

URGENT ACTION

FORCED EVICTIONS IN LAGOS STATE MUST STOP

Over 4000 residents of Otodogbame waterfront community in Lagos, Nigeria were on 26 March forcibly evicted from their homes by Lagos State officials. No notice was issued to the residents prior to the forced eviction. Several residents were injured during the incident as police used excessive force.

Officials of the Lagos Task Force made up of Lagos State agencies, on 26 March forcibly evicted thousands of **residents of Otodogbame waterfront community** in Lagos, Nigeria. This is the third time residents in the area were being forcibly evicted after Lagos State authorities evicted over 30,000 residents on 9 and 10 November 2016 and several others on 17 March. Residents had rebuilt their homes after the November 2016 forced evictions.

Without notice, the Task Force officials and armed police arrived in Otodogbame with a bulldozer at about 8:00 in the morning. Residents formed human chains to protect their houses. In response, police fired teargas and shot in the air, forcing residents to run to safety. Several people were injured during the incident as police used the butts of their guns to beat up the residents as they fled. A woman was injured when a teargas canister hit her back. The Lagos State Task Force officials demolished a few of the remaining houses in the community. This is against an existing court order issued on 26 January by a Lagos State High Court preventing any further demolitions in Otodogbame community. Five women and three men, including an elderly man above 70 years who could no longer walk as a result of the beating he received were arrested during the demolitions. All eight were eventually released after about 10 hours in detention.

Since 2000, more than two million people have been forcibly evicted from their homes in informal settlements and waterfront communities across Lagos State.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned with the continued forced eviction of residents of Otodogbame community by Lagos State authorities which has already rendered thousands of people homeless and left them vulnerable to a range of other human rights violations.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on the Lagos State government to immediately end the continued intimidation, assault, harassment and forced eviction of Otodogbame community residents;
- Urging them to respect the existing court order and ongoing mediation process and halt the demolition of any of the Lagos waterfront communities;
- Calling on them to immediately provide alternative housing and emergency support for those rendered homeless, and medical care for the injured during the attack;
- Urging them to conduct an independent investigation into the excessive use of force by police during the eviction in Otodogbame and bring those found responsible to justice in fair trials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 MAY 2017 TO:

Governor of Lagos State

Governor Akinwunmi Ambode

Twitter: @AkinwunmiAmbode

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Akinwunmi

i.Ambode

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Commissioner

Sir Hon. Tpl. Wasiu Anifowoshe,

Lagos State Ministry of Physical

Planning & Urban Development

Alausa Secretariat

Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

Salutation: **Hon. Commissioner**

And copies to:

Acting Executive Secretary National

Human Rights Commission

Mrs. Oti Ovrawah

National Secretariat Ilubirin

No 19 Aguiyi Ironsi Street Maitama

P.M.B. 444Garki

Abuja, Nigeria

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. His Excellency Olukunle Akindele Bamgbose, Acting High Commission for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigeria House 9 Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5BX Phone 020 7839 1244 Fax 020 7839 8746 chancery@nigeriahc.org or information@nigeriahc.org.uk or hc@nigeriahc.org.uk Salutation: Your Excellency

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This forced eviction was the third eviction of the community since November 2016. Over 30,000 thousand residents of Otodo Gbame, Ilubirin and Ebute Ikate waterfront communities in Lagos State were forcibly evicted by Lagos State authorities on 9 and 10 November 2016 respectively. A Lagos State High Court in an interim ruling made on 26 January 2017, stated that the forced eviction of Otodogbame community which took place on 9-10 November 2016 amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and was a violation of the right to dignity enshrined in Section 34 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The judge then ordered the Lagos State government and residents of Otodogbame to attempt mediation through the Lagos State Multi-Door Courthouse.

Lagos State authorities on 17 March defied the existing court order as well as an ongoing mediation process and demolished homes that had been rebuilt in Otodogbame waterfront community after the November 2016 demolitions. The police fired gunshots and used teargas to disperse residents. More than 4,700 people lost their homes and livelihoods.

In September 2015, approximately 10,200 residents of Badia-East community in Ijora area of Lagos were forcibly evicted, and many of them remain homeless and dependent on family and friends. In September 2016, residents of Ilubirin community were also forcibly evicted from their homes without prior notice. The state government is yet to provide any compensation or resettlement to evictees from these demolitions.

The Lagos State authorities stated that the forced evictions and demolitions in the waterfront communities is because of the environmental risks these waterfront communities. Over 40 communities and tens of thousands of residents are currently at risk of imminent eviction across the state.

Nigeria is a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and other international and regional human rights treaties, which require it to realize the right to adequate housing, and to prevent and refrain from carrying out forced evictions.