

# URGENT ACTION

## THOUSANDS FORCIBLY EVICTED IN GEORGIA

**Amnesty International is concerned by a series of forced evictions of internally displaced people carried out by local authorities in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. According to sources in Georgia, around 5,000 people have been forcibly evicted from their homes since mid-June. Some of them have not been given any alternative housing, others were sent to homes that appear to be unsuitable for habitation. More forced evictions are likely to take place in the near future.**

The evictions carried out over the last two months have apparently failed to meet international standards. In particular, the authorities did not carry out a genuine consultation process with the displaced people; they failed to provide reasonable advance notice about eviction, and failed to provide adequate housing. In some cases, the residents were not offered any accommodation at all and the authorities evicting them told them to find shelter with relatives and friends. The five forced evictions that took place in June, July and August affected around 5,000 displaced people. Amnesty International received credible information that the authorities plan to expel residents of over 30 collective centres in Tbilisi each of which houses dozens of displaced families. If these expulsions follow the same pattern as those that have already taken place, it is likely that they would also lead to forced evictions.

The first forced eviction took place on 14 June when 38 families were expelled from a collective centre where they had been living for several years. The families were not genuinely consulted to identify alternatives to evictions, or on other accommodation. They were offered accommodation at another collective centre, which does not appear to be suitable for habitation. Photographs obtained by Amnesty International show that the parts of building are full of debris and poorly maintained. In addition, one room containing a toilet has reportedly been allocated to be the main living area for a family. This forced eviction was conducted in violation of Georgia's own national procedures for internally displaced people; in particular a law saying that internally displaced people cannot be moved to accommodation inferior to their current residence and without their written agreement.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Georgian, English or your own language:

- Urging the President to use his authority to halt all forced evictions immediately;
- Calling on him to ensure that evictions are carried out only as a last resort, and only in full compliance with the guarantees required under the national law on internally displaced people and international human rights standards;
- Calling on him to ensure that those evicted are provided with adequate housing as a matter of urgency.
- Calling on him to ensure that any alternative accommodation that is provided to internally displaced people complies with requirements for adequacy of housing, under international human rights standards
- Urging him to respect the rights of all victims of forced evictions to access remedies and justice.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 01 OCTOBER 2010 TO:

#### President

Mikheil Saakashvili  
Office of the President of Georgia  
Ingorokva 7  
0105 Tbilisi  
GEORGIA  
Fax: +995 32 92 1069 (from 7am  
GMT); +995 32 99 08 79  
Email: [info@president.gov.ge](mailto:info@president.gov.ge)  
Salutation: Dear President

#### Minister of Internally Displaced Persons

from Occupied Territories,  
Accommodation and Refugees  
Koba Subeliani  
Tamarashvili Street N 15A  
0177 Tbilisi, Georgia  
Fax: + 995 32 311596  
Email: to be sent from website  
[www.mra.gov.ge](http://www.mra.gov.ge)  
Salutation: Dear Minister

#### And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Grigol Vashadze  
Chitadze str., 4  
0118 Tbilisi  
GEORGIA  
Fax: +995 32 284 678  
E-Mail: [inform@mfa.gov.ge](mailto:inform@mfa.gov.ge)  
Salutation: Dear Minister

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

**AMNESTY  
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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Georgia, up to 246,000 people are still displaced from their homes following conflicts in the 1990s and in 2008. Roughly 42 per cent of those displaced in the 1990s live in large state or privately owned buildings which can house dozens of families. Currently, there are around 1,658 such buildings, known as "collective centres", in Georgia with 515 located in Tbilisi.

The Public Defender of Georgia (Ombudsperson) reported on 17 August that in most cases, those about to be forcibly evicted were given a five-day warning, mostly verbally. They did not have sufficient information about housing options and could not make an informed decision. According to the Public Defender's statement some displaced people were verbally and physically assaulted during the evictions. According to media reports, in at least one eviction in August, the residents only received seven hours' notice of their eviction.

Amnesty International received information that at least four internally displaced people were arrested during their eviction on 11 August. On the same day they were sentenced to 30 days detention. Reportedly, they did not have legal representation during the court procedures and therefore could not appeal against the court decision within the seven-day limit for such appeal.

The national media reported that according to Georgia's Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees, those evicted in August were offered either financial compensation of US\$10,000 or alternative housing, reportedly in rural areas. The same media reports quote some internally displaced people as saying that they could not agree to move to accommodation in rural areas. Apparently, some of those who did not agree to relocate to rural areas reportedly found themselves homeless with their belongings stored by the authorities in a city hall. According to Amnesty International sources, many did not receive financial compensation as a durable housing solution.

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