

URGENT ACTION

THOUSANDS FORCIBLY EVICTED, MORE AT RISK

Over 30,000 thousand residents of Otodo Gbame, Lagos State, south west Nigeria were forcibly evicted by policemen and Lagos state government officials on 9 and 10 November. Hundreds of thousands more living in other settlements along creeks and waterfronts in Lagos State are at risk of forced evictions.

Over 30,000 thousand residents of Otodo Gbame, a waterfront community in Lagos State were forcibly evicted by Lagos State authorities on 9 and 10 November. Eyewitnesses reported that there was an existing communal "scuffle" which escalated on the morning of 9 November, and resulted in a fire. Although it is not clear how this fire started, eyewitnesses stated that police officers at the scene did not attempt to stop the fire. Rather, they chased away residents who attempted to put out the fire. A statement by police said they intervened to "restore calm". The fire burned till about 1.30 pm that day. The police and a demolition team returned at about 11.30 pm that night with a bulldozer. Residents say that the police used the bulldozer to demolish their homes, they set some houses on fire, while also shooting sporadically in the air in order to scare people away and to forcibly evict them. This continued till the afternoon of Thursday 10 November. Residents told Amnesty International that authorities did not serve them with any eviction notice. These forced evictions happened despite a court order issued on 7 November preventing Lagos State authorities from demolishing structures in waterfront communities in Lagos State.

The forced evictions come in the wake of an announcement by the Lagos State Governor on 9 October that there were plans to demolish all irregular structures along the State's waterfronts to improve security. There has been no consultation with the affected residents on these plans, which leaves hundreds of thousands of residents in waterfront communities in Lagos State at risk of becoming homeless and vulnerable to a range of other human rights violations.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urging the Lagos State government to immediately announce a halt to all planned demolitions of waterfront communities in the state;
- Urging them to, as a matter of urgency, investigate the fire incident that destroyed people's houses and structures and launch an inquiry into the events that led to the forced eviction of over 30,000 people in Otodo Gbame community;
- Calling on them to ensure that all legal and procedural safeguards are put in place prior to any evictions, including genuine consultation with all those affected on alternatives to evictions, adequate notice, legal remedies, compensation, and provision of alternative housing for those who cannot provide for themselves;
- Calling on them to provide immediate relief supplies, medical care, alternative adequate housing and compensation to evicted residents including those from Otodo Gbame communities;
- Urging them to establish a moratorium on mass evictions until regulations to ensure that evictions comply with international standards are in place.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 JANUARY 2017 TO:

Governor of Lagos State

Governor Akinwunmi Ambode

Twitter: @AkinwunmiAmbode

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/Akinwunmi.Ambode

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Physical Planning & Urban Development, Lagos State

Sir Hon. Tpl. Wasiu Anifowoshe,

Ministry of Physical Planning & Urban

Development, Lagos State

Alausa Secretariat Ikeja, Lagos

Nigeria

Salutation: Hon. Commissioner

And copies to:

The Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission

Professor Bem Angwe

National Secretariat

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, 020 7839 1244, Fax 020 7839 8746 chancery@nigeriahc.org or information@nigeriahc.org.uk or hc@nigeriahc.org.uk Salutation: Your Excellency

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since April 2016, cases of kidnapping and abductions have increased in Lagos State. In a bid to halt the rising trend and improve security, the authorities have decided to demolish irregular structures in all waterfront communities in the state.

Lagos State Governor, Akinwunmi Ambode visited Ilubirin, a waterfront community on 9 October. During the visit, he stated that demolition of all shanties in Lagos would commence in the next seven days. Amnesty International received confirmation of these plans from the Public Relations Officer of Lagos State Building Control Agency who told Amnesty International that they would demolish all the shanties along the waterfronts.

On the official Lagos State government website, the Commissioner for Information Steve Ayorinde said: "The government has taken adequate steps to stem the tide of kidnapping in the State, noting that in line with the directive of the State Governor, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, plans have been concluded to commence the demolition of illegal structures erected across the state waterfronts.

Residents of Ilubirin community were forcibly evicted from their homes and their houses demolished on 15 October. To date, the evicted residents of these communities have not been provided with any assistance, compensation or alternative housing.

On 7 November, the Lagos State High Court granted an injunction preventing the State Government from proceeding with the demolitions until the case filed by the residents against the State Government is heard on 6 December.

Over 30,000 thousands of residents of Otodo Gbame community on 9 and 10 November watched in horror as their homes and possessions were destroyed as they were forcibly evicted. Residents of the community fled in confusion, some plunged into the sea as they ran. The incident was wrongly reported as a "scuffle" between youths in Otodo Gbame and youths in a neighbouring community and that the police only intervened to "restore calm".

More than two million people have been forcibly evicted from their homes in different parts of Nigeria since 2000. These evictions are carried out without adequate prior consultation, adequate notice and compensation or alternative accommodation. Most were already marginalized and many had lived for years without access to clean water, sanitation, adequate health care or education.

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. The state government is yet to provide any compensation or resettlement to these evictees.

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.