

Roma Housing in Serbia

May, 21 2012, Skopje

Roma settlements – general picture

- Approximately more than 600 settlements
- Not classified (slums, settlements that could be legalized, etc.)
- One of the activities in Strategy for the improvement of the position of Roma in Serbia

Acess to other rights for inhabitants of informal settlements

- Permanent/temporary residence
- Health care
- Social protection
- Registration in birth registry books
- Access to energy
- **...**

Governement of the Republic of Serbia activities

- Legalization of informal Roma settlements slowly ongoing process
- Improvement of living conditions in informal Roma settlements – initiative from NGOs/ some of the local municipalities
- Social housing not enough for Roma housing needs
- □ Relocation (eviction) of informal Roma settlements that could not be improved/legalized – affected more than 3000 Roma

Evictions of informal Roma settlements – legal framework (1)

Difficulties

- Domestic legal framework does not stipulate procedures for conducting evictions of informal settlements
- Without safeguards
- Poor direct application of international standards (i.e. ICESCR, UN Guidelines on Development-based Evictions, etc.)

Evictions of informal Roma settlements – legal framework (2)

- Possibilities
 - Constitution of Republic of Serbia direct application of human rights standards
 - Recommendations from IOs and UN Treatybodies (CERD 2011, ECRI 2011, EC 2011)
 - ECtHR Case Law (Oneryildiz, Yordanova, etc.)

Forced evictions of informal Roma settlements:

- 17 since 2009 (affected more than 3000 Roma)
- All of them were conducted in Belgrade
- Not in accordance to international standards (ICESCR, ICERD, ECHR)

Eviction of informal Roma settlement Blok 72, Belgrade – example 1

- November 2011 March 2012
- Affected 33 families (app. 1/2 of them IDP families)
- Without prior plan of the eviction
- Involvement of the Directorate for Human and Minority Rights
- Consultation with families, workgroup positive steps!
- Without clear criteria for alternative accommodation

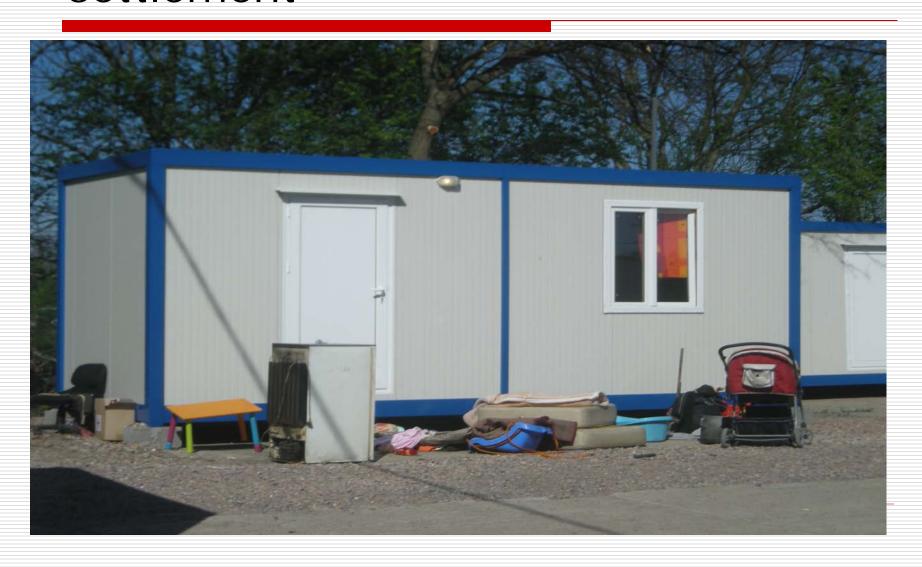
Eviction of informal Roma settlement Belvil, Belgrade – example 2

- March 2011 (2012) April 2012
- Affected approximately 250 families (1500 people)
- Non-transparent process
- Action plan for the eviction finished on the day of the eviction
- Conducted 10 days before the election, in the middle of school year and SWC strike
- Without consultations with inhabitants
- Without workgroup before the eviction

Eviction outcomes

- Violations of human rights standards
- Not adequate alternative accommodation 14.8 m²metal containers (5 persons)
- New segregated settlements far away from public services, on the outskirts of the city, exclusively for Roma housing
- No clear criteria for adequatte accomodation for evicted families

Alternative accomodation – Belvil settlement



Alternative accomodation – Belvil settlement



NGOs responses to forced evictions

- Direct actions during the evictions
- Strategic litigation
- Advocacy
- Platform for the right to adequatte housing – more that 60 NGOs

What should be done – NGO perspective

- Strong commitment for stopping all forced evictions
- Introduction of legal framework on evictions of informal settlements
- New budget funds for Roma housing improvement of housing conditions and legalizations
- Involvement of local Roma communities
- Stronger cooperation with international organizations and domestic NGOs



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