



BULGARIA FAMILIES HAVE NOWHERE TO GO

At least 200 Roma, including children and elderly people, were left homeless when local authorities forcibly evicted them in September 2009, according to NGOs Equal Opportunities Initiative and Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. Their homes in the Gorno Ezerovo and Meden Rudnik settlements in the Black Sea city of Burgas were demolished.

Gorno Ezerovo and Meden Rudnik are informal settlements that have existed for more than 50 years. They have public services such as water, sanitation and electricity.

Around 84 Romani households received eviction orders in 2007, based on legislation which allows houses built without the proper permits to be demolished. The authorities did not engage in meaningful consultation. Some residents appealed against the eviction orders but without success. Bulgarian national law does not provide for redress in such situations and the authorities offered no legal aid to residents.

On 8 September 2009, the authorities forcibly evicted 27 families in Gorno Ezerovo and demolished their homes. In the following days, 15 more homes were demolished in Gorno Ezerovo. Some residents dismantled the houses themselves in order to keep building materials. On 24 September, the authorities forcibly evicted 15 Romani households in Meden Rudnik.

Police oversaw the evictions. In Gorno Ezerovo, police officers reportedly kicked some of the residents and dragged them away.

The authorities have not offered alternative housing, remedies or compensation to any of those who were forcibly evicted. Many moved in with their relatives in the same area. Many others remain unprotected from future evictions, harassment, or other threats.

