

# URGENT ACTION

## INADEQUATE HOUSING FOR ROMA FAMILIES

**On 8 May, eight Romani families, numbering some 50 individuals, moved with a police escort, from the premises of the Albanian Romani Association in the Albanian capital Tirana, to buildings which were partially renovated for their permanent accommodation. Their housing remains severely inadequate and there are fears for the families' safety.**

The families' access to the site was initially blocked by other inhabitants of the site, who protested against their relocation. The inhabitants claim ownership of the land, which the authorities claim to be state-owned. Police reinforcements were brought in and several protesters were briefly detained. Police brought the Romani families to their new homes and have remained on site to guard them. However, the Romani families fear for their physical safety, as the inhabitants continue to threaten them and voice strong objections to sharing the same site with them.

The conditions in the buildings, which have been partially renovated for the Romani families, are below international standards for adequate housing: they lack electricity (this may have been cut by the local inhabitants) and water. Space is cramped: there are reportedly only seven rooms, for eight families with many children, and the rooms, including bathrooms, often lack doors and window panes. The rooms have been furnished with bunk beds for six to eight people, allegedly with old mattresses. The site itself is reportedly half an hour's walk from the nearest public transport, which exacerbates their problems in relation to accessing employment and services.

**Please write immediately in English, Italian or your own language:**

- Express concern that living conditions in the buildings to which the families have been moved do not meet international standards for adequate housing, and request that the necessary improvements are made immediately;
- Request that the authorities clarify ownership of the land at the site and ensure that the Romani families are given a clear verbal and written explanation of their rights, which should include security of tenure, in relation to the buildings in which they have been housed;
- Urge that the Roma be assisted to build new lives in this environment by providing them with access to employment, education and medical services;
- Welcome efforts by the authorities to ensure the physical safety of the Romani families and urge that protection continues to be provided whilst the families remain at risk.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JUNE 2012 TO:

Minister of Internal Affairs  
Z. Bujar Nishani  
Ministër i Punëve të Brendshme  
Sheshi Skënderbej, Nr 3  
Tirana, Albania  
Email: bnishani@moi.gov.al; or  
ministra.brendshme@moi.gov.al  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Minister of Labour & Social Affairs  
Z. Spiro Ksera  
Ministër i Punës, Cështjeve  
Sociale dhe Shanseve të Barabarta  
Rruga e Kavajës  
Tirana, Albania  
Email: spiroksera@yahoo.gr  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**And copies to:**  
The People's Advocate  
Z. Igli Totozani  
Institucioni i Avokatit të Popullit  
Blv. "Zhan D'Ark", Nr. 2,  
Tirana, Albania  
Email: itotozani@avokatipopullit.gov.al  
**Salutation: Dear Mr Totozani**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 32/12. Further information:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR11/003/2012/en/>

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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The eight Roma families are among some 40 Romani families who in February 2011 left an informal settlement near the railway station in Albania's capital, Tirana, where they were living, after a series of attacks by men from outside the settlement. The authorities at first offered them temporary accommodation in tents at Babrru, on the outskirts of Tirana, pending resettlement. (The other families refused this offer mainly on health and safety grounds, and have still not been offered alternative accommodation). In mid-February 2012 these eight families, threatened with eviction, were moved to temporary accommodation in premises of the Albanian Roman Association.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the government of Albania is legally obliged to respect, protect, and progressively fulfil the right to adequate housing, guaranteed in Article 11(1) of the ICESCR.

Further, 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 Romani communities, and has adopted an (Albanian) National Strategy "For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority".

Name: Eight Romani families (50 Individuals)

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 32/12, Index: EUR 11/006/2012 Issue Date: 15 May 2012