

# URGENT ACTION

## 1,200 FAMILIES FORCIBLY EVICTED IN CAIRO

**The Cairo Governorate forcibly evicted at least 1,200 families on 18 February and demolished their homes. The families were reportedly given no warning, and most were provided with no alternative housing. At least 300 families are said to be still homeless.**

Egypt's security forces forcibly evicted at least 1,200 families in Ezbet Al-Nakhl district of Cairo on 18 February, and arrested at least 16 men. The authorities had made no attempt to consult with the residents and did not give them any notice. According to the government, two days after the eviction 400 families were provided with alternative housing in the Al-Marg area of the city. However, some of the families told Amnesty International that they were only provided with apartments after having been forced to sleep in the streets and at least 300 families are still homeless.

Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that the security forces fired live ammunition into the air to scare the residents who tried to object. They also saw police officers dragging two women by their hair, beating children and arresting men who refused to leave their homes.

It is not clear exactly how many families were living in Ezbet Al-Nakhl in Al-Marg but reliable sources state that official figures significantly underestimate the size of the population. The Cairo governor said there were 400 families, according to the latest survey carried out by the government in late 2012. However, families and lawyers told Amnesty International there were at least 1,200 families living there prior to eviction with at least 300 families now living on the streets.

### **Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that all the residents forcibly evicted are provided with adequate alternative housing as a matter of urgency that meets the needs of habitability, location and availability of basic services;
- Calling on them to ensure that all those whose rights have been violated as a result of the forced evictions have access to effective remedies;
- Reminding them that Egypt's new Constitution outlaws forced evictions and urging them to ensure that any future evictions are conducted in line with international standards, with residents being genuinely consulted, notified in writing in advance and provided with adequate alternative accommodation.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 APRIL 2014 TO:**

#### Governor of Cairo

Galal Mostafa Mohamed Saeed  
7 Abdin Square, Al Gomhoriya Street  
Cairo, Egypt  
Fax: +20223904620  
+20223907387  
Email: Cairogov@Cairo.gov.eg;  
cairogov@idsc.net.eg  
**Salutation: Dear Governor**

#### Executive Director, Informal Settlements

Development Facility  
Khalid Abdul Aziz Ghiberti  
Informal Settlements Development  
Facility  
PO Box 16 - 11852 Cairo, Egypt  
Fax: +20222634000  
Email: isdf@isdf.gov.eg  
**Salutation: Dear Khalid Abdul Aziz  
Ghiberti**

#### Public Prosecutor

Hesham Mohamed Zaki Barakat  
Office of the Public Prosecutor  
Supreme Court House, 1 "26 July" Road  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +202 2 577 4716  
+202 2 575 7165  
(Switched off after office hours, GMT+2)  
**Salutation: Dear Counsellor**

**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**



# URGENT ACTION

## 1,200 FAMILIES FORCIBLY EVICTED IN CAIRO

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sources from the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, who were present during the eviction, told Amnesty International that the security forces, including the Central Security Forces, Special Forces and the Criminal Investigations Unit, forcibly evicted the families on 18 February. Those who refused to leave their homes were dragged outside and beaten. They added that the government transferred their belongings in garbage trucks and the security forces prevented journalists from entering the area to report the incident.

The government provided 400 families with apartments, based on a survey done by the government on the residents in this area in late 2012 which registered 400 families living there. However, residents told Amnesty International that this number does not reflect the real number living there, which is around at least 1,200 families. Lawyers and community-based organizations in the area confirmed these numbers stated by the families.

Some of the residents went to the Public Prosecutor on 21 February and filed a report regarding the treatment they faced at the hands of the security forces and saying that they had to spend nights on the streets because they did not have alternative housing.

Families also told Amnesty International that they tried to tell the police officers that they did not have alternative housing but were told, "It's not our business". One man told a police officer that he would set himself on fire if they demolished his home. The police officer handed him a match and told him that no one would prevent him from doing so. The security forces arbitrarily arrested at least 16 men who tried to object to the evictions and later released them without charge.

Human rights lawyers working on the issue told Amnesty International that the eviction was carried out because the government was in the process of building a bridge, unofficially called the "Mostorod axis".

The constitution, adopted in January 2014, prohibits forced evictions under Article 63. Article 78 guarantees that the state is responsible for providing adequate housing. Under Article 59, every person has the right to a secure life and the state shall provide security and reassurance for citizens residing on its territories.

Forced evictions are prohibited by international law. The authorities have routinely failed to respect safeguards required under international law to prevent such forced evictions, including genuine consultation with affected communities over resettlement options, providing adequate information about plans, giving written notice of evictions, and providing adequate alternative housing and compensation for losses. In December 2013, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed its concern over what it called "widespread" forced evictions in Egypt, and the lack of effective remedies for those affected. It called on Egypt's government to ensure that laws guaranteed the rights to adequate housing and security of tenure.

Name: At least 1200 families in the Ezbet Al-Nakhi district of Cairo, Egypt  
Gender m/f: both

UA: 37/14 Index: MDE 12/010/2014 Issue Date: 21 February 2014