

URGENT ACTION

600 FAMILIES FACE FORCED EVICTION FROM HOMES

Approximately 600 families are under threat of imminent eviction from their homes in Santo Domingo Province, Dominican Republic. The notice period provided by state authorities to leave the land they have been occupying for more than 20 years has expired. Due process has not been respected.

Around **600 families** have been living since 1990 on a plot of land in the neighbourhood of El Valiente, in the municipality of Boca Chica in Santo Domingo Province. According to their lawyer they had been granted permission to occupy the land by the owners, the State Sugar Company (Consejo Estatal del Azúcar).

On 16 February 2013, a group of people entered the families' houses under the pretext of taking measurements in view to carrying out infrastructure work. Once they had finished, one of the people claimed that he had owned the land since 1985 and warned the families that they had to leave. On 6 April the alleged owner returned accompanied by armed men, they harassed the families and threatened to destroy their houses.

The families' lawyer filed a judicial complaint against the alleged owner, but on 8 May the prosecutor in charge of land disputes ordered the families to leave within 15 days of the notification, under the threat that they would be forcibly evicted if they did not leave willingly. As the notice period expired on 30 May, the eviction could now take place at any time.

In contravention of international standards, state authorities have not carried out any consultation with the residents nor provided them with the possibility of challenging the prosecutor's decision. No precise date and time for the eviction has been communicated to them.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the Dominican authorities to immediately halt the eviction and ensure that evictions are only carried out once all international legal and procedural safeguards including genuine consultation, adequate notice, serious consideration of all feasible alternatives, including alternative land and housing and access to legal remedies, are in place;
- Calling for them to ensure that no one is left homeless and vulnerable to other violations of their human rights as a result of actions undertaken by the authorities;
- Reminding the authorities that unless these conditions are met, an eviction will violate the human rights of affected individuals and amount to a breach of the Dominican Republic's international human rights commitments.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 JULY 2013 TO:

Public Prosecutor for Land Issues

(Abogado del Estado)

Dr. Fermin Casilla Minaya

Oficina del Abogado del Estado

C/ Independencia Esq. Jiménez Moya

Primera planta – La Feria

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Fax: +1809 534 5285 (keep trying)

Salutation: Honourable

Magistrate/Honorable Magistrado

Attorney General

Francisco Domínguez Brito

Palacio de Justicia, Av. Jiménez Moya

esq. Juan Ventura Simón

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Email: info@pgr.gob.do

Fax: +1809 532 2584 (keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

/Estimado Procurador General de la

República

And copies to:

Residents' Lawyer

Lic. Santos de la Cruz

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Email: santo993@hotmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Forced evictions are frequent and recurrent in the Dominican Republic. Most evictions are executed without due process or consultation with the communities affected in order to make lands available for the construction of infrastructure, tourist estates or industrial complexes. The lack of deeds and security of tenure, which is estimated to affect more than 50 percent of the population (75% in Santo Domingo Province), are among the main arguments used by the authorities to justify forced evictions.

Police violence and excessive use of force during evictions are common in the Dominican Republic. For example, on 15 October 2011 more than 20 people were injured and required hospital treatment during an eviction in Brisas del Este. Many others suffered the effects of the teargas, including children and pregnant women.

Name: 600 families in Dominican Republic

Gender m/f: both

UA: 142/13 Index: AMR 27/005/2013 Issue Date: 31 May 2013