



Introduction

The information contained in these eviction reports is taken from various Roma websites and from e-mails circulated by non-governmental organisations active in issues concerning Roma – the European Roma Rights Centre, the International Federation for Human Rights, national Helsinki Committees, Amnesty International, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions. To our knowledge there has been no official denial of the veracity of the facts described in these reports.

Evictions have gained momentum in recent years for a number of reasons.

In Central and Eastern Europe the introduction of the market economy has prompted speculators to take over for development land which is often illegally occupied. Under communist governments these illegal settlements were often tolerated, particularly as it was government policy to sedentarise the Roma. Many of the destroyed or threatened settlements had been inhabited without interruption for over 40 years.

2. The opening of borders between East and West has resulted in an influx of Roma from Central and Eastern Europe – in particular from Romania - into Western Europe. They are sedentarised Roma who have turned nomadic in a search for a better life. They settle on land outside main cities and are constantly hounded by the local authorities and the local population.
3. Increased decentralisation – particularly in Central and Eastern European countries, which were highly centralised under communist governments – has given considerable power to local mayors who, for political reasons, pay lip service to the local population.
In Western Europe, the hostility of the population to Travellers has encouraged local authorities to deny the latter access to camping sites and often to circumvent the law. Numerous municipalities in France (about 75%) have failed to apply the '*Loi Besson*' which requires them to have camping sites for Travellers, and in England Travellers have been refused permits to build on their own land. As a result Travellers camp wherever they find available.
4. A number of evictions have taken place in preparation of international events. This has been the case with settlements near Athens (Olympic Games) and near Patras (declared Cultural capital of Europe for 2007). It is feared that the Olympic Games in London might have the same effect on Travellers camping sites.

Apart from the illegality of the settlement, the authorities often claim that the conditions in the settlement are unhygienic and a threat to health. These unhygienic conditions however are due to the fact that no water, electricity or drainage is provided and rubbish is never collected.

Eviction raises issues that go beyond questions of legality or hygiene. The question is whether people, including women and children, can be left without any shelter whatsoever, sometimes in extreme weather conditions. The answer is clearly no – and yet, in most of the cases reported in this document people were thrown out into the streets without any alternative accommodation being offered.

Such behaviour goes against a multitude of international conventions, agreements and recommendations and is unworthy of a healthy democracy. It is sad and regrettable that these evictions often take place with the full support of the local population. The duty of the authorities, however, is to follow rules of justice and not the whims of the local inhabitants. Roma and Travellers are human beings and, with rare exceptions, citizens of the country which keeps rejecting them.

ALBANIA

Tirana (in the bed of the Lana river - a canal crossing Tirana)

7 January, 2005

One hundred or so families settled in the bed of the Lana river (a canal crossing Tirana) in a kind of shanty-town, have repeatedly sought, without success, a long term solution from the city council, namely a safe place to build by themselves their own houses with easy terms to pay for the land they would acquire this way. On 6 January, without any notice, the building authorities destroyed all the Romani families' cabins and forcibly evicted the occupants. The reason for the eviction was that four persons who wanted to set up a car washing station on this location had been recognized by the courts as former owners of the land. The Romani families were never informed of the proceedings.

Elbasan

15 July, 2006

According to the Albanian Romani Union Amaro Drom, 109 Romani individuals have been evicted from homes they have occupied since 1991. At the time of the evictions, the community was in the process of legalising their homes. However, on 15 July, local building authorities reportedly notified residents that the building would be destroyed beginning 21 July, and on this date proceeded to destroy the building. Individuals were not allowed to remove their personal belongings, including furniture and other items, before the destruction of their homes.

Since this date, the 21 families that occupied the buildings have been left homeless, including pregnant women and children. According to information provided by representatives of the Elbasan Municipality, the municipality intends to build municipal social housing for poor families on the site, which is intended to benefit the same evicted families. However, evictions should not have taken place until alternative housing was made available so as to avoid homelessness.

Local activists have voiced doubts as to the commitment of local housing authorities to solving the housing problems of Roma.

BULGARIA

Research carried out by ERRC and other organisations show that very large numbers of Roma - in particular those Romani individuals residing in informal slum settlements - are precluded from legally registering their housing. Roma as an ethnic group have been systematically compelled to reside or left in situations in which, as a group, they face no reasonable alternate options other than residing in housing lacking a legal basis, and therefore in a state of permanent high insecurity and under generalised threat of forced eviction.

In practice authorities have on numerous occasions forcibly evicted Roma from housing without providing them with adequate alternate accommodation or sufficient compensation or adequate redress for destroyed housing, thus rendering many Romani families homeless or vulnerable to other human rights abuses.

A number of major Romani settlements are today under permanent threat of wholesale or partial destruction as a result of urban plans, and inhabitants have in the main been excluded from decisions about their housing fates and left uninformed for significant periods of time as to plans for their future housing arrangements.

**Hristo Botev, Sofia
August, 2005**

Approximately 25 houses in the Hristo Botev neighbourhood of Sofia were pulled down on August 31 and the Roma inhabitants evicted from these dwellings. The Sofia municipality plans to undertake further forced evictions of Roma occupying illegal constructions in other neighbourhoods of Sofia.

**Dobri Jeliaskov, Sofia
June, 2006**

The small Roma community living in the area does not possess any documents for the houses. The houses were built around 1930 and the residents are registered at that address since birth. At the beginning of June 2006 the municipality started a procedure under the Bulgarian Territory Act - to forbid the use of the houses. The procedure was started by issuing acts for illegal construction on public municipal land. The Equal Opportunities Association (EOA) helped the community to prepare objections against the acts. As this procedure is relatively long, the municipality started a second procedure on 12 July, under the Municipality Property Act, which involves forced eviction. Contrary to the agreement reached between the municipality and the Roma Public Council in Sofia, on 25 July the Municipality issued orders for eviction against the Dobri Jeliaskov community and gave the people 14 days to leave their homes. No alternative housing is provided and it is highly unsure that such will be provided in 14 days. As the law in Bulgaria provides for opportunities for appeal before the court authorities against the eviction orders, the EOA intends to continue to support the community to defend the only homes the people currently have.

**Batalova vodenitza, Vazrazhdane district, Sofia
30 June, 2006**

The Sofia Municipality in the Vazrazhdane district has announced that on 30 June 2006 it will forcibly evict Roma families from the Batalova vodenitza neighbourhood, also known as NPZ Sredetz. Many of the families have lived in this neighbourhood for almost a century and are now threatened with homelessness, as the Municipality has not offered compensation or resettlement.

The families, due to be evicted tomorrow, are only entitled to one-time support in the amount of BGN 275 (approximately Euro 130). They have filed a case with the European Court of Human Rights.

Other communities also face impending eviction. The Municipality in Vazrazhdane has issued eviction notices to the 16 families of a different community that is also called Batalova vodenitza. Despite the community residing on this land since 1926, the families were informed on 26 June 2006 that they now have 14 days to object to notices. The Regional Directorate on Control of Illegal Constructions will then have the power to forbid the use of the buildings and cut off electricity and water supplies.

CZECH REPUBLIC

**Bohumin
October, 2005**

A number of parties concerned at racial segregation in the field of housing in the Czech Republic yesterday spent the night in the flats of four families threatened with forcible expulsion from their homes in the northern Czech town of Bohumin.

The families concerned have been under threat of forced eviction since June, when municipal officials informed them that, following expiry on June 30 of their rental contracts to stay in a hostel for low-income and other poor families, they would have to move out, along with approximately 250 other inhabitants of the hostel. The majority of the persons affected are Romani. Until issued with eviction orders, they have been long-term legal tenants of the building. An appeal on behalf of the families by five non-governmental organizations including the ERRRC, sent to Czech Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek, remains as yet unanswered and without any apparent effect.

Under intense pressure and harassment by municipal officials, most of the families have now left the building, despite having been provided with no reasonable alternative housing. Some have emigrated from the Czech Republic, having abandoned hope of a life with dignity in the country. However, four families, including the family of Mrs Renata Scukova, stayed on, and brought legal challenges against the evictions. Mrs. Scukova was moved to challenge the evictions after municipal officials urged her to separate from her husband Stefan so that she might move into a shelter for single mothers.

The city of Bohumin has now undertaken a number of arbitrary acts against the families, including engaging a private security company to guard the door of the hostel and to block anyone but persons living there, including close family members, from entering the building.

For the services of this security company, the city of Bohumin has issued monthly bills to the families concerned. In July, this bill was 76,549 Czech crowns, or approximately 2,580 Euro, to be divided among the families. Mrs. Scukova's family's share of this and other bills, only for the month of July, was 27,802 Czech crowns (approximately 940 Euro).

In addition, as a result of these measures, Mrs. Scukova, who previously was a fastidious rent-and utilities-payer, has now accrued approximately 110,000 Czech crowns of debt (approximately 3710 Euro). She and her family will not be eligible for social housing in the Czech Republic until this debt is repaid. She now must also endure the public humiliation of Bohumin municipal officials, who regularly call her a "non-payer" in the media.

On September 15, a court in Karvina ruled against Mrs. Scukova's appeal against the eviction order, and gave her 15 days to move out. She will appeal the decision as soon as it is issued in writing. She remains in the hostel together with 15 other persons.

As a result, a number of concerned parties have come to the assistance of Mrs. Scukova and the other Romani families threatened with eviction in Bohumin. On the night of October 4, a number of sympathisers, including the Czech government's Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Svatopluk Karasek and members of his staff; Deputy Ombudsman Ms. Anna Sabatova; as well as members of the civil organisations Life Together, League of Human Rights and the European Roma Rights Centre, spent the night as guests of Mrs. Scukova and the other three families concerned, in flats in the hostel in Bohumin. The action was intended as a gesture of solidarity . It also aimed at bringing public attention to this emergency.

The action "Guests of Mrs. Scukova" was not without opposition. Acting on the orders of municipal officials of Bohumin, security guards refused to allow the guests to enter the building including Mrs. Scukova's attorney, who requested to meet with her client in private. The police refused to remove the seven security guards concerned in the evening hours of October 4. It was only after the intervention of the deputy director of police of the Northern Moravian region of the Czech Republic that security guards finally allowed Mrs. Scukova's guests and members of her close family to enter the building, four-and-a-half hours after they had first arrived.

Commenting in the Czech weekly Respekt on his reasons for undertaking the action, Life Together Director Kumar Vishwanathan said, "I decided to support them. I was thinking constantly of Mrs. Ratzova, who was expelled from a hostel in Slany in exactly the same

circumstances two years ago. She then wandered around the whole country, searching in vain for some kind of accommodation. After four months, when she was at the end of her strength, she gave up her children into state care. Completely ruined, she moved in with her mother and her psychologically ill brother, who some time later killed her. This woman lived a normal existence with her children, when there suddenly came a powerful assault on her life. She was kicked around like a balloon and then entirely abandoned. When I look at the situation in Bohumin now I can't help thinking of her".

Greece**Patras, 2005-6****Riganokampos**

Earlier, on June 21, 8 NGOs were compelled to undertake joint action after 15 Romani families living in the Riganokampos settlement in Patras were served with eviction orders on 16 June. Patras has been the scene of repeated and regular forced evictions of Roma since at least 2001. According to Sokadre, which groups Roma NGOs, the municipal authorities have increased the evictions, accompanied by the destruction of property of over 70 Greek and Albanian Roma families living in shanty settlements outside the city. According to Sokadre, the Patras authorities are trying to "clean up" the city before it is declared cultural capital of Europe. Similar evictions took place in Athens just before the Olympic Games. Most of the compensation promised has never been paid.

Makrigianni

The eviction of the Makrigianni Roma community of some 50 families is also in progress. 13 homes (sheds) of Roma who were absent for seasonal work elsewhere were demolished on 27 July 2006). During the operation, a prosecutor reportedly ordered the Roma present there to leave within 30 minutes. The Roma however refused to leave and see their homes demolished too. Subsequently, 15 Roma families were served twice, on 3-4 August and again on 8 August 2006, with emergency court summons for imposition of "police measures" of eviction. . A protocol of administrative eviction issued for the same area last year was annulled by a Magistrate. The authorities now resort to procedures that depend only on the office of the prosecutor whose chief has publicly called for the eviction of the Roma. Some 20 other shanty homes that belong to Roma who are also absent for seasonal work risk demolition any day now. No alternative housing was offered to any of them.

Several of the victims of the home demolition of 27 July 2006 have already seen their homes demolished or threatened with demolition in August 2004 (in Riganokampos Patras), October 2004 and June 2005 (in Makrigianni). In all instances, the Municipality of Patras argued that no eviction of Roma took place but that it merely "cleaned" the area from "deserted" houses, after first "acquiring the consent" of other Roma living there, but apparently not the consent of the Roma who owned the demolished houses and who were not there at the time of the eviction. These evictions were implementing the plan drawn by local authorities in 2004. In a letter (No. 734/14-10-2004) of the General Secretariat of the Region it was clearly stated that "*it was decided that only the Makrigianni Roma registered in the municipal rolls of Patras (some 5-6 families) should be allowed to remain there, while the others should be driven away*" The letter was addressed to the Police Directorate of Achaia, calling upon them to take the necessary measures in order to drive the Roma away.

Hania, Crete**July, 2006**

On 18 July 2006, in the Kladiso area of Hania, Crete, 10 homes (sheds) of Roma who were away for a festival in another area of Crete or were working in nearby olive orchards were demolished by an inter-municipal "ecological" company with the assistance of police, even though there was no prior legal eviction order issued. Once again, authorities claimed to have "cleaned the area." Only four homes were left for those who were still there and who were told to leave in the

following days. A month before, a local tourist police captain had announced his intention to see the removal of those Roma and GHM had warned with a 18 June 2006 letter the Chief of the Hellenic Police of the illegality of such action. The Chief of Hellenic Police never replied to the letter nor did he take any preventive action. On 20 July, GHM filed a complaint with the Hania prosecutor who launched a preliminary investigation. In the end of July, police officers again told the Roma to leave but the latter refused.

Aghia Paraskevi 2004-5

Between December 2004 and December 2005, 7 out of 10 Roma families in Aghia Paraskevi, Greater Athens were victims of evictions or attempted evictions. The evictions were carried out by private land owners with court orders. Yet, the Roma were still squatting –for decades- on those properties as the plan of the municipality to relocate them to a plot of land purchased in the adjacent town of Spata in 2001 was cancelled following anti-Roma racist reactions by inhabitants and the municipal authorities of Spata, that were backed by the courts. In 2005, the Aghia Paraskevi municipality purchased new plots of land in Euboia, an island over 100km away where the forefathers of these Roma came from 50 years ago, to relocate the Roma, possibly in 2006.

Athens Votanikos

In June 2005, it was announced that in the Votanikos district of Athens a new football stadium was to be constructed in an area which includes today several settlements of Roma, with over 200 homes, who were to be evicted. As there were no plans for their relocation, a letter of concern by nine Greek and international NGOs (Amnesty International, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Coordinated Organisations and Communities for Roma Human Rights in Greece, European Roma Information Centre, European Roma Rights Centre, Greek Helsinki Monitor, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Minority Rights Group International, and World Organisation against Torture) was sent on 1 August 2005 to the then Mayor of Athens and current Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis. No answer was ever received and no plans for the relocation of these Roma have been made.

Marousi

. To make room for additional facilities for the 2004 Olympic Games, an August 2002 contractual agreement was signed between the mayor and about 40 Roma families. It provided for rent subsidies until the permanent relocation of the Roma. The subsidies were however paid irregularly with several months delay, and stopped after the 2004 Games.

ITALY Milan, 30 June, 2005

On 30 June, 2005, 300 (according to the Corriere della Sera) and 600 (according to Il Manifesto) Roma have been evicted from the Roma camp in Via CAPORIZZUTO, Milan. The eviction was conceived in the framework of a tolerance zero policy which has been adopted after the detention of one of the inhabitants of the camp for rape.

The President of the Region Lombardia (the Region of Milan), Mrs. Viviana Beccalosi, declared that Roma are parasites of society.

150 policemen entered the Roma camp at 4:30 a.m., and without giving any warning, destroyed the barracks. Those Roma who had regular residence permit stayed during the “operation” in order to try to save some personal effects, but those who were “clandestine” tried to escape from the police. At the end, 70 of them were conducted to the Police Station for immediate return to Romania.

The “Manifesto” highlights that no social assistant, civil protection official or a person responsible from the welfare unit of the Municipality were present during the eviction.

No alternative housing solution was presented to these Roma following the eviction. Some NGO tried to offer to some of the Roma a place where to stay. For the moment, the Roma living in VIA TRIBONIANO Camp are also on alert. This site is the next on the list of the Municipalities for eviction.

The main problem which has been raised by the civil society is the consequence that the eviction will have on the "Regular Roma", those with regular residence permit, and in particular for those who have children who are attending school. Some of them have been lodged in a "Centre for temporary stay", i.e. the Centres in which the irregular migrants are blocked during the time necessary for their identification. All the other Roma are still looking for a place where to stay.

Montenegro Tuzi, May 2005

According to a report issued by Vjesti newspaper on May 11, 2005 ten families were left homeless after the demolition of their homes on May 10, 2005 in the village of Tuzi outside of Šipčanik in Montenegro.

Local authorities and police began demolishing the homes on the morning of May 10 in the presence of social workers, leaving approximately forty-eight people homeless. According to the main communal inspector, Mr Radenko Gačević, the destruction of the homes, which had been illegally built on public land, had been planned since July of 2004. The families were informed ten days before the demolition of their homes. As of June 30, 2005, none of the families had received alternate accommodation and were living in shacks made from collected materials close to the site of their demolished homes.

Romania Bucharest, January 2006

On 24 January, 2006, at 7a.m. the Bucharest District 1 Mayorality demolished 7 houses of Roma located on Chitila Triaj Street, Chitila neighbourhood – Bucharest. One day before, the Roma in question had been informed, verbally, that their houses would be destroyed.

A Romani CRISS team went to the scene and ascertained that community policemen (which came in a bus and 10 cars, including special intervention forces), gendarmes and representatives of District 1 Mayorality had undertaken the action. Initially, the community police denied access to Romani CRISS team in the area, although they were on public road and at approximately 500 m from the scene.

An approximate number of 50 Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity whose houses had been demolished were not allowed to take back anything from their own homes, not even their identity papers. All of their belongings were picked up by the police (furniture, cloths, electronic appliances, etc), without even signing a proces-verbal.

"Where am I supposed to go from here? They destroyed my house, they got my wife out of the house, wearing thin cloths, out in this cold, with our 1 year-old child in her arms and they didn't even let my son to put on some shoes. They even threw out my food" – Zamfir Zamfirel said (a Roma whose house was demolished).

The Roma declare they have been beaten up and threatened; a police officer hit a Roma person in the eye with the gun stock and a member of Romani CRISS organisation got him to the hospital. Another person was taken by the ambulance to Matei Bals hospital.

Romani CRISS expresses its concern regarding the abusive demolition of Roma houses, especially when the houses are destroyed without prior written summons, without irrevocable

Court orders and when outside the thermometers show a -15 °C degree temperature. Moreover, no alternative housing was provided, though mandatory under international legislation.

Russia

Arkhangelsk 2004-6

The group of Kelderash Romani families involved in the dispute arrived from Volgograd in 2004, following their leader, Khulupij Bakalaevich Gomon. . Before the families moved in, Gomon made arrangements for the necessary permits and by September of that same year the families obtained legal permission to rent their current parcels of land, which are located in the Noviposyolok region. The permit was signed by Arkhangelsk's mayor at the time, Nilov, and other local authorities.

Danskoy, the new mayor demands that the courts not only demolish the Roma's homes, but expel them from their lands completely.

Regardless of the temporary nature of these houses, it is not disputed that they were illegally constructed. Nonetheless, the Russian legal system clearly stipulates that it is possible to legalize homes with such a status in order to protect their residents. The North-West Center of Social and Legal Protection of Roma, itself, has provided legal assistance to Romani families in the Novgorodskaya Oblast and Leningradskaya Oblast regions, whose homes were in a similar situation.

In November 2004 the Roma's attorneys, Maria Nosova and local Margarita Golenisheva, won the court case by alleging that the construction of illegal houses is not reason enough to evict the Romani families since they were legally granted to the right to inhabit their properties. The mayor's legal team then changed its strategy upon realizing that it could not win the case on the grounds of illegal construction of homes alone. The mayor's team proceeded to declare that the contract which granted lands to the Roma in the first place was not valid because it did not properly adhere to the legal procedures necessary in such an action. Furthermore, they claimed that although the administration itself was to blame for this mistake, it was still necessary for the Roma to abandon their land, since it was not obtained by means of a proper contract.

In early 2005 the court ruled in favor of the administration, and by summer of that year it declared that the illegal homes must be demolished, but that they must be demolished by the Roma themselves. The ruling, however, forbade the administration from demolishing these homes by force. Not surprisingly, the Roma did not demolish their homes, preferring instead to pay a fine each time the town bailiff checked whether the homes still stood or not. In September the mayor went to court once again, this time demanding that the houses should thus be forcibly demolished. At this point the mayor's team also began to prosecute each Romani household individually, denying that they should be treated as a community.

The individual court cases began in October 2005 when the mayor sued the Gomon household. Although the court initially ruled in favor of the mayor and declared that Gomon's house must be forcibly destroyed, this decision was soon overturned by a higher court, which upheld that such an action against the Romani families was not permissible.

In spring 2005, the court cases also drew the attention of Russian ombudsman, Vladimir Lukin, who voiced the opinion that racial discrimination can have no place in such legal proceedings. Furthermore, since the end of 2004 several human rights organizations had already begun taking notice of the discriminatory actions being taken against the Roma. Such organizations included the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in Paris, the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) in Budapest, the Moscow-Helsinki Group in Moscow, and of course the North-West Center of Social and Legal Protection of Roma in Saint Petersburg, all

of which protested that the legal actions being brought by the mayor of Arkhangelsk against the Roma were discriminatory in nature. They also pointed out that it is plainly inhumane to evict entire families with small children from their homes just before winter, and that furthermore, the Russian government is bound to a number of national and international human rights agreements which state that evictions of this sort must be avoided to the furthest degree possible.

**Kaliningrad
July, 2006**

From May 29 to June 2, authorities bulldozed 37 houses belonging to Roma families in the village of Dorozhnoe, in Russia's Kaliningrad region and set fire to the ruins.

Over 100 of the displaced Roma, who had lived legally for years in their homes, are currently in tents and other temporary shelters and are being threatened with physical expulsion from their land. Others have fled elsewhere or been expelled from the area. This situation is aggravated by the severe weather conditions in the Kaliningrad region at this time of the year

Regional authorities began their eviction campaign by initiating court proceedings to have the Roma families' ownership of their homes declared illegal. An attorney with the Justice Initiative and local counsel appeared before the local high court to assist the families in securing legal title to their properties. But the court issued decisions on May 3, 2006 rejecting the families' claims and opening the door to the forced evictions that would follow.

The Justice Initiative then filed a request for interim measures with the European Court of Human Rights, which was denied. The Justice Initiative will pursue an application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of several of the families.

Practically all the people living in Dorozhny were registered in their houses, which together with the land, were given to them by the Soviet authorities at the end of 1960s, in virtue of a Decree of the USSR Supreme Council that abolished nomadism. In 2001 the local regional court allowed Roma to register the documents for the land. This decision was annulled after an intervention by the new governor of the Kaliningrad region, Georgy Boos on TV, stating that he disapproved of the criminal record of the village and said that he would "eliminate it with fire".

The court then decided to demolish the houses. The local authorities are now preparing the land for the auction sales, which will take place soon.



After 40 houses were demolished more than 150 people, including small children, were thrown into the streets. They are all the citizens of Russian Federation and all of them had proper registration in Dorozhny.. No compensation was offered to the families. Forced to live under the open sky people have built for themselves tents that are regularly put down by the local militia. Authorities try to make Roma go to the distant villages of the Kaliningrad region, but in every such place an anti-gypsy media campaign took place.. As it turns out the Roma have no place to go now. At any moment militia can force them to go to theses remote places (200 –300 km from Kaliningrad, whereas Dorozhny was only 2 km away).





Evictions are also taking place in **Iskitim (Novosibirsk region), Ulianovsk and Yaroslavl.**

**Serbia
Belgrade, January, 2005**

According to ERRC research, conducted in partnership with the Belgrade-based non-governmental organisation Minority Rights Center (MRC), ninety-eight Romani families, including displaced Roma from Kosovo, living in Belgrade's Blok 28 and Tosin Bunar settlements, were presented with eviction orders. The local government and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights stated that the evictions would be postponed. According to ERRC/MRC research, the eviction order presented to the Romani inhabitants of the Tosin Bunar settlement were ordered to dismantle the settlement themselves and restore the area to its original form because they had built their homes on private property without permission. The area is owned by a private company, which tried to evict the Romani families several times in two years. As of the end of January 2005, several homes in the Blok 28 settlement had been destroyed and the residents had moved to another area in the same settlement, according to ERRC/MRC research. No evictions had yet taken place in the Tosin Bunar settlement.

Slovakia
Kosice, June, 2005

About 40 Roma, including women and children, were forced out of an abandoned apartment building on 15 June, 2005, in Kosice, Slovakia by a private security agency, reported the Slovak daily newspaper SME. After all the residents had been forced to leave, the building was partially demolished to prevent their return, leaving the families out on the streets.

The building, owned by Slovak National Railroad company ZSR, was probably originally built as housing for employees of the railroad, but had fallen out of use. Roma families had forced their way in and been squatting in the building for at least 10 years, although one man claimed to have moved in 18 years ago following the destruction of his house in a nearby village.

Filled with illegal residents, the building was something of an eyesore in the Kosice community. Without any public services, trash and sewage had built up around the building, causing neighbors to complain. Although some residents had been granted legal rights to live there, the illegal squatters far outnumbered the legal residents, and eventually the city moved all of the legal residents to legal housing, leaving the building entirely occupied by squatters.

Under pressure from the municipality, ZSR had tried to rid itself of the building in 2003, contracting it out to a private company, who was eventually supposed to buy the building. When the deal fell through a few weeks ago, ZSR made the decision to rid themselves of the problem the quick and dirty way: evict the residents and destroy the building. Residents were given notice to leave by June 14th; upon their failure to leave, a security company was hired to escort them out.

Neither ZSR or the city of Kosice has taken responsibility for what will happen to the now homeless families. When SME journalists asked a spokeswoman for the city what would happen to the Roma families, she replied; "they have to find housing for themselves. All of them had a permanent address on record somewhere else, so they should return to those addresses. The city is not the owner of the building and we are not responsible."

While some of the former residents claimed that they would move in with family or friends in the Lunik IX district, a well-known slum area, others stated that they would remain on the streets. During the night, they had already moved back behind the skeleton of the building.

Turkey
2006

Ankara
Çinçin district

Gültepe (Çinçin) district of Ankara Aldındağ Municipality is mostly inhabited by Roma. Altındağ Municipality is intending to construct a total of 776 flats in four blocks on 48.173 m² of land as part of an urban transformation project. As part of the project the municipality demolished the houses of around 170 Roma and a further destruction of 400 houses is planned. The Municipality has finalized talks with the Housing Administration for a 14 storey apartments project (**August 2006**)

Eređli

The Municipal Council decided to demolish, a two-storey building in the Filtepe street of the Müftü Quarter in Zonguldak Blacksea / Eređli, in which 45 people from 6 different Roma families were living. There was resistance against eviction on the part of the occupants but the municipal teams took out the personal effects from the apartments, and demolished the building. **(26 July 2005)**

Bursa Kamberler

The Osmangazi Municipality of Bursa Province is demolishing houses in the Kamberler Quarter where Roma citizens are residing to make way for a "History and Culture Park". So far, more than 150 buildings have been expropriated by Osmangazi Municipality. The municipality has stated that an area of about 17 thousand square meters has been acquired for demolition, and added that around 13 trillion Liras for expropriation has so far been spent in compensation to put the project into practice in the district.. **(21 July 2006)**

İstanbul Kuştepe

The Housing Administration (TOKİ) is launching a slum transformation Project in Kuştepe where Roma live, in virtue of a protocol signed with the Şişli Municipality and the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. 228 flats will be built on a 12 thousand m² of land which is identified as a pilot region. Roma dwellers of Kuştepe who have lived there for 30 years are worried about what kind of flats TOKİ will build and whether they would be sent elsewhere. say; ". **(August 2006)**

İstanbul Küçükbakkalköy

As part of the Urban Transformation Project the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality has pulled down 120 houses in Kadıköy Küçükbakkalköy where Roma people were living. Roma reluctant to evacuate their houses got into a fight with the police teams. The Roma living in those houses had been notified of the demolition two months earlier. Teams of the Metropolitan Municipality, hundreds of municipal police officers, Kadıköy police teams as well as Rapid Force teams accompanied the demolition. **(July 2006)**

İstanbul Gaziosmanpaşa district

Teams attached to İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality arrived at the barracks in the Cebeci Quarter in Gaziosmanpaşa, and pulled down 20 houses where Roma people were living. Roma people and their children went up on the roofs and demonstrated against the teams. The Roma people demonstrating were detained by the police, and the little children and elderly in the barracks were carried out by the municipal teams. The police conducted searches in the pulled-down barracks as well as the surrounding houses and detained around 30 people for not having ID cards. **(13 June 2006)**

İstanbul Kağıthane

11 houses inhabited by Roma in Gültepe The Roma tried to resist and set their houses on fire to prevent the destruction. Some of the dwellers stepped into their houses during the fire in order to rescue some of their belongings. House owners will be paid by the Municipality 2-7 thousand YTL by the Municipality for the cost of the debris. **(May 2006)**

United Kingdom

England Dale Farm 20 August, 2005

The G&TLRC is urging **Basildon Council to halt plans for a forcible eviction of Travellers at Dale Farm and consider the alternatives.** The Coalition has backed moves by Basildon Labour Group leader Nigel Smith who has called for the Audit Commission and Basildon Council's external auditors PKF to step in and block the Conservative-led administration from releasing an estimated £1.9million required to finance the eviction.

The Coalition calls upon Malcolm Buckley (council leader) to postpone this action until a solution to the issue and alternative sites is found. Representatives have been in contact with officials from the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and urged John Prescott to override the Council's plan for confrontation on grounds of the safety of site residents and damage such action will have on community relations.

It has been suggested that English Partnerships could help the Council identify suitable land for development . Basildon Council could also access new funding for site development and upgrading existing encampments.

In response to a House of Commons debate sponsored by local MP John Baron, the ODPM Minister, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, last month announced new measures to address the lack of Gypsy and Traveller sites across the country. The Government has created a £56 million loan scheme administered by the Housing Corporation to enable Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords to construct new sites.

Basildon is in a prime position to access these funds. The G&TLRC and other groups are urging the Council to work with Registered Social Landlords in the Essex area and site construction advisors to investigate local options.

Travellers were advised by the Government to buy their own land and set up their own caravan parks. Many have done so. But the catch is that you cannot get planning permission to reside in your own caravan on your own land. Councils in Britain refuse permission to Gypsies nine out of ten times.

Evictions have become worse since the coming into prominence of the private bailiff company, Constant & Co. Mr Constant's firm has earned millions of euro moving families on and carrying out large scale evictions from land owned by Gypsies.

One example was the eviction by Constant for Chelmsford Borough Council of 20 families from their own Meadowlands Caravan Park, in January 2004. In the course of this, conducted with the help of riot police, Kathy Buckland's mobile-home was burned, another caravan burned, much property needlessly destroyed.

The same has happened to many hundreds of families in other parts of England, Scotland and Wales. Official figures show 3,000 families have nowhere legal to live.

At Twin Oaks Farm, owned by members of the Sheridan clan, a police-led eviction commenced at 4 am on 6 January last year. Again property was burned, including the chalet of 71-year-old Patrick William Sheridan, whose wife Ann was due to go into hospital that day - and the Hertsmere Borough Council knew this.

The police escorted families driven out of Twin Oaks Farm from Hertfordshire over the border into Essex. Most of them then took refuge at Dale Farm, in the Basildon district.

Dale Farm is currently the largest Travellers' community in the UK. It was started in the 1970s when Basildon District Council, under a Labour Party administration, gave planning permission to some 40 families.

With evictions taking place like that at Twin Oaks and Meadowlands, "internal refugees" began to arrive in increasing numbers at Dale Farm..

The recent extension of Dale Farm has taken place mostly on land which was previously a licensed scrapyards. Hundreds of old wrecked car bodies were piled there. They have been removed by the Sheridans and replaced by well-kept yards, with ornamental walls and gates, neat new chalets and mobile homes, and new caravans.

The response of Basildon council has been to refuse all planning applications and issue countless enforcement notices.

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott has helped Dale Farm by granting two years "temporary" stay. This expired in May 2005.

In June last year, the council's Development Control Committee recommended the expenditure of up to £3 million (roughly five million euros) to bulldoze Dale Farm and "return it to greenbelt".

This recommendation was endorsed by the full council, with a majority of just four votes. Both the Labour Party and Liberal Party members are opposed to forced eviction.

Labour Party head in Basildon Nigel Smith says force should not be used and the expenditure of so much money to "restore" a small area of greenbelt is disproportionate. He says the decision "could be racially tainted".

Meanwhile, the Commission for Racial Equality has joined with Dale Farm families in a Judicial Review of Basildon council's decision (due to be heard on 14 March). And fresh planning appeals were due for hearing, starting 21 February.

The constant threat of eviction is causing enormous stress to all the families at Dale Farm, in addition to those in two smaller Travellers' communities at Five Acre Farm and Hoverfields Avenue. The total number of people involved is over 1,000.

If the eviction took place, an entire school, Crays Hill Primary School, where all the children but one are from Dale Farm, would close. Everyone, the old and sick, the young and vulnerable, would be thrown onto the road with nowhere legal to live. They would end up in

caravans on a supermarket car-park or side of a dangerous road.

The Brentwood, Billericay and Wickford Primary Care Trust has issued a statement warning an eviction will result in violence and that women and children will be physically injured. In addition, the children witnessing such violence, including the levelling of their homes, will suffer psychological damage.

This warning has been considered but overruled by Basildon council in favour of "preserving" a few acres of so-called greenbelt land.

The UK Government has again intervened with a proposal from Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott for an alternative piece of land to be provided for all the families at Pitsea, a village on the other side of Basildon. The response by John Baron MP has been to collect 5,000 names on a petition against this proposal, despite the fact that the land at Pisteas is in a "brownfield" zone set aside for industry - and is not in the "greenbelt".

However, it must be said that the families at Dale Farm, who have invested so much in creating a community there, do not want to have their clan-home split into two. For half of Dale Farm is now "legal" and half is regarded as "illegal". Their hope is that Mr Prescott can be persuaded on appeal, supported by an international petition by the IAI, to grant permanent planning permission and save them from the bulldozer.

Scotland
Bobbin Mill, Pitlochry
July, 2006

Bobbin Mill was the setting for the "Tinker Experiment Programme" which has lasted for 60 years. Bobbin Mill residents are living in worse conditions today in 2006 than they were when first put into the "Experimental" programme in 1947.

The accommodation consisted of a 60ft x18ft wooden hut to be made into 4 dwellings. In addition the cheapest price was agreed to be used in their construction.

As families grew they were forced to move from the huts into caravans, which the families had to provide themselves. Water, sanitation, electricity or indeed a road, which are fundamentally taken for granted and enjoyed by the wider community was never deemed a necessity for the "Tinker Experiment" families of Bobbin Mill.

The families who have been used for the "Tinker Experiment" are the tenants of the local authority. We feel the local authorities have been negligent in their duty of care towards the families in the "Tinker Experiment" programme.

Miss Rosanna McPhee and Mr Shamus McPhee have both received a notification of a warrant issued against them by Perth & Kinross Council for "Non payment of Council Tax". Mr & Miss McPhee have been unemployed for a number of years due to ill health brought on by the appalling living conditions they were forced to endure.

The McPhees have both stated they indeed filled in documentation to the effect they were both out of work and asked to claim the benefit for rent charges etc,

UKAGW has now requested the Scottish Executive to use their good offices to treat the matter of notification of warrants of non payment of council tax against Mr & Miss McPhee with the utmost urgency and have these warrants withdrawn.

Mr McPhee Senior was a war hero (Burma Star) of the Second World War serving under Lord Mountbatten in the Royal Navy. His reward for serving his country was along with his family to be put, along with his family, into a "Tinker Experiment Programme".

r