

URGENT ACTION

ROMA FAMILIES AT RISK OF FORCED EVICTION

The authorities in a city in the north-east of the Czech Republic plan to evict over 40 Roma families living in rented housing. They have given 14 families contracts for inadequate alternative housing in dormitories, and made no concrete alternative housing arrangements for the remaining over 30 Roma families.

The head of the city of Ostrava's construction office delivered an eviction notice on 3 August to **more than 40 Roma families** living in rented housing, giving them 24 hours to leave or face eviction..

The construction office of Ostrava municipality has justified the eviction on the grounds that the buildings are unfit for human habitation, as their structure is unsafe, the electricity supply is faulty and their sanitation system does not function. The local authorities and the owner of the buildings have failed to carry out adequate maintenance of the sewage sanitation, and as a result, many houses are polluted with raw sewage.

The city authorities gave 14 Roma families contracts for inadequate alternative housing in dormitories. Several families do not want to move but signed the contracts as there was no feasible alternative and they feared they would be made homeless. The housing to be provided to the 14 families does not meet international standards on adequate housing, in particular adequate space and affordability. No concrete indication of housing arrangements has been provided to the remaining families.

Please write immediately in English, Czech or your own language:

- Urge the mayor of Ostrava to ensure that any eviction is carried out as a last resort, once all feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored;
- Urge him to ensure that nobody is rendered homeless as a result of eviction, and any alternative housing provided complies with international standards for adequate housing, particularly adequate space, affordability, location and access to essential services;
- Urge them to engage in genuine consultation with the affected Roma families to develop long-term housing alternatives that respect international standards for adequate housing.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND BEFORE 17 SEPTEMBER 2012 TO:

Mayor of Ostrava

Petr Kajnar

Prokesovo namesti 8
729 30 Ostrava, Czech Republic
Fax: +42 059 611 88 61

Email: pkajnar@ostrava.cz

Salutation: Dear Mayor

And copies to:

Minister of Regional Development

Kamil Jankovsky
Ministerstvo pro mistni rozvoj
Staromestske namesti 6]
110 15 Praha 1, Czech Republic
Fax: + 42 022 486 12 08
Email: ministr@mmr.cz
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs

Jaromir Drabek
Ministerstvo prace a socialnich veci
Na Poricnim pravu 1/376
128 01 Praha 2, Czech Republic
Fax: + 42 022 491 8391
Email: posta@mpsv.cz
Salutation: Dear Minister

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The planned eviction may amount to a forced eviction, which is illegal under international law. The planned eviction was not preceded by adequate and reasonable notice for the affected people, nor was it preceded by a genuine consultation of all individuals and families affected. Numerous residents have not been adequately informed about the housing options made available to them by the municipality. Fourteen Roma families were provided with contracts for alternative housing, but some of them signed as there was no feasible alternative and they feared that otherwise they would be left homeless. No concrete information was made available to the remaining 30 or more Roma families about their housing arrangements.

The housing to be provided to the 14 Roma families does not respect the international standards for adequacy of housing, particularly in relation to access to adequate space and affordability. Each family, containing up to nine people, will be provided in most cases with one room and the cooking and sanitation facilities will be shared among several families. The rent that the families will have to pay for a room in the new housing will be twice or more what they now pay for a flat, raising serious concern about whether the Roma families will be able to afford such accommodation.

After receiving the eviction notice, the Roma families started doing some small repairs of the buildings: they cleaned the public area, closed the entrance to the cellar where the sanitation facilities were housed, closed balconies declared unsafe by the construction office, in an attempt to demonstrate that they want to stay there while ensuring that the accommodation is suitable for human habitation.

The Czech Republic is a party to a range of international and regional human rights treaties, which strictly require it to prohibit, refrain from and prevent forced evictions. These treaties include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized in its General Comment 7 that evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored, and they should not result in anyone being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Even when an eviction is considered to be justified, it can only be carried out when appropriate procedural protections are in place and if compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing is provided to all families affected.

Name: Roma families in Prednadrázi area, Ostrava, Czech Republic
Gender m/f: both

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