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Georgia must end forced evictions of internally displaced

“We feel completely abandoned by everyone”

A sentiment shared by newly evicted displaced people from the 1990s and 2008 conflicts in Georgia

The Georgian government must put a stop to forced evictions of internally displaced people and provide them with adequate housing, Amnesty International said today.

The call comes as Amnesty International publishes a briefing, [*Uprooted again: Forced evictions of internally displaced persons in Georgia*](#), detailing a pattern of forced evictions in June – August 2010 and January 2011 from temporary shelters where people have sought refuge. With a fresh wave of evictions having started in Tbilisi in July 2011, Amnesty International is urging the Georgian authorities to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated.

“In their drive to empty temporary housing shelters in the capital and provide displaced people with durable housing the Georgian authorities have ignored essential protections for those evicted and estranged many from established support networks and livelihoods,” said Natalia Nozadze, Amnesty International’s Georgia researcher.

Although Georgia has made the provision of adequate housing for some 247,000 people displaced after military conflicts in the 1990s and 2008 a priority, the forced evictions carried out under the government’s action plan, violate Georgia’s international obligations and have aggravated the situation for many IDPs.

“People uprooted by war need stable environments to rebuild their lives. Instead the authorities have added to their sense of insecurity by evicting them without adequate consultation, notice or access to legal remedies. In some cases, the authorities have failed to provide those evicted with adequate alternative housing,” said Natalia Nozadze.

Internally displaced people comprise about six percent of the overall population of Georgia. Most of them remain unable to return to their homes and have faced more than a decade of displacement with reduced access to employment, healthcare and social security.

Amnesty International continues to call on the authorities of the break-away regions to respect the right of Georgia’s internally displaced population to return to their original places of residence in safety and dignity.

When a safe return is not immediately possible, the government must implement measures to integrate displaced families into local communities, and by providing them with adequate housing and access to livelihoods to enhance their self-sufficiency and their ability to voluntary return.

In June – August 2010 and January 2011 over 1,000 displaced families were evicted from temporary shelters and collective housing in Tbilisi. In many instances the evictions were carried out without proper

consultations and reasonable advance notice to these affected.

Nana, evicted from the temporary shelter in Tbilisi in August 2010, told Amnesty International:

“They told me to put all my belongings onto the truck and leave. When I asked them where they were taking us, they said that we have been provided with an alternative accommodation in Potskho- Etseri, in Western Georgia, close to the border with Abkhazia. That was the first time I have ever heard of that place.”

Poskho- Etseri, home to some 500 displaced people and local residents, is both extremely isolated and severely lacking in appropriate infrastructure. The settlement, built for construction workers during Soviet times and long since abandoned, is 40 kilometres from the nearest town of Zugdidi. Its remoteness from other communities, municipal offices, employment and other amenities makes it extremely difficult for resettled people to sustain themselves.

Irma, a single mother of two children, evicted from Tbilisi in August 2010 and resettled to small village in Abashpiri, Western Georgia, told Amnesty International:

“I feel very alone and isolated here, without friends, relatives and people I can rely on for help... Our only subsistence is the meagre monetary assistance we get. In the city I did housekeeping jobs or worked at the market, here in this small town there is nothing for me to do...”

“Unless the eviction and relocation process is undertaken fully in line with the human rights standards and informed involvement of these affected, the measures by the Georgian authorities will disrupt rather than enable the social and economic integration of the displaced people with the local community,” Natalia Nozadze said.