

URGENT ACTION

500 ROMA PEOPLE HOMELESS AFTER FORCED EVICTION

Around 500 Roma people, including around 150 children, pregnant women and older people have been left homeless after being forcibly evicted by the authorities from their settlement in municipality of Giugliano in Campania, in southern Italy, on 10 May. The Roma families have been made homeless and are living in inhuman conditions as the authorities have failed to provide them with alternative housing.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the Council of Ministers

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Dear President of the Council of Ministers,

I am writing to express my concern over the situation of around 500 Roma people, including some 150 children, pregnant women and older people, who have been left homeless in the Ponte Riccio locality after being forcibly evicted by the local authorities of Giugliano in Campania on 10 May 2019.

These Roma families have already been victims of a catalogue of human rights violations at the hands of national and local authorities in recent years, including being forcibly evicted in June 2016 and relocated to a former fireworks factory where they were living in inhuman conditions, and where they remained until 10 May. For almost three years, the authorities failed to guarantee the families an adequate housing solution, only to forcibly evict them again, and leave them homeless and at risk of abuses and other human rights violations.

Since 10 May, the families are desperately seeking shelter in the surrounding localities. However, they have been faced with hostility by the municipalities in the area. With no housing, access to electricity, water or the possibility to cook, the families remain in very dire conditions. This will have a particularly adverse impact on children, pregnant women and older people. Forced evictions are a human rights violation and Italy has obligations under international law to ensure that all those who cannot provide for themselves are offered adequate housing. Nobody should be subjected to such treatment or left homeless and without support from the authorities.

I therefore urge you to ensure that immediate short-term emergency shelter is found for the homeless families, that guarantees their right to adequate housing, water, and sanitation. I also urge you to ensure that all relevant authorities engage immediately with the community to identify longer term adequate alternative housing as outlined in international and regional human rights laws and standards and in Italy's National Strategy for Roma Inclusion.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 10 May, around 500 Roma people – approximately 350 adults and 150 children – were forcibly evicted by local authorities from their homes in a former fireworks factory in Ponte Riccio locality, in the Municipality of Giugliano in Campania, in the Province of Naples, southern Italy. The families had been living there, in inadequate living conditions, since June 2016 when they were forcibly evicted from a segregated authorized camp in Masseria del Pozzo, located next to a toxic landfill. Following a judicial order to remove the families from Masseria del Pozzo camp, the administration failed to find adequate housing alternatives for them within the court's deadline and proceeded to forcibly evict them in 2016, offering as only alternative to homelessness the site of the former fireworks factory in Ponte Riccio locality.

Amnesty International is well-aware of the dramatically sub-standard living conditions these Roma families were enduring in Ponte Riccio locality, having visited the settlement on multiple occasions. As documented in [previous reports](#), these conditions were largely the result of failures by the authorities to protect the right to adequate housing of the community. Amnesty International visited the settlement several times in 2016 and 2017 and already then, conditions were gravely inadequate with severely limited access to shelter, water and sanitation.

Local authorities carried out the 10 May eviction on the basis of the Municipal Order no. 29 of 5 April 2019 that required the immediate eviction of the settlement for reasons of public health and safety due to the unhygienic and unsafe conditions of the camp. The camp was deemed to be infested with rats and at risk of fire due to the precarious connections to electricity and to the presence of gas canisters for cooking and heating. Furthermore, the presence of large quantities of rubbish which would be generated by the settlement near the high-speed road which flanked the settlement was described as a risk to the safety of traffic on the road.

Local authorities did not engage in a process of genuine consultation with the community to identify a suitable alternative to the current location. They provided scant information to the families and the only alternative offered was a one-off payment to contribute towards rent for housing on the private rental market. Many of the Roma people in this community are stateless or do not have documents allowing them to be regularly employed and do not have stable jobs, making it impossible for them to rent a home on the private market, thus making the offer of a one-off contribution towards rent, unviable and unsustainable.

As the necessary safeguards, according to international human rights standards – adequate written notice, genuine consultation with the community and provision of adequate alternative housing - had not been put in place ahead of the eviction, Amnesty International concludes that the eviction was a forced eviction, which is a grave human rights violation. This breaches Italy's obligations under a range of international and regional human rights treaties, including EU legislation (Race Equality Directive), which guarantees the right to adequate housing and protection against all forms of discrimination based on ethnicity and race. This forced eviction also flies in the face of commitments undertaken by Italy in its own National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, adopted in 2012.

This case should be seen in the broader context of ongoing discrimination and segregation of Roma families in access to housing by Italian authorities. Amnesty International has documented such practices and human rights violations for several years. In response to the ongoing scandal of the housing situation of Roma people in Italy, on 18 March Amnesty International lodged a collective complaint at the European Committee for Social Rights. Drawing on several years of research by the organisation, especially in Rome, Milan and Naples, the complaint presents comprehensive evidence alleging how the housing situation of Roma communities in Italy amounts to a series of breaches of the European Social Charter. These include widespread forced evictions; the continued use of segregated camps featuring substandard housing, and lack of equal access to social housing.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Italian and English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 25 June 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Roma community from Giugliano