

# Police under fire for monitoring Romanis

**Swedish police is under heavy fire after news broke Sunday of law enforcement systematically monitoring people of romani heritage.**

**According to the [daily Dagens Nyheter](#) as many as 4 000 people have been registered solely by ethnicity by the police in the district of Skåne. Over a thousand minors are said to be listed.**

**"It's absolutely insane and truly illegal", former Liberal People's party leader Maria Leissner told Expressen.**

The record of Romanis in several of Sweden's largest cities was created in Skåne police district as late as in 2012, according to Dagens Nyheter's report. The data file itself is called "kringresande" – the Swedish term for "nomadic" – and located in the national law enforcement's internal network, accessible for police officers all over Sweden.

The name itself is upsetting as it is racially offensive.

"It's something you would have expected in South Africa during apartheid or in the US before the abolishment of segregation against African americans. But the fact that such a record exists in Sweden year 2012 is huge", says Maria Leissner, who after leaving party politics was appointed chairman of Romnai affairs by the Swedish government.

The illegal record is said to contain 4029 names with information such as personal ID-number, address and known relatives. Supposedly looking a lot like a family tree.

The register doesn't contain any criminal records, according to Dagens Nyheter, but is rather a biological register for no other apparent reason than the citizens being of this minority ethnical group.

Law enforcement officials reacted in disbelief when confronted with the accusations;

"These are groundless claims. It sound unlikely to me. I was stunned when I heard this. I've talked to others who are just as stunned as I am and who are asking the same question as I am; why the hell would we need that?", says spokesperson Lars Förstell of the Skåne police district.

Even the national police spokesman, Varg Gyllander, said he had never heard of biological records of Romanies.

If true, the collection of data would not only be a violation of the national law enforcements data legislation. It would also be a crime according to the European convention, chapter 8, which declares citizens' right to personal integrity.

The reactions in Sweden Sunday were those of anger and disgust with the law enforcement.

"It sounds like something Hitler would have done", says Sandra Håkansson who's two year old daughter, Sara Håkansson, was register when she was only two months old.

"There is a law. You can't make records based on ethnicity. And a thousand kids! It's a scandal", says Soraya Post, spokeswoman for the Roman Women's Network.

More reactions from officials is expected Monday. Sweden's prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt will meet media in New York where he's expected to take part in the opening of United Nations General Assembly.



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