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Nigeria: Hundreds of people forcibly evicted from their homes in Lagos

The Lagos State government of Nigeria must immediately stop the forced eviction of residents of Oke Ilu-Eri area of Badia East in Lagos, Amnesty International said today.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on Saturday 23 February 2013, at approximately 9am, bulldozers entered the community of Oke Ilu-Eri and began demolishing houses.

According to the Nigerian NGO, Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC), which has been working with leaders of the community since Wednesday to try to prevent the demolition, at least 300 houses have been demolished so far with hundreds of people displaced. SERAC said about 200 heavily armed police officers supervised the demolition and several residents who tried to resist the demolition were beaten up by the police.

No adequate notice was given to the residents of the community before the demolition commenced. According to information received by Amnesty International, on Wednesday 20 February a notice of eviction was given to the Baale (Yoruba word for traditional district head) of the community – just three days before the demolition started.

No compensation has been paid to residents; the evicted people have not been offered alternative housing and many people have been displaced. The demolished houses included both wooden and concrete structures. Some of the displaced residents owned their homes, while many were poor tenants.

The demolitions are on going.

“The eviction of people from their homes without the appropriate legal and procedural safeguards, including prior and adequate consultation, adequate notice and the provision of adequate alternative housing constitute a forced eviction and is a gross violation of human rights including the right to adequate housing” said Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for Africa, Lucy Freeman.

Amnesty International calls on the Lagos State government to stop the ongoing demolition; embark on a genuine consultation with the affected community; immediately provide adequate alternative housing to all those who have been forcibly evicted; and provide emergency relief including access to food, shelter, water, sanitation and healthcare services to the affected people.