

**PUBLIC**

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**Forcible eviction**

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
(CHECHEN REPUBLIC)**

**147 internally displaced families**

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The 147 families of internally displaced people (IDPs) living in a temporary accommodation centre in the Chechen capital, Grozny, were reportedly told by officials on 10 January that they had to leave at short notice. Some have apparently been told they have until the end of the month, but officials have threatened to cut off the electricity and gas if they do not leave. The families include young children, elderly and disabled people, and they risk being forcibly evicted and being made homeless at a time when the temperature in Grozny falls below freezing at night. Reportedly, men thought to be police came to the centre at around 8pm on 23 January and grabbed one female inhabitant in an attempt to force her to leave.

The officials told the families, who are living in the temporary accommodation centre at 4, Vyborgskaia Street, that they would have to move out so that the building's owners could carry out repairs. It is plausible that the real reason for the sudden eviction is to close the accommodation centre so as to bolster the authorities' claims that normal life is being restored in Grozny.

Thirty-seven of the families are reportedly registered as resident in other districts of Chechnya. They have been told to go to the authorities in those districts for assistance; however, there are concerns that this assistance may not be adequate. The others were told that each family would be given 18,000 roubles (approx US\$700) to rent alternative accommodation for six months, which they say is not enough. The officials have reportedly promised that after six months they will be given apartments, and have given some of them letters guaranteeing this, but the families are reluctant to trust them.

Despite rebuilding programmes in Chechnya, there are still housing shortages. A sudden increase in the number of people looking to rent accommodation will push up prices. Empty apartments usually have no cooking facilities or heaters, which the families will need to buy. At least 67 of the families have already left the centre. It is not known where they are now living, though at least one is believed to have camped out in a ruined building. It is reported that inhabitants of all the other remaining temporary accommodation centres in Grozny are also being told to leave.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Russian federal forces moved in 1994 to crush a Chechen independence movement, which had arisen since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This first conflict ended in 1996, but in late 1999 Russian federal forces attacked the republic again, destroying Grozny almost completely, after a series of bomb explosions in Moscow and two other Russian cities, which the Russian authorities blamed on Islamic separatist groups in Chechnya. Thousands fled into the neighbouring Russian republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan where many languished for years in overcrowded tent camps and other makeshift shelters, including train carriages and former factories, offering inadequate shelter and sanitation.

Temporary accommodation centres were set up in Grozny, providing very basic and cramped accommodation for those displaced by the second Chechen conflict. Those living in the centres are society's most vulnerable: many are young families with small children, and almost all have disabled members for whom they have to care.

Many of those living in the centres moved there when the last of the tent camps for IDPs in Ingushetia were closed in 2004. Heavy fighting in Chechnya has ended, but many people remain homeless because so much

of Chechnya's housing was destroyed by the massive bombardment by Russian federal forces. Many have not been given compensation for their homes being destroyed. Amnesty International has been told that many people who have been given compensation have reportedly only received any payment after giving away around half of it in bribes. What they are left with is often not enough to rebuild their destroyed homes.

In April 2006, the then Prime Minister of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, demanded that the temporary accommodation centres for internally displaced people in Chechnya be closed, reportedly calling them "a nest of criminality, drug addiction and prostitution". Officials started to make regular visits to the centres, and anyone listed as living at a centre but not there at the time of the visit was removed from the official register of inhabitants, meaning those who went outside risked losing their homes. Since then many of the centres have been closed or renamed as hostels and it is feared that all remaining centres will shortly be closed.

Under international law forced evictions, carried out without consultation, due process of law and assurances of adequate alternative accommodation, are a grave violation of human rights.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Russian, English or your own language:**

- expressing concern that the authorities are preparing to forcibly evict the 147 families living in the temporary accommodation centre at 4, Vyborgskaia Street, and to close down all the centres in Grozny;
- urging the authorities to ensure that no one is evicted without due process, adequate notice, consultation and ensuring that all of those affected have access to adequate alternative accommodation;
- expressing concern that the authorities appear not to have consulted with inhabitants, and have given them extremely short notice;
- pointing out that the lack of alternative accommodation during winter will be particularly dangerous for the very young, very old and disabled people living in the centres;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons state that all internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living, and that the state shall provide basic shelter and housing, and ensure protection against arbitrary displacement.

**APPEALS TO:**

Victor Kuznetsov  
Procurator of the Chechen Republic  
Office of the Public Procurator of the Chechen Republic  
Ul. Garazhnaia 9b, Grozny, 364000, Chechen Republic, Russian Federation

**Fax: +7 8712 22 35 29**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator**

Muslim Kuchiev  
Mayor of Grozny  
Administration of Grozny, Chechen Republic, Russian Federation

**Fax: +7 8712 22 25 87**

**Salutation: Dear Mayor**

**COPIES TO:**

Yurii Chaika  
Procurator General, General Procuracy of the Russian Federation  
Bolshaia Dmitrovka 15d., Moscow, 125993, Russian Federation

**Fax: +7 495 692 17 25**

Nurdi Nuzhazhiev  
Ombudsperson of the Chechen Republic  
Ul. Esambaeva 4, Grozny, 364051, Chechen Republic, Russian Federation

**Fax: +7 8712 22 34 57**

and to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 March 2008.