

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Serbia: Amnesty International deplores Belgrade's forced eviction**

Amnesty International deplores the forced eviction in Belgrade on 20 September, of more than 80 Roma – 40 of them children - from an abandoned factory in Belgrade.

The organization again calls on Dragan Dilas, Mayor of Belgrade, to stop forced evictions in Belgrade.

Amnesty International notes that 15 of the 23 families evicted from the premises at Zemunska Street, New Belgrade, were already forcibly evicted by the city authorities from the Belvil settlement in April. Without residency in Belgrade, they were forced to return to southern Serbia after the forced eviction. Unable to find work in their home municipalities, they had returned again to Belgrade.

Amnesty International believes that the city's policy of returning forcibly evicted Roma to their home municipalities violates their right to freedom of movement and residence under international conventions which Serbia is a party to. The organization also considers that returning people to the south is not a sustainable solution, either for the city or for the victims of forced evictions.

Serbian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had previously succeeded in postponing the eviction, which was carried out on behalf of a private company. However, the affected families were not informed about the date of today's eviction. Nor were they consulted in advance of the forced eviction, or offered any alternative accommodation. NGOs believe that they will now be homeless.

Amnesty International is also concerned that journalists, the UN and independent observers including local NGOs were prohibited from observing the eviction.

The organization has already urged the new president and prime minister of Serbia to introduce a legislative framework which prohibits forced evictions, and sets out guidelines and safeguards to ensure that all evictions are conducted according to international standards.

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