

URGENT ACTION

ROMA FAMILIES AT RISK OF FORCED EVICTION

Around 160 families, mainly Roma, are at risk of forced eviction in the ‘Numbered Streets’ neighbourhood of Miskolc, Hungary. The authorities must ensure that no one is forcibly evicted from their homes.

The Municipality of Miskolc, plans to evict all its tenants from the “Numbered Streets” neighbourhood in Miskolc, Hungary’s fourth largest city, to make way for a football stadium. At least two families have been given notice to vacate their homes by Monday 13 April and Thursday 16 April by a bailiff acting on behalf of the municipality. Others are expected to follow. Speaking to Amnesty International’s delegate on 1 April, one resident who has been told to leave by Monday 13 April said: “the whole thing is about the football, money and racism. They hate Roma people.”

The notices mark a resumption in evictions that were temporarily halted over the winter months, during which evictions are prohibited by law. Prior to the evictions, around 900 mainly Roma people lived in the neighbourhood. In May 2014, approximately half of the families received eviction notices. By the beginning of December 2014 around 30 families had been evicted, without adequate genuine consultation or provision of alternative housing. Amnesty International have visited the “Numbered Streets” neighbourhood three times in the last nine months and met with municipal officers responsible for carrying out the evictions in the neighbourhood. The affected individuals report that genuine consultations on the eviction or the alternatives to it have not taken place; nor have they been provided with adequate alternative housing. According to international human rights standards even where eviction is considered to be justified, it should be carried out in strict compliance with the relevant provisions of international human rights law.

Please write immediately in Hungarian or your own language:

- Urging the municipality to halt all evictions until genuine consultation with the affected communities in the ‘Numbered Streets’ neighbourhood has been conducted to identify all feasible alternatives to evictions and resettlement options, and until adequate alternative housing, compliant with requirements under international human rights law, is provided to all persons affected;
- Urging the city authorities to ensure that any evictions, including those of households living in the “Numbered Streets” neighbourhood are carried out only as a last resort and in full compliance with international human rights law and standards;
- Urging the city authorities to ensure that those forcibly evicted in 2014 are provided with access to effective remedies including adequate alternative housing.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 MAY 2015 TO:

Mayor of Miskolc

Mr Ákos Kriza
Városház tér 8.
Miskolc 3525
Fax: (+36) 46 347 807
Email: hivatal@miskolcph.hu

Salutation: Dear Mayor

Municipal representative in charge of the eviction

Dr. Schweickhardt Gyula
Városház tér 8.
Miskolc 3525
Fax: (+36) 46 348 801

Email: schw.gyula@miskolcholding.hu
**Salutation: Dear Dr. Schweickhardt
Gyula**

And copies to:

Minister of Human Capacities
Zoltán Balog
Ministry of Human Capacities
Akademia utca 3.
Budapest 1054
Fax: (+36) 17 95 01 51
E-mail: miniszter@emmi.gov.hu

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 Miskolc authorities began their attempts to erase the “Numbered Streets” neighbourhood on 8 May 2014 when they decided to terminate rental agreements. The majority of residents of the neighbourhood are currently at risk of being rendered homeless by the evictions without receiving any compensation. The municipality hasn't involved the residents in a meaningful consultation. Amnesty International wrote to the municipality on 14 July 2014 and met with the representatives of the municipality in October 2014.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and other human rights treaties, Hungary is under an obligation to prohibit, refrain from and prevent forced evictions.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized in its General Comment 7 that evictions may be carried out only as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored. Even when an eviction is considered to be justified, it can only be carried out when appropriate procedural protections are in place and if compensation for all losses and adequate alternative housing is provided. Under international law, forced evictions and housing demolition must not be used as a punitive measure against people who lack residency or other status

Moreover, under international human rights law, Hungarian authorities must ensure that an eviction does not directly or indirectly result in discrimination and inequality. While planning projects or considering evictions for any purpose, authorities must assess if any particular group is at higher risk of eviction. Hungarian authorities are in fact obliged to take positive measures to combat discrimination of improve security of tenure of marginalized groups, including the Roma.

Under the ICESCR, prior to carrying out any evictions the authorities must explore all feasible alternatives in genuine consultation with the affected persons. All potentially affected groups and persons, including women, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities, as well as others working on behalf of the affected, have the right to relevant information, full consultation and participation throughout the entire process. They also have the right to propose alternatives that authorities should duly consider.

The UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement (Basic Principles) require states to carry out impact assessments prior to the initiation of any project that could result in eviction and displacement. Impact assessments must provide information about the area; the individuals affected, including information about their relationship with the location (for example their income-generating activities), public services in the area etc.

A consultation is only meaningful if it explores all the feasible alternatives to forced evictions. For example, where an eviction is sought because of non-payment of rent, consultations may result in an agreement allowing people more time to pay. Where evictions are planned because people live in unsafe housing, it may be possible to upgrade rather than demolish the properties.

Name: Families in the “Numbered Streets” neighbourhood
Gender m/f: both

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