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Roma families in Belgrade forcibly evicted

Amnesty International has urged the Belgrade authorities to stop forced evictions after Roma families, including 17 children and one pregnant woman, were evicted from their homes in the city.

The 36 people were forcibly evicted from their houses at 15 Vojvodjanska Street, where most of them had been living since 2003 after being previously forcibly evicted from another site in Belgrade.

“These people are being forcibly evicted from their homes for the second time in less than 10 years and now they have nowhere to go,” said David Diaz-Joqeix, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Europe and Central Asia Programme.

“The Belgrade authorities appear to be planning to remove all the city’s informal Roma settlements, but they have no real plan – other than homelessness – for these communities..”

Amnesty International learnt that the forced eviction was carried out in order to make way for the building of a new road and an apartment building.

“The Belgrade authorities offered the evicted families no alternative accommodation or assistance. They did not discuss alternatives to the evictions with them. No legal assistance was available to the evicted people to challenge this eviction. These human rights abuses have serious and immediate consequences for these families who are now homeless.” said David Diaz-Joqeix.

Representatives of the municipal authorities accompanied by police came to the settlement today at 11 am to execute the eviction order. The houses were demolished around 1.30 pm. Representatives of the Ministry of Human Rights and Minorities were at the site but were unable to prevent the eviction.

Lepa, a pregnant mother of three, told Amnesty International: *“I have nowhere to go. I went to the municipality last week to ask for help, any shelter to keep my children safe, but nobody wanted to speak to me. What am I supposed to do now?”*

The Belgrade city authorities issued the residents of the settlement with a first eviction notice on 24 August, giving the people one day to leave the site. This decision however was temporarily suspended after protests by local civil society organizations, who have been trying to prevent the eviction from taking place.

On 28 September residents of 15 Vojvodjanska Street received a further notice that the eviction was to take place.

Under international law, evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once other alternatives have been explored in genuine consultation with the affected communities.

The authorities then have a duty to provide them with adequate notice; alternative adequate

accommodation and compensation and must ensure that no families are made homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights as a consequence of eviction. This includes providing them with effective remedies for violations of their rights,

The Serbian government has a duty to ensure that the authorities in Belgrade abide by international law.

See also

[*Serbia: Stop the forced evictions of Roma settlements*](#)