
2nd August 2008

Mr. Aziz Yeniay
President
Küçükçekmece Municipality
Istanbul

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Re: Respecting the human and housing rights of all residents at Ayazma (Istanbul).

I am writing to you on behalf of the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI), the international network of social organizations (inhabitants' associations, tenants' unions, homeless and poorly sheltered people's committees, housing co-operatives and social centres, volunteers' and migrants' associations), which for many years has been committed to the defence of housing rights 'without frontiers'. Furthermore, I belong to the UN-Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE).

Our organization received very disturbing information from the Popular Coordination on Housing rights, the Human Rights Associations and other civil society organisations concerning the violent evictions of approximately 900 families carried out in November 2007 in the Ayazma area. The clearing out, which took place in the middle of the winter, without adequate warning despite the presence of children, women and older persons, showed discrimination through the following: on one hand, the homeowners were offered alternative solutions; on the other hand, the tenants did not receive any relocation alternatives or compensation.

Invited by the Ayazma residents' association on 28th July 2008, I was able to directly verify that approximately 110 persons, of which 73 are children, continue to live in the area in shanties rebuilt over the rubble of the previous eviction, with only one source of running water and one shared toilet.

These very people, almost all of whom are unemployed, comprise 18 families that are continuously threatened with eviction by the authorities, whilst the children are unable to regularly attend school.

For these reasons, I would like first of all to remind you that this situation violates the following articles of national and international law:

- Article 57, Right to housing of the Turkish Constitution.
- Article 12, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948.
- Article 11, (Right to housing) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Turkey on 23 December 2003. In particular the General Comments n. 4 and 7.
- Article 27, Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Turkey on 4 May 1995.

- Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, ratified by Turkey on 18 May 1954.
- Revised European Social Charter, ratified by Turkey on 27 September 2006 (alone or in combination with Article E (non-discrimination):
- Article 16 (Right of the family to social, legal and economic protection)
- Article 30 (Right to protection against poverty and social exclusion)
- Article 31 (Right to housing)

Moreover, such violations are not in any way justifiable, as this represents a relatively small number of cases when compared to the capacity of the Turkish Government to produce decent housing solutions.

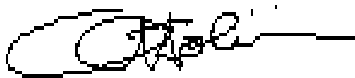
For these reasons we support the demands of the Popular Coordination for Housing Rights for all the violated rights to be respected immediately, or in other words:

1. An end to any attempt to evict by force
2. The immediate provision of water and emergency sanitation
3. The recognition and fulfilment of the right of all families still living in Ayazma to be relocated with their consent to decent, affordable housing.

We are ready to work together on implementing these demands, but if they are ignored or not dealt with immediately, we are determined to launch a widespread international publicity and solidarity campaign.

Finally, we would not hesitate in appealing to the UN-AGFE, the UN Committee on Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and to the European Committee of Social Rights.

Respectfully yours.



Cesare Ottolini
IAI coordinator