

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Serbia: Five Roma families evicted from homes and left homeless

Amnesty International is concerned about five Roma families who were evicted from privately owned buildings in 55 Skadarska Street, Belgrade, Serbia on 11 August. The eviction was carried out on the basis of a decision made by a Belgrade court on 29 June, which stated that the residents had to vacate the property and remove all their possessions.

On 27 July, the affected families, together with activists from several Belgrade NGOs, peacefully prevented an officer of the court who was accompanied by police officers from carrying out the forced eviction. They managed to negotiate with the court official for the eviction to be postponed until 11 August, during which time the NGOs stated that they would take all possible measures to influence the relevant authorities and ensure that the families are provided with adequate alternative housing.

One of these local NGOs, Praxis, approached the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, City Secretariat for Social Protection and City Centre for Social Work and asked for the families to be provided with adequate alternative housing. Amnesty International urgently called on the authorities to stop the forced eviction and provide adequate housing.

However, the State and City authorities have failed to respond positively to these requests and the families are now homeless. Amnesty International is especially concerned as 10 out of 20 members of this community are children and one of the women in the community may be sent to southern Serbia which she fled to avoid domestic violence.

In April 2011, Amnesty International issued a report on forced evictions in Belgrade, calling on the end of forced evictions. It also called on the government to introduce a law prohibiting forced evictions. However, no action has been taken to date.

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