

Slums and Informal Settlements

It is estimated that over 10 percent of people worldwide live in informal settlements or slums. Amnesty International has gathered evidence to show that people living in slums and informal settlements are often denied or have inadequate access to services that are essential for the realization of their human rights. Governments are failing to meet their obligations under international law to ensure that all people have adequate housing. The multiple and widespread human rights violations experienced by people living in these communities are the starkest representation of the link between poverty and human rights. The lack of a minimum degree of security of tenure also puts people living in slums and informal settlements at risk of forced evictions and other violations of the right to adequate housing, often also impacting their rights to water, sanitation, education and health. Forced evictions are evictions carried out without legal protections. This means those affected are not genuinely consulted to identify feasible alternatives to eviction and are not given adequate notice of an eviction. Communities are often denied access to effective remedies such as compensation and are not offered adequate alternative housing which can lead to homelessness. These human rights violations often have a disproportionate impact on women living in slums and informal settlements.

Amnesty International's work addresses the accountability gap which exists between strong international and regional standards on most of these issues, and governments' failure to uphold their human rights obligations. In solidarity and collaboration with residents' groups in slums, human rights

defenders, community organizations and NGOs, our work seeks to empower and support women and men living in slums and informal settlements so that they can actively participate and claim their rights to be part of decision-making processes that affect their lives. Supporting this work, we actively campaign and lobby governments, public officials and local authorities to ensure that the right to adequate housing is respected, protected and fulfilled.

To find out more about Amnesty International's work on slums and informal settlements, visit: amnesty.org/endforcedevictions



Nairobi, Kenya, March 2012. Residents and activists in an End Forced Evictions Roadshow Kibera, an informal settlement facing forced eviction, walk a huge balloon down the railway line during Africa week of action against forced evictions and for housing rights.

Useful resources on the right to housing

Know your obligations guide: This publication aims to assist public officials to effectively meet their obligations with respect to the right to adequate housing. It outlines the pertinent international human rights standards, and gives practical guidance on key measures that must be undertaken when planning projects that may involve evictions. http://bit.ly/KYOguide

Know your rights flyer: http://bit.ly/KYRflyer

End forced evictions animation: English https://bit.ly/evictthem

General Comments 4: http://bit.ly/GC_04

General Comments 7: http://bit.ly/GC_07

Basic principles and guidelines on development based evictions and displacement: In 2007, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing presented to the Human Rights Council this set of principles and guidelines to assist States in developing policies and legislations to prevent forced evictions at the domestic level: http://bit.ly/PGonE

Respect my rights, respect my dignity: Module 2 - Housing is a human right: Produced as part of the Respect My Rights, Respect My Dignity resource pack, this module is a high quality human rights education resource with global relevance. It has been used by human rights educators across the movement to engage with young people on the right to housing and forced evictions. http://bit.ly/M2Housing

























2014 Calendar

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Toto displacement camp, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

A young girl carries water in Toto displacement camp, November 2010. Tens of thousands of families are still living in desperate conditions in the camps that sprang up after the January 2010 earthquake destroyed their homes. A fifth of the remaining camps are also currently under threat of forced eviction. Families are desperately seeking durable solutions to their housing needs so they can finally start to rebuild their lives and begin to live in dignity. Sexual violence in Haiti has been exacerbated by these conditions since the earthquake. Women and girls live with the constant threat of sexual violence as makeshift camps and shelters do not provide sufficient security from intruders.

For more information see the 2013 report 'Nowhere to go': Forced evictions in Haiti's displacement camps (Index: AMR 36/001/2013)





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Boeung Kak Lake, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Thousands of people have been forcibly evicted from their homes on and around Phnom Penh's Boeung Kak Lake since 2007, when the land was leased to a company. Many residents were harassed and threatened into accepting inadequate compensation or relocation to a place far from work opportunities and without basic services and infrastructure. Women were at the forefront of campaigning and protests against the forced eviction. As the company filled the lake with sand, several homes were flooded and destroyed. In August 2010, this family had to balance on a narrow jetty to get to their house. The lake area is now completely filled and an estimated 650 families await alternative housing.

For more information see the 2011 report Eviction and resistance in Cambodia: Five women tell their stories (Index: ASA 23/006/2011)





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Goriča vas, Ribnica municipality, Slovenia

Marjan Hudorovič, a resident of the Roma settlement of Goriča vas in Ribnica municipality, Slovenia, whose only access to water is a tap in a cemetery or a spring in a wood, Ribnica, Slovenia, July 2012.

While nearly 100 per cent of the Slovenian population enjoy access to adequate water and sanitation to meet all their needs, this is not the case for many Romani communities.

The informal Roma settlement of Goriča vas in Ribnica is home to approximately 70 people, around 22 of them children of school age. They have no water supply, no electricity, no toilets, sewerage or drainage.



⁰⁸ March 2014 — International Women's Day

²¹ March 2014 - International day of Eradication of Racial Discrimination

²² March 2014 - World Water Day



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Brussels, Belgium

A flashmob of more than 70 Amnesty International and Roma activists create a Roma settlement outside the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, 8 April 2013 for the Human Rights Here. Roma Rights Now campaign.

The activists — portraying Roma inhabitants, police officers and municipal officials — staged a dramatic portrayal of a forced eviction. The action unfolded before an audience of more than 200 people. The event was especially powerful and emotional because some of the Roma activists had themselves experienced forced eviction and racist violence.





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City Carton, Nairobi, Kenya

The remains of City Carton settlement in Nairobi. On 10 May 2013, at around 4am, groups of men arrived at City Carton unannounced and started dismantling people's homes using crowbars, hammers and machetes. Residents reported that the police stood by and watched, and used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse people. On 17 May, a bulldozer arrived and completely flattened the area, leaving some 400 families homeless. The residents were not offered any compensation or alternative housing. Many find themselves again at risk of being forcibly evicted from the temporary shelters they have built beside their former settlement.

For more information see the 2013 report 'We are like rubbish in this country' Forced evictions in Nairobi, Kenya (Index: AFR 32/005/2013)





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Baia Mare, Romania

Aladar and his partner live in Baia Mare, Romania. Numerous Romani communities living in informal settlements across Romania, are often forcibly evicted by local authorities who are not held accountable for such human rights violations. Romani communities are left homeless, or relocated in inadequate housing conditions, on the outskirts of cities, next to waste water filtering stations, former chemical dumps or landfills. Their right to adequate housing is violated and they are subjected to continuing poverty, insecurity and social exclusion as a result.

For more information see the 2013 report *Pushed to the margins: Five stories of Roma forced evictions in Romania* (Index: EUR 39/003/2013)





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Cinelândia, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Amnesty International Brazil launched the End Forced Evictions campaign in September 2013, focusing on the city of Rio de Janeiro. The campaign aims to change the approach of local authorities when implementing projects that lead to evictions and to ensure that people living in informal settlements have a say in what happens to their homes and their lives and are not left isolated from the rest of the city. This installation with mattresses in Cinelândia represents scenes from forced evictions when people have to drag their mattresses out of their homes before they are destroyed.





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Njemanze, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Aniedi Bassey, 16, used to live in Njemanze informal settlement in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, before it was demolished.

On 28 August 2009, Njemanze was demolished as part of the state authorities' urban renewal programme for the city. It is estimated that between 13,800 and 19,000 people were forcibly evicted from their homes, left homeless and vulnerable to other human rights violations. In 2011, when this photo was taken, Aniedi was sleeping on a wooden table at the 'Mile One' open market, where he and other street children were living, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.





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Yangji village, Guangzhou city, Guangdong province, China

A woman who tries to protect her house from being demolished is seen crying in Yangji village in Guangzhou city, south China's Guangdong province, 21 March 2012. Promised by some official that her house wouldn't be removed. The woman expected to be given enough compensation, however, the negotiation was not successful. Sudden and violent forced evictions are widespread in China, usually preceded by threats and harassment.

For more information see the 2012 report *China: Standing their ground: Thousands face violent eviction in China* (ASA 17/001/2012)





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Harare, Zimbabwe

Housing rights activists from various townships across Zimbabwe demonstrate during an Amnesty International 'Africa Week of Action to Stop Forced Evictions' in Harare, Zimbabwe, 23 March 2012.

During the Africa week of action, Amnesty International joined with partners, members and communities in Chad, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe in an unparalleled week of campaigning to stand up against forced evictions and for housing rights.

06 October 2014 — World Habitat Day

 $17\ {\rm October}\ 2014$ — International Day for the Eradication of Poverty





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Al-Duwayga, Manshiyet Nasser, Cairo, Egypt

Steps run through what used to be houses in the informal settlement of Al-Duwayqa. Life for residents among the rubble of their former homes is fraught with dangers. Al-Duwayqa lies in Manshiyet Nasser, one of Egypt's largest informal settlements. Residents work in the informal sector as artisans, street vendors, construction workers, rubbish collectors, or as daily wage labourers.

For more information see the 2011 report 'We are not dirt': Forced evictions in Egypt's informal settlements (Index: MDE 12/001/2011).



¹⁹ November 2014 — International Toilet Day

²⁹ November 2014 - International Women's Human Rights Defenders Day



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Silpakorn University, Nakornpathom, Thailand

Activists with Shine a Light Lanterns event during Amnesty International's yearly Letter Writing Marathon, at Silpakorn University, Nakornpathom, Thailand Dec 2011. Writing a letter can change a life. Amnesty's annual Letter Writing Marathon mobilizes people around the world to take part in a mass action together, providing hope and transforming the lives of others around the world. In 2012, people took more than 1.5 million actions, across 80 different countries.



2015 Calendar

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WHO WE ARE

Amnesty international is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists who campaign for human rights to be respected and protected. Our vision is for every person to enjoy all human rights, for example, freedom of expression and of assembly, access to maternal health care, housing rights and protection from discrimination.

By joining Amnesty International, you are making a stand against human rights abusers.

- We are independent and impartial in our research. Our work is based not on ideology, religion or politics, but on taking action for anyone whose human rights have been violated.
- We find out the facts, we expose the truth, we demand change.
- We mobilize to put pressure on governments, armed groups and companies to protect and promote human rights.
- We are committed to justice, equality and freedom, and we press governments and other powerful groups to allow people to live in dignity.

JOIN

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