



SERBIA THEIR RIGHTS IGNORED

On 3 April 2009, the Serbian authorities forcibly evicted 250 Roma, including young children and the elderly and infirm, from a temporary settlement in New Belgrade. Parts of the settlement, known as Blok 67, were cleared in order to make way for a new road ahead of the Student Games, a major sports event. For many of the residents, who were originally displaced from Kosovo, this was not the first time they were torn away from their homes.

The authorities offered the families containers in another area of Belgrade as temporary housing, but local residents tried to burn the containers in order to stop Roma from moving in. There was no further attempt to offer the families alternative adequate housing; after spending several nights without a roof over their heads, 60 of them accepted alternative accommodation at the Orlovsko Brdo barracks where they had no water or electricity. Some found temporary accommodation elsewhere in Belgrade but most stayed at Blok 67, trying to make do with whatever shelter they could find.

The authorities erected a fence around the community on 17 June 2009 for the duration of the games. Police and private security services guarding the fence arbitrarily decided whether or not people could cross, preventing residents from going to work and restricting their freedom of movement.

