



HOUSING IS OUR HUMAN RIGHT

END FORCED EVICTIONS
IN NIGERIA

The settlement of Makoko in Lagos State in 2008. Residents of this community have been forcibly evicted from their homes three times in eight years, the last in July 2012. The Lagos State authorities failed on every occasion to provide alternative housing and/or compensation for victims.

More than 2 million people in Nigeria have been forcibly evicted from their homes since 2000 and thousands still remain at risk. (Information from the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)/Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC), May 2008).

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A makeshift home in Makoko, Lagos State, in February 2013. The Lagos State authorities had forcibly evicted people from their homes seven months earlier, in July 2012.

Makoko is one of the biggest informal settlements in Nigeria. It is a fishing community where all structures, including houses, clinics and schools, are built on stilts on the Lagos Lagoon.

Makoko is not an isolated example. Other communities in Lagos State have faced forced evictions, as well as communities beyond Lagos State, including in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

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A vehicle belonging to the Lagos State Environmental and Special Offences Enforcement Unit (Lagos State Task Force) parked in Badia East, Lagos State. At least three people were detained inside the vehicle during the forced eviction in Badia East.

On 23 February 2013, at least 266 structures were demolished on the orders of the Lagos State Government in this informal settlement. Amnesty International delegates were told that scores of heavily armed police officers supervised the demolition and several residents who tried to resist were beaten up by police.



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Makeshift shelters in Badia East,
Lagos State

Following their forced eviction on 23 February 2013 from Badia East informal settlement, hundreds of residents were left homeless and vulnerable to other human rights abuses. As the Lagos State Government failed to provide the evicted residents with alternative housing and/or compensation, many were forced to sleep in temporary shelters made from materials salvaged from the ruins of their homes.

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Children play football in Bundu waterfront in Port Harcourt, April 2011.

On 12 October 2009, armed security forces opened fire on a crowd of people peacefully protesting against the proposed demolition of their homes in Bundu. At least 12 people were shot and seriously injured, and eyewitnesses saw at least six dead bodies piled in the back of a police pick-up truck.

Although the risk of further eviction still exists, no demolitions have taken place in Bundu since the shooting of at least 12 people in the waterfront in October 2009.

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Austine Onwe shows the scar on his abdomen from where he was shot on 12 October 2009 in Bundu, Port Harcourt. Residents peacefully protesting against the proposed demolition of their homes were fired at by the police and the Joint Task Force (a unit which includes the police, the army and the State Security Service).

The excessive use of force by the security forces in Bundu waterfront community that day, including the use of firearms on protesters, is in violation of Nigeria's international human rights obligations and commitments. A case on the incident was filed by residents of the Bundu waterfront, supported by the Nigerian NGO Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), at the ECOWAS Court of Justice. The case is still ongoing and no one has been held to account.

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Justina Jack is a former resident of Njemanze waterfront, Port Harcourt. She was forcibly evicted during the demolition carried out by Rivers State authorities on 28 August 2009. After losing her home, she was forced to seek refuge in a church nearby, where she lived after the demolition.

Njemanze settlement was demolished as part of Rivers State's urban renewal programme for Port Harcourt. It is estimated that between 13,800 and 19,000 people were forcibly evicted from their homes, without adequate notice and without access to legal remedies, compensation or alternative housing.

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A resident stands outside his condemned house in Abonnema Wharf, Port Harcourt, April 2011. His home and the shop next door are officially marked for demolition.

On 27 June 2012, bulldozers arrived at Abonnema Wharf waterfront and began to demolish buildings in the community under the supervision of heavily armed security forces. Thousands of people had not received adequate notice and were left homeless and with livelihoods destroyed.

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Residents pick through the remains of their destroyed homes in Abonema Wharf, Port Harcourt, after the Rivers State government forcibly evicted thousands of people. 27 June 2012.