

Autonomous Refugee Aid Committee, Romania

(*Comisia Autonoma de Ajutorare*), organization established in Bucharest, Romania, after the unsuccessful Iron Guard revolt and accompanying pogroms of January 1941. The committee was instituted by leaders of the Union of Jewish Communities, Zionists, businessmen, and women known for their aid activities, in order to amass funds and supplies for the pogrom victims.

After the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in mid-1941 and the Romanian authorities began deporting Jews to the region of Transnistria, many new volunteers joined the committee. They provided aid to victims of other persecutions, including the Iasi pogrom and the transfer of Jews from their small villages to large cities. They also supplied the Jews who had been drafted into forced labor battalions with money, food, tools, kitchen utensils, and medicine.

The Romanians launched the mass extermination of the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina in the summer of 1941. The committee tried to send aid to the Jews there, to no avail. After the Union of Jewish Communities was dissolved in December 1941, the committee got permission to send aid to the Jews interned in Transnistria. When those Jews were allowed to come home in 1943, the committee helped organize their return.