

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International calls on Serbia to bring justice to all persons suspected of, or complicit in, crimes under international law

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Serbia

Amnesty International welcomes Serbia's support of recommendations to prosecute all persons suspected of crimes under international law.¹

Although Serbia has made progress in its cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, impunity persists for crimes under international law committed during the 1990s. The number of prosecutions concluded in the Special War Crimes Chamber at Belgrade District Court remains low; as of 14 May 2013 only 34 cases had been concluded at the second instance. The War Crimes Prosecutor has failed to indict officials for their command responsibility and there is concern about the capacity of the witness protection unit to provide adequate protection.

The organization calls on Serbia to bring to justice all persons, including senior police, military and political officials, suspected of committing or being complicit in crimes under international law, and to guarantee the victims access to reparations, including compensation.

Further, Serbia maintains that most of the recommendations calling for access by Roma to adequate housing and their protection from forcible eviction have already been implemented.²

Yet, between April 2009 and April 2013, some 20 forced evictions of more than 2,600 mainly Romani people took place in Belgrade. Successive governments have taken no action to prevent such forced evictions.

Many Roma live in informal settlements without security of tenure which makes them vulnerable to forced evictions. The authorities consistently fail to engage in meaningful consultation to explore alternatives to eviction or to provide prior notice of eviction or access to legal remedies and compensation.

More than 200 forcibly evicted families have been resettled in metal containers in racially segregated settlements on the outskirts of Belgrade. These settlements do not meet the criteria for adequate alternative housing, as set out by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³ They are often far from sources of work, healthcare, schools and municipal offices, and public transport.

Amnesty International calls on Serbia to introduce legislation to prohibit forced evictions and to develop guidelines that must be complied with prior to any eviction, consistent with the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Resettlement and other international human rights standards.

¹ A/HRC/23/15, recommendations 132.65-132.69 (Switzerland, Spain, Mexico, France, Australia)

² A/HRC/23/15, recommendations 132.94, 132.95, 132.97, 132.98 (Libya, USA, Germany, Slovakia).

³ CESCR General Comment 7, paragraph 8

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Serbia on 7 June 2013 during its 23rd session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Serbia: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR70/022/2012/en/Oea5b589-2343-460b-a17b-b284aef0663b/eur700222012en.pdf>

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