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Chad: End forced evictions and provide emergency shelter to tens of thousands made homeless

The Chadian government must stop the forced evictions which have left tens of thousands homeless in the capital city of N'Djamena, Amnesty International said in a report released today. The Amnesty International report *Broken Homes, Broken Lives* analyses commercially available satellite images, verified by in-depth interviews and site inspections in N'Djamena in May 2009, to show the scale of demolition that took place in the capital from January 2008 until late July 2009. This action was directly allowed by Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno who issued a decree in February 2008 authorizing the destruction of what were termed illegally constructed buildings and structures. Many of the resulting demolitions flouted international human rights standards as well as Chadian laws. "The vast majority of families who lost their homes were not consulted by the authorities, were given little or no notice and have not received alternative housing or any other form of compensation," said Tawanda Hondora, Amnesty International's Africa Deputy Director. "In distressing scenes, many have been reduced to living in the rubble of their former houses." "The Chadian authorities must respect the rule of law. They must ensure that every person's right to protection under the law is upheld," said Tawanda Hondora. Some families were evicted by the government in direct contempt of court orders prohibiting their removal. In the neighbourhood of Diguel Est, for example, some residents with ownership papers appealed to magistrates and won a court injunction. However this was ignored by the mayor of N'Djamena and the houses were demolished; prompting the magistrates union to threaten a strike. "These images tell a shocking story of families whose homes were destroyed following President Deby's decree," said Tawanda Hondora. "The pace of housing demolition in N'Djamena suggests a frightening level of human suffering." The satellite images printed in *Broken Homes, Broken Lives* show that over 3,700 structures were destroyed in about 385 days between January 2008 and January 2009. As part of its Demand Dignity campaign, launched in May 2009, Amnesty International is calling on the Chadian Government to introduce a moratorium on mass evictions until a clear and effective prohibition against forced evictions and a legal framework that protects human rights is put in place. The government should also ensure that all victims of forced evictions have access to adequate alternative housing, emergency assistance, access to justice and effective remedies including reparations.

Through this campaign, Amnesty International is calling on governments globally to take all necessary measures, including the adoption of laws and policies that comply with international human rights law, to prohibit and prevent forced evictions. **Notes to Editors:**

- Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign aims to end the human rights violations that drive and deepen global poverty. The campaign is mobilizing people all over the world to demand that governments, corporations and others who have power, listen to the voices of those living in poverty and recognise and protect their rights. For more information visit <http://demanddignity.amnesty.org/campaigns-en/>
- A forced eviction is the removal of people against their will from the homes or land they occupy without legal protection and other safeguards. Evictions should not be carried out until all other feasible alternatives have been explored, genuine consultation has taken place with the affected communities and appropriate procedural protections are in place.
- The satellite images taken between January 2008 and January 2009 and were analysed and verified during an Amnesty International mission to N'Djamena in May 2009.