control unit, Helsinki Police Department, and Roma organisations.

From the perspective of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman's statutory duties, the key questions were:

- 1) How to ensure the non-discriminatory nature of police operations and compliance with the prohibition of ethnic profiling?
- 2) How can we increase the Roma population's trust in the police?

Based on the round table discussion, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends the following follow-up measures regarding the Kuri1 operation:

- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends that the **National Police Board** develop its operations in accordance with the [recommendations made in CERD general recommendation no. 36](#) in order to ensure that the **prohibition of ethnic profiling is fully understood in all police departments**.
- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends that the **National Police Board design and implement information gathering measures on whether ethnic profiling is being used in police operations**. The police should regularly collect both qualitative and quantitative data on how police operations target various ethnic minorities.
- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends that **police departments hold regular discussions** with the Roma on the targeting of police operations at them. The Roma population's distrust of police activities can be dispelled through open and honest exchanges of information.
- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends continuing the discussion on the development of the **Police Barometer** so that **its respondents be extended to cover various ethnic minorities**. The Police Barometer is a follow-up and evaluation survey that studies citizens' perceptions of police activity and the state of internal security in Finland. The knowledge base of the Barometer should also be expanded to enable the more extensive use of various ethnic minorities' experiences and views in the development of police activities.
- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends that **police departments** ensure that all Regional Advisory Boards on Romani affairs also include a police representative. Police members must also be appointed to local Roma working groups to ensure straightforward cooperation and information exchanges at the regional level.
- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends that the **police invest in more extensive anti-racism work at all levels** in addition to ensuring compliance with the prohibition of ethnic profiling through targeted measures. The Kuri1 operation was a manifestation of deep-rooted structural racism, and recognising and acknowledging this is a necessary condition for the equality of police work and improvement of trust in the police. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommends that the **conclusions on the discriminatory nature and discriminatory**

procedures of the Kuri1 operation be discussed at all levels in all police departments. The commitment of and example set by the police leadership plays a major role in this. The development of operational equality promotion planning is also an effective way of addressing structural equality issues.