



Country Report: Romania

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In September 1940, General Ion Antonescu [became](#) Prime Minister of Romania, with the support of the fascist [Iron Guard movement](#). Antonescu's Government from 1940 until 1944 was allied to the Third Reich and [directly participated](#) in the Shoah. The Antonescu Regime murdered an estimated [380,000-400,000 Jews](#) throughout the Second World War.

Over the last few years, Romania's far right has reemerged. In the wake of [disillusionment](#) with mainstream parties, the far-right ideologue Calin Georgescu received the highest number of votes out of the candidates in the first round of Romania's 2024 Presidential Election at [22.9%](#). Despite forgoing a [typical campaign](#), he seemed [poised to win](#) the second round. Georgescu has openly referred to General Antonescu as a "[martyr](#)", and in a recording described him as "[among the heroes of the Romanian Nation](#)". Romania's electoral commission banned Georgescu's campaign due to irregularities in [campaign financing](#) and [alleged Russian meddling](#), preventing him from assuming office.

Despite Calin Georgescu's arrest, the far right continues to strengthen in Romania. At [35%](#), Romania's largest far-right party, the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), is by far the most popular party in Romania. The party openly portrays Georgescu as a victim of Romania's elite, with its leader, George Simion, calling for "[those who committed the coup to be skinned in public for what they did](#)". It also describes the Shoah as a [minor topic](#) that does not need to be taught in schools, polarizing the memory of WWII. The country has clear laws against Shoah denial, but they are [rarely enforced](#). Notably, Romania only adopted a [mandatory curriculum](#) including Holocaust education in 2021. An Elie Wiesel Institute poll conducted in 2023 showed that only [11% of Romanian respondents](#) knew that the Holocaust had also taken place in Romania. This showcases the need for Holocaust education reform in Romania.

Romania continues to experience de facto discrimination against its Romani minority. Despite Romania's efforts to desegregate schools, in practice, segregation has worsened. In 2022, [55% of Romani children](#) attended schools where either all or most of their peers were Roma, as compared to 26% in 2016. A 2008 UN study found that Roma-majority schools have [worse facilities and less qualified staff](#) compared to their non-Roma majority counterparts. Additionally, several Romanian municipalities effectively denied Roma individuals [access to social housing](#).

Genocide Watch assesses that Romania is at **Stage 3: Discrimination** due to its de facto segregation against the Roma minority in schools and social housing. It also assesses that Romania is at **Stage 10: Denial**, for the minimization of the Shoah and the glorification of its perpetrators, as demonstrated by high-profile Romanian politicians.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Building on the country's newly developed [Holocaust curriculum](#), Romania should produce additional educational programming for adults on the Holocaust on the country's state TV channel, TVR.
- Romania's Ministry of Justice should work to enforce [existing laws](#) against antisemitism. Romania's Parliament could assist in this by introducing mandatory minimum sentences for antisemitism and other hate crimes.
- To deal with the problem of a lack of prosecutorial experience in this field, Romania should [collaborate](#) with [fellow EU member states](#) to train prosecutors in the skills needed to prosecute antisemitism.
- Romania's Ministry of Education should launch a transparent investigation of Romania's desegregation programs in schools to understand why segregation targeting the Roma community remains prevalent in the country.