

URGENT ACTION

TWENTY-FOUR ROMA FAMILIES RISK FORCED EVICTION

Twenty-four Roma households at the Belvil settlement in Belgrade are due for resettlement at the end of November. If human rights requirements, including genuine consultation and providing full information are not followed, their removal for resettlement could result in a forced eviction.

The families are amongst 50 Roma households due for resettlement from the informal settlement at Belvil, in advance of construction work funded by the European Investment Bank (EIB). The resettlement of the first 24 families was originally scheduled to take place in September; it was then delayed until the end of October, and was then again delayed to the end of November. The families will be resettled into social housing units in Orlovsko naselje, in the eastern part of Belgrade. The remaining families are due to be resettled in 2015.

When Amnesty International visited the settlement in September, many of the affected families indicated that they had not been provided with a timeline or up-to-date information about their resettlement. At the last meeting, held on 6 August, the City Secretariat for Social Welfare and Belgrade Land Agency (Beoland, the city building agency constructing the social housing units), did not provide with dates and details about the resettlement.

The families were informally told about the delay by EIB's consultants, but as of the end of October, the families have not been officially informed about the new date for resettlement. According to EIB, measures set out in the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), agreed between the city and EIB, to provide the families with access to education, healthcare, social welfare and employment have not yet been put in place. As a result, many of the Roma have little information on the resettlement and are increasingly uncertain about their future.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Expressing concern to the Mayor of Belgrade at the inadequate preparation by the City of Belgrade authorities for the resettlement of 24 families from the informal settlement at Belvil to Orlovsko naselje at the end of November;
- Calling on the Mayor of Belgrade to ensure that the affected families are provided with timely information, including a timeline for their resettlement, and to ensure that meaningful and genuine consultation with them is carried out throughout the process;
- Expressing concern that the Belgrade authorities' failure to carry out the eviction and resettlement in accordance with international standards may result in a forced eviction;
- Urging the Mayor to ensure that the Secretariat of Social Welfare is provided with sufficient personnel and resources to conduct the resettlement and to assist the Secretariat for Social Welfare by calling a meeting of all relevant Secretariats to plan the resettlement and ensure that affected families and individuals are provided with security of tenure, access to schools, health centres and social welfare immediately after resettlement, and that urgent measures are taken to provide resettled Roma with meaningful employment opportunities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 DECEMBER 2014 TO:

Mayor of the City of Belgrade

Dr Siniša Mali

Office of the Mayor

Dragoslava Jovanovića 2

11000 Belgrade, Serbia

Email: gradonacelnik@beograd.gov.rs

Salutation: **Dear Mayor**

And copies to:

Secretary for Social Welfare

Ms Jasmina Ivanović

Secretariat for Social Welfare

27. marta 43 – 45

11000 Belgrade, Serbia

Email: jasmina.ivanovic@beograd.gov.rs

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 50 Roma families remained at Belvil after the city authorities forcibly evicted more than 250 other families from another part of the site in April 2012. The families were to stay on the site until they could be resettled into permanent housing in advance of the building of access roads to a bridge over the nearby River Sava. The planned construction is co-funded by a loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB), which requires the city to resettle the families in line with international standards as a condition for the disbursement of the loan, as agreed in the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP). These standards are designed to ensure that the resettlement does not constitute a forced eviction or result in any further violation of the rights of the affected people.

The UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on development-based evictions and displacement sets out the responsibilities of the state authorities, including its agencies and local government bodies, including the City of Belgrade authorities. This includes the obligation to provide all necessary amenities, services and economic opportunities during the transition process and at the proposed site, and to meaningfully consult and assist the affected people, enabling them to actively participate in processes and decisions related to the resettlement. Additionally, EIB's own Environmental and Social Standards aim to ensure that all affected people are assisted to improve, or at least restore, their former livelihoods and living standards.

Amnesty International has recently talked to EIB about their responsibility to ensure that the City of Belgrade mitigates against potential human rights violations by ensuring the resettlement is carried out in accordance with the RAP, and with international human rights standards.

The rest of the Belvil families (26 households) were due to be resettled to a segregated site at Jabucki rit, on the outskirts of the city by January 2015. However, construction has not yet been started at this site, and they are not expected to be resettled until April next year.

Name: Belvil settlement inhabitants
Gender m/f: both

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