

URGENT ACTION

FORCED EVICTION OF THOUSANDS STOPPED

Following our urgent action on 28 September, thousands of people in Harare, Zimbabwe, who were facing the threat of forced eviction from their homes have been assured by the government that no evictions will be carried out.

In June, the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development posted written notices at Hatcliffe Extension in Harare, the capital of the country, warning lease holders that they were required to pay for the renewal of their lease agreements by 30 September or they would lose their plots. Though the individual lease fees varied according to the size of the lease holders plots, in some cases they were as much as USD140. This is unaffordable for many residents of Hatcliffe Extension, who are amongst Zimbabwe's poorest. Most of the affected people were victims of Operation Murambatsvina, a programme of mass forced evictions initiated in 2005, which left about 700,000 people without homes, or livelihood, or both.

Following our urgent action, in a letter to the Zimbabwean Ambassador to Germany, which was copied to Amnesty International, the Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities, Giles Mutsekwa states: "[N]o person shall be evicted from their legal settlement areas, unless alternative arrangements/shelter has been put in place...[T]here are no plans, there were never plans to evict residents of Hatcliffe Extension."

Amnesty International is now in direct communication with the government on the issue. In Zimbabwe, lawyers representing residents from Hatcliffe Extension are also engaging with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is required on this case. The IS and AI Zimbabwe will continue to work on this case.

