

URGENT ACTION

ROMA FAMILIES FORCIBLY EVICTED

Roma families were evicted on 7 August and are now homeless. Neither the Tirana municipal authorities nor the government have done anything to assist them or provide them with alternative housing.

Roma families, some of whom have lived for 10 years on the site of the former Centre for the Realization of Works of Art in Rruga Kavaja, in the capital, Tirana, were forcibly evicted on 7 August.

That morning, contractors demolished seven or eight makeshift homes, before the police responded to calls from the Office of the People's Advocate (Ombudsperson) and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) in Tirana, and stopped any further forced evictions and demolition. The Director General of the State Police also ordered the company to stop work on the site, and asked that construction be stopped until a housing solution was found for these families.

By then, Roma families had left the site: even those whose homes were not destroyed were too frightened to go back. Along with those whose houses were demolished, many Roma slept in the street. However, on 8 August, in the absence of the construction workers, some were able to collect their belongings. They have nowhere to go, and no shelter from the summer heat of around 37 degrees Celsius. Some Roma have proposed they take all their belongings and protest outside Tirana city hall.

Another 30 families left the area in late July or early August when they were threatened by company workers and told that their homes would be demolished. The Roma are now unable to work. After reports that some had been searching garbage containers to find something to eat, they are now being provided with food, water and other assistance by an NGO.

Please write immediately in English or your own language to:

- Urge the authorities to provide immediate assistance to the Roma families made homeless following their forced eviction from the development site in Rruga Kavaja, Tirana;
- Urge them to provide all of those who have been evicted, including those who previously lived on the site, with adequate alternative housing, which meets international standards, including the UN Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Resettlement

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO:

Mayor of Tirana

Z. Lulzim Basha
Blvd. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Tirana,
Albania
Email: kabinetit@tirana.gov.al

Salutation: Dear Mr Basha

Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and

Equal Opportunities
Z. Spiro Ksera
Ministër i Punës, Cështjeve Sociale dhe
Shanseve te Barabarta
Rruga e Kavajës, Tirana, Albania
Email: spiroksera@yahoo.gr
klevesbitro@yahoo.com
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

European Union Delegate
Jochen Schult, Chargé d'Affaires
Delegation of the European Union to
Albania
ABA Business Center, Rr. Papa Gjon
Pali II, 17th floor, Tirana, Albania
Fax: +355 4 223 0752
Email: delegation-
albania@eeas.europa.eu

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 211/13. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR11/001/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Director General of Police has issued an order, according to local media, that the police shall not allow any further eviction of these Roma families, and that the construction company shall not be allowed to undertake any activity until the situation has been clarified: this must include approval by the Bailiff's Office and environmental permission from the Municipality. The Ombudsperson has called for the problem to be solved by means of a regular legal process to which the Roma are also party, guaranteed by legal institutions. The Ombudsperson has also called the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs urgently to ensure shelter or accommodation for the Roma families.

For further information on the forced eviction, see: *Albania: Authorities have obligation to assist forcibly evicted Roma*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR11/002/2013/en>

The Albanian government has a duty to abide by international law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Albania in 1991 (Article 11.1) and General Comment 4 on Article 11.1 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Furthermore, Albania has undertaken to fulfil the objectives of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015", an initiative of 12 European countries to improve the socio-economic status of Roma communities, and has adopted a (Albanian) National Strategy "For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority".

Under international law, evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once alternatives have been explored in genuine consultation with the affected communities. The authorities then have a duty to provide them with adequate notice. The authorities must ensure that no families are made homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights as a consequence of eviction. This includes providing them with adequate alternative housing which meets international standards, as well as legal remedies, including the provision of compensation for the destruction of their homes, possessions and loss of income.

Name: 30-40 Roma families living Rruga Kavaja, Tirana.

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 211/13 Index: EUR 11/003/2013 Issue Date: 9 August 2013