

URGENT ACTION

FORCED EVICTIONS OF ROMA IN SERBIA

The authorities in Obrenovac, a municipality of Belgrade, Serbia, are planning the forced eviction of seventeen Roma families living in municipal buildings. Amnesty International is concerned the families will be moved to metal containers which do not meet the criteria of adequate housing.

Seventeen predominantly Roma families who live in several buildings owned by the Belgrade municipality of Obrenovac are at risk of being forcibly evicted. Approximately 78 people will be affected including 35 minors and four people over the age of 65. According to the Minority Rights Centre, a Serbian NGO, some of the Roma have been living in this location for more than 40 years, and most have contracts with the municipality allowing them to use the property indefinitely. Until recently they paid taxes and other bills, including for heating and lighting, to the municipality.

As with other recent evictions in Serbia, the municipality plans to move the community into metal containers which do not meet minimum standards of adequate housing as defined by the UN Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. The authorities have not consulted with the affected community on the eviction plans and have refused to accept or listen to their appeals against eviction.

Amnesty International is extremely concerned at the rising number of forced evictions of Roma communities living in informal settlements in Belgrade. Serbia is a state party to international and regional human rights treaties which prohibit and aim to end forced evictions. This includes the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Serbian government has failed to comply with its obligations under these treaties including adopting a law prohibiting forced evictions, which would ensure that the processes and safeguards, set out in relevant UN Guidelines and Principles, are in place before any evictions are carried out. The government has failed to prevent forced evictions of Roma by the City of Belgrade, who not only lose their homes, but their livelihoods and often their only possessions.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Urge the municipal authorities not to forcibly evict the families living in Obrenovac;
- Urge them to conduct genuine consultation with the families to identify all feasible alternatives to evictions and on resettlement options;
- Call on them to develop a comprehensive and sustainable resettlement and compensation plan for the families in Obrenovac to include adequate alternative housing for all families due to be evicted;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 AUGUST 2011 TO:

Mayor of Obrenovac Municipality

Zeljko Jovetic
Vuka Karadzica 74
11500 Obrenovac
Serbia
Salutation: Dear Sir

Mayor of Belgrade

Dragan Djilas
Dragoslava Jovanovića 2
11000 Belgrade
Serbia
Salutation: Dear Sir

And copies to:

Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia
Bozidar Djelic
Nemanjina 11
11 000 Belgrade
Serbia

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

UA: 200/11 Index: EUR 70/009/2011 Issue Date: 01 July 2011

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