

URGENT ACTION

ROMA RISK IMMINENT FORCED EVICTION IN ROME

Over 350 Roma people are facing eviction from the Tor de' Cenci camp in Italy. Local authorities in Rome are planning to resettle them in a new camp, which would constitute racially segregated housing. Authorities plan to complete the eviction by 10 July.

More than 350 people of Roma ethnicity, mostly Bosnian and Macedonian nationals, have been living in Tor de' Cenci camp in Rome for up to 16 years. The camp was opened by local authorities in 1995, in an area where residents have access to a range of services, including schools for children. In the past two years, however, local authorities started referring to Tor de' Cenci as a "tolerated" camp (i.e. a camp which has existed for a long period, but was built irregularly on public or private land), and threatened to close it and transfer its residents to another camp further away from residential areas in the city. Living conditions in Tor de' Cenci have progressively worsened, as the camp has been effectively abandoned by local authorities in view of its planned closure.

The local authorities plan to resettle the families in a new camp called La Barbuta. This was built in 2011 using special powers granted under the Nomad Emergency – a state of emergency in place since 2008 and ruled unlawful in November 2011 by the Council of State. Compared to the location of Tor de' Cenci, which is near a residential area, the camp of La Barbuta is located in an isolated area next to Ciampino airport. It is surrounded by fences and security video cameras to monitor movements inside the camp. Local authorities plan to use the camp exclusively to house Roma families currently living in different camps in Rome. If these plans are implemented, the camp will constitute racially segregated housing, prohibited under international and regional laws to which Italy is subject and inconsistent with the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion adopted by Italy in February 2012.

No appropriate procedural and legal safeguards have been followed to ensure that the eviction of Tor de' Cenci's residents is carried out in compliance with international and regional human rights obligations. Consultation with Roma families has not been genuine, as it has been carried out under the constant threat of an eviction and there were repeated messages to both the media and the residents that the camp would be closed. This was combined with the serious deterioration of living conditions, and the lack of any other alternatives on offer. Although some families appear willing to move, many others are strongly opposing their resettlement to La Barbuta.

Please write immediately in Italian, English or your own language, calling on the authorities to:

- Halt any plan to close Tor de' Cenci camp and refrain from evicting residents who are not willing to relocate, and take steps in consultation with residents to restore adequate housing conditions and infrastructure in the camp;
- Guarantee that any current or future re-settlement of individuals living in camps is planned in genuine consultation with all camp residents and with the offer of a range of alternative adequate housing options, including equal access to social housing where appropriate;
- Ensure that La Barbuta camp is not used as a permanent housing facility and is not used exclusively for Roma communities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 AUGUST 2012 TO:

Mayor of Rome

Gianni Alemanno

Via del Campidoglio, 1

00186 Roma, Italia

Fax: +39 06 6710 3590

Email: sindaco@comune.roma.it

Salutation: Egregio Sindaco/Dear Mayor

Deputy Mayor of Rome

Sveva Belviso

Via del Campidoglio, 1

00186 Roma, Italia

Fax: +39 06 6710 3590

Email: sveva.belviso@comune.roma.it

Salutation: Egregio Vice Sindaco/Dear Deputy Mayor

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The closure of the Tor de' Cenci camp constitutes part of the Nomad Plan, implemented in Rome since 2008, within the framework of the "Nomad Emergency" declared by the Italian government earlier that year. The Nomad Plan aims to close Rome's informal and "tolerated" camps, and resettle their residents in 12 to 13 "authorized villages". There are currently eight authorized villages in Rome, including La Barbuta. Amnesty International has criticized the declaration of the "Nomad Emergency" as illegitimate and discriminatory. The organization has also criticized the Nomad Plan, because, in addition to a range of deficiencies, it is discriminatory and perpetuates and pursues ethnic segregation in housing.

In February 2012, the Italian government submitted to the EU Commission its *National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities*, as requested in the Commission's communication No.173/2011. The strategy recognizes that use of evictions was excessive in recent years and that it is time to move beyond the emergency approach. The strategy makes a commitment to avoid segregation in camps for Roma. The strategy was assessed by the European Commission, whose conclusions were published in the communication *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework*, adopted on 21 May 2012. Besides acknowledging efforts made by member states to develop a comprehensive approach to Roma integration, the Commission's communication highlights that much more needs to be done to secure sufficient funding for Roma inclusion, put monitoring mechanisms in place and fight discrimination and segregation.

Amnesty International has documented how evictions of Romani settlements carried out in Rome in recent years have systematically violated international human rights law and standards, rendering people homeless and exposing them to further human rights violations and abuses. Forced evictions have been deemed to be a gross violation of human rights and are prohibited under international law. Italy is a state party to international and regional human rights treaties that prohibit forced evictions and uphold the right to adequate housing. Under international human rights law, evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all feasible alternatives have been explored and only after appropriate procedural and legal safeguards are in place. These include genuine consultation affected persons, adequate notice and provision of legal remedies. No one should be made homeless and vulnerable to other human rights violations as a result of evictions. Any alternative housing provided must be in line with international human rights standards.

For further information, please see:

Roma moved 'like pawns on a chessboard' under Rome's 'Nomad Plan', Blog, 8 June 2012, available at <http://livewire.amnesty.org/2012/06/08/roma-moved-%E2%80%98like-pawns-on-a-chessboard%E2%80%99-under-rome%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%99nomad-plan%E2%80%99/>

The invisible Roma, Blog, 4 April 2012, available at <http://livewire.amnesty.org/2012/04/04/the-invisible-roma/>

Italy: Briefing to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: 80th session, 28 February 2012 (AI Index: EUR 30/001/2012), available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR30/001/2012/en>

Italy: The wrong answer: Italy's 'Nomad Plan' violates the housing rights of Roma in Rome, Report, 11 March 2010 (AI Index: EUR 30/001/2010), available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR30/001/2010/en>

This work forms part of Amnesty International's global Demand Dignity campaign and the European Fight against Discrimination campaign.

Name: Around 350 Roma people

Gender m/f: Both

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