

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: EUR 25/011/2005 (Public)  
News Service No: 181  
1 July 2005

## **Greece: Albanian Roma targeted for evictions and attacks**

Roma have been evicted, their homes demolished by the Greek authorities and attacks against Romani communities have not been investigated in Patras, Western Greece. Roma who have migrated from Albania have been particularly targeted.

Amnesty International is seeking assurances from the Greek authorities that no further evictions or demolitions will be carried out until the organization's concerns are resolved, and procedures to safeguard the human rights of Roma of Greek and other nationalities are put in place.

In a letter to the Minister of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation of Greece, Amnesty International voices its concern at the way the evictions were carried out as well as at the failure of the Greek authorities to investigate, thoroughly, promptly and impartially, the alleged attacks on the Romani communities.

"The Greek authorities are legally obliged to respect the right to adequate housing of all those residing in Greece, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity. Only in exceptional circumstances may they evict people. This must be done only after consultation with the people to be evicted and only after they are guaranteed suitable alternative accommodation," Nicola Duckworth, Director of Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Programme, said.

On 23 and 24 June 2005, 11 sheds belonging to Albanian Roma legally residing in Patras were demolished while their owners were away looking for temporary work. The so-called "cleaning operation" was carried out by teams from the Municipality and the Prefecture working in tandem, allegedly to address the problem of rats and mice. On several occasions in 2004, tens of Albanian Romani families were forcibly evicted from their homes in the Patras region without being relocated or compensated.

"A pattern of targeting Albanian Romani homes for demolition is emerging. The Greek authorities must extend the measures for relocating Romani families to those who are not of Greek nationality, particularly to Albanian Roma legally residing in the country. Failure to do so will contravene the country's obligations to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination," Nicola Duckworth said.

Attempted arson attacks against the community -- on three consecutive dates, starting from 22 June -- have not been investigated, although two were officially confirmed by the authorities. According to local Roma, no police officer has taken their statements about the attacks or investigated the crime scenes.

"By failing to investigate the attacks, Greek police are encouraging the attackers in their discrimination against Romani people, particularly against Albanian Roma. The Greek authorities are

further perpetuating the discrimination by failing in their obligations to investigate the allegations against the police."

Greece is at risk of failing to fulfil its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Public Document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566  
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>