

URGENT ACTION

EVICITION SURVIVORS UNDER THREAT ONCE MORE

Survivors of the 2005 mass forced evictions in Harare, Zimbabwe, are threatened with another eviction if they fail to pay lease renewal fees to the government by 30 September. The up-front fee of up to US\$140 is unaffordable for most residents, who are amongst Zimbabwe's poorest.

In June, the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development posted written notices at Hatcliffe Extension, Harare, stating that all lease holders should pay for the renewal of their lease agreements by 30 September. The notice stated failure to pay would result in residents losing their land which would then be allocated to others on the government housing list. Since June, the residents have made several unsuccessful attempts to engage with the relevant authorities.

Residents at Hatcliffe Extension are amongst the poorest and most marginalised in Zimbabwean society, where the unemployment rate stands at around 90%. Many households have no means of meeting the amount set by the government because Operation Murambatsvina, as well as destroying homes, also destroyed the informal employment sector, depriving thousands of reliable income

Hatcliffe Extension is a settlement on the outskirts of Harare with an estimated 15- 20,000 residents. The majority of residents are survivors of Zimbabwe's 2005 programme of mass forced evictions, known as Operation Murambatsvina (Drive out Filth) in which an estimated 700,000 people lost their homes, their livelihood, or both. It is one of a number of settlements set up under Operation Garikai - the government programme that was initiated in the aftermath of the mass forced evictions, ostensibly to re-house the victims of Operation Murambatsvina. The fact that survivors of Operation Murambatsvina are once more under threat of eviction demonstrates the inadequacy of the remedies offered under Operation Garikai.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Urging Ministers to immediately halt any pending evictions at Hatcliffe Extension and other Operation Garikai settlements, expressing concern that residents who were resettled under Operation Garikai, as a remedy for their losses during the 2005 forced evictions, are once more under threat of eviction
- Calling for Ministers to ensure genuine consultation with those affected takes place to provide security of tenure and affordable leases (payable in instalments) so that no one is rendered homeless or vulnerable to other human rights violations.
- Urging Ministers to publicly assure all survivors of Operation Murambatsvina who are resettled under Operation Garikai that they will not face another eviction on or after 30 September 2010 if they have failed to renew their leases with the Ministry

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 NOVEMBER 2010 TO:

Minister of Local Government

Hon Ignatius Chombo
Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban
Development
P. O. Box CY7706
Causeway, Harare
Zimbabwe Fax: +263 4 792307

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities

Hon Giles Mutsekwa
Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities
Private Bag 7780
Harare
Zimbabwe

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Zimbabwe accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The problem of lease fees that are beyond the reach of most residents is not restricted to Hatcliffe Extension. Residents of other informal settlements set up under Operation Garikai are also under threat of eviction. In addition, it is not clear which government ministry has responsibility over Hatcliffe Extension settlement. After the setting up of the unity government in February 2009, it was indicated that the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities was to take over Operation Garikai settlements. However the notices posted at the settlement were issued by the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Developments.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the government of Zimbabwe to review and revise Operation Garikai, with the participation of all stakeholders, in order to develop a comprehensive human rights-centered housing program to address the housing needs of all victims of Operation Murambatsvina.

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