

URGENT ACTION

STOP FORCED EVICTIONS OF ROMA IN ALBANIA

Nine homeless Romani families temporarily settled by the Albanian authorities in tents on private land have been threatened with imminent forced eviction. No adequate alternative housing has been offered to these families.

The families are among some 40 Romani families who left the informal settlement near the railway station in Albania's capital, Tirana, where they were living in February 2011, after a series of attacks by men from outside the settlement. The authorities offered them temporary accommodation in tents at Babrru, on the outskirts of Tirana, pending resettlement in former military barracks, once they had been renovated. The other families refused this offer mainly on health and safety grounds. Though the government maintains that the site provides all necessary conditions for normal living, Amnesty International believes that they do not meet criteria for adequate housing, as set out in international law. The owner of the land on which the families' tents are pitched reportedly plans to evict them, due to a dispute over unpaid rent with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is responsible for the families' accommodation and welfare. The Ministry is reportedly considering moving these families to the barracks site, even though this would also fail to meet international standards for adequate housing, as the necessary reconstruction work has not yet started. Night temperatures in Albania are around 0 degrees Celsius at this time of year

Under international law, evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once other alternatives have been explored in genuine consultation with the affected communities. The authorities then have a duty to provide them with adequate notice. The authorities must ensure that no families are made homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights as a consequence of eviction. This includes providing them with legal remedies, including provision of compensation for the destruction of their homes, possessions and loss of income.

Please write immediately in English or your own language, urging the authorities to:

- prevent the imminent forced eviction of the Romani families living in Babrru;
- provide without further delay, immediate access to adequate housing for these families;
- identify in consultation with all affected families, all feasible alternatives to eviction, put in place procedural and legal safeguards and, if evictions are unavoidable, develop a comprehensive relocation and compensation plan for all affected communities which complies with requirements under international human rights standards;
- provide the necessary financial and other resources for the renovation of the military barracks or other permanent housing, and by closely monitoring progress in ensuring that this permanent housing is made ready in line with international standards on adequate housing, while keeping the families fully informed and updated on progress.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 MARCH 2012 TO:

Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs
and Equal Opportunities

Filloreta Kodra
Ministër i Punës, Cështjeve Sociale dhe
Shanseve të Barabarta
Rruga e Kavajës
Tirana, Albania
Email: kodraf@yahoo.com
Salutation: Dear Deputy Minister

Mayor of Tirana

Z.Lulzim Basha
Blvd. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Tirana,
Albania
Email: kabineti@tirana.gov.al
Salutation: Dear Mr Basha

Copies to:

Prime Minister
Prof. Dr. Sali Berisha
Kryetari i Këshillit të Ministrave
Bulevardi "Dëshmorët e Kombit" Nr. 1
1000 Tirana, Albania
Email: kryeministri@km.gov.al

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Forced evictions, whereby people are removed involuntarily from their homes without legal protection or the assurance of alternative accommodation, are a gross violation of a range of human rights.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the government of Albania is legally obliged to respect, protect, and progressively fulfil the right to adequate housing, guaranteed in Article 11(1) of the ICESCR. This includes the duty to ensure "security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats." The government has legal obligations to protect its citizens from forced evictions, especially when such evictions would make them homeless.

Further, Albanian has undertaken to fulfil the objectives of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015", an initiative of 12 European countries to improve the socio-economic status of Romani communities, and has adopted an (Albanian) National Strategy "For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority".

Name: Nine Romani families

Gender m/f: Both

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