

URGENT ACTION

EVICTED FAMILIES ATTACKED BY SECURITY FORCES

Security forces used excessive force to disperse homeless families from the rubble of their former homes, from which they were forcibly evicted on 18 February. The families were using the rubble as shelter since they were not provided with alternative housing. The security forces arrested at least five men and beat women and children.

On 26 February at 7:00 in the morning, security forces in the Ezbet Al-Nakhl in Al Marg district of Cairo shot live ammunition in the air and tear gas to disperse families from the rubble of the homes that they were forcibly evicted from on 18 February. At least five men who tried to object to the security forces' actions were arrested and released a few hours later. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that the security forces beat women and children. They witnessed at least two women beaten on their heads by gun butts, which led to bleeding, and at least four women beaten by batons. Two children, aged nine months and three years, respectively, were transferred to the Matareya hospital to receive treatment for suffocation because of the use of tear gas.

Families told Amnesty International that following the dispersal, they marched to the Matareya Local Authority Office to demand they be provided with alternative housing. Once there, police officers from the neighbouring Matareya police station told the families to leave and return on 3 March when the names of the families who will receive flats will be announced. However, not all families living in Ezbet Al-Nakhl will receive alternative housing, as the residents said that a survey conducted by the government in 2012 does not include the names of all the families. Hassan Sabry, a resident of Ezbet Al-Nakhl, told Amnesty International that the government did not register him to receive alternative housing although he has been living in Ezbet Al-Nakhl for at least 10 years, has been paying bills there since 2003, and has this address on his National Identity card. He added that around 80 families remain on the streets opposite to the area affected by last week's demolition of homes.

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

- Calling on the authorities to ensure that there is no further use of excessive force against the residents of Ezbet Al-Nakhl and to initiate a prompt, thorough and independent investigation into the use of force and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to promptly provide emergency adequate housing to people rendered homeless by the forced eviction until permanent adequate housing solutions are implemented;
- Calling on them to ensure that all those whose rights have been violated as a result of the forced evictions and excessive use of force by security forces have access to effective remedies.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 APRIL 2014 TO:

Governor of Cairo

Galal Mostafa Mohamed Saeed
7 Abdin Square, Al Gomhoriya Street
Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2 390 4620
+202 2 390 7387
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: +202 2 263 4000
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. This is the first update of UA 37/14. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/010/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Egypt's security forces forcibly evicted at least 1,200 families in Ezbet Al-Nakhl district of Cairo on 18 February. The authorities had made no attempt to consult with the residents and did not give them any notice. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that the security forces had fired live ammunition into the air to intimidate 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.

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, families and lawyers told Amnesty International that they were only provided with apartments after having been forced to sleep in the streets. Further, they added that the number of the families received flats do not reach 400 families.

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.

Mohamed Abdel Azim from the Egyptian Centre for Civil and Legislative Reform told Amnesty International that the government put more than one family in one flat. He mentioned that one of the families, a woman with four children were put in the same flat with her divorcee and his wife although the two families have different registration numbers with the government to receive two separate flats. He also added that the families who received flat were not given a legal possession document proving their possession of the property or clarifying the nature of the possession, whether ownership, rent or usufruct.

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 1,200 families in the Ezbet Al-Nakhl district of Cairo, Egypt
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 37/14 Index: MDE 12/011/2014 Issue Date: 28 February 2014