

Dear Members and Friends:

We have just received this urgent action request from our partners in India, the Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), about the demolitions of slums taking place locally. Your URGENT ACTION is required immediately. The details of the case, along with a sample letter for your convenience, are attached below.

Thanks,

Urgent Actions Team

Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN)-Habitat International Coalition (HIC)

E-mail: abalata@hlrn.org

Web: www.hlrn.org

Urgent Action Appeal: Pavement Community Faces Demolitions, India

45 houses, affecting approximately 225 persons, of the Baradevi Pavement Community in Sewri, Mumbai were forcefully demolished on the afternoon of 31 May 2010. The evictions of the pavement dwellers were carried forth by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) under the authority fo the Maharashtra State Government. All evicted residents are not considered eligible for the Mahatma Gandhi Pathakranti Yojana(MGPKY), a scheme that aims to clear slums from pavements along arterial roads with a plan to rehabilitate approximately dwellers from 45 roads across Mumbai.

The residents of Baradevi are informal workers engaged in washing cars, domestic work, construction work, driving vehicles, etc. They have been living in the said location for the past three decades and currently there is no known plan for road expansion or other development-based projects. A large number of the community consists of single women and widows who have now been rendered doubly vulnerable due to the forced evictions.

As the MGPKY recognizes the presence of the person's name consistently in the electoral lists of 1995 to 2009 as the only eligibility criteria for rehabilitation, about 72 % of the Baradevi Pavement Community has been rendered ineligible and are currently homeless due to the forced evictions.

No notice was served to the pavement dwellers prior to the demolitions and they have been threatened by the Ward Officer, Mr. H. Kale, that if they dare construct their homes again on that pavement, the BMC would confiscate all their belongings.

We demand that each and every one be rehabilitated under Mahatma Gandhi Pathakranti Yojana and all actions of forced evictions be stopped immediately.

We urge you to support this urgent action by sending protest letters (sample letter below) to the following persons:

Dr. Kishor Kshirsagar
Deputy Municipal Commissioner in charge of MGPKY
Fax : + 91 (0)22 2309-2158

Mr. Manukumar Srivastava
Secretary, Urban Development and Special Projects
Email : sec_ud2@maharashtra.gov.in , manukumarsrivastava@maharashtra.gov.in
Fax: +91 (0)22 2285-4573

Prof. Foujiya Tahasin Khan
Minister of State, General Administration
Email: stmin_homeur@maharashtra.gov.in

Mr. Ashok Chavan
Chief Minister, General Administration and Urban Development
Email: chiefminister@maharashtra.gov.in

Please copy all communication to: evictionwatch@yuvaindia.org

SAMPLE LETTER

RE: Demolition of Pavement Community at Baradevi, Sewri, Mumbai

Dear Dr. Kishor Kshirsagar:

We have been informed by our friends at the Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) about the forced evictions of the pavement community at Baradevi, Sewri, Mumbai on 31 May 2010.

45 houses, affecting approximately 225 persons of the Baradevi Pavement Community were forcefully demolished on the afternoon of 31 May. The demolitions were carried out by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Most of the pavement dwellers are considered ineligible for the Mahatma Gandhi Pathakranti Yojna(MGPKY), as they do not have the required document to prove residence/ eligibility. The said Yojna of the Maharashtra State Government is meant for the rehabilitation of the pavement dwellers and is applicable to 45 roads across Mumbai.

The residents of Baradevi are informal workers engaged in washing cars, domestic work, construction work, and driving vehicles. They have been living in the said location for the past three decades and currently there is no known plan for road expansion or

other development-based projects in this area. A large number of the community consists of single women and widows who have now been rendered doubly vulnerable due to the forced evictions.

As the MGPKY recognizes the presence of the person's name consistently in the electoral lists of 1995 to 2009 as the only eligibility criteria for rehabilitation, about 72 % of the Baradevi Pavement Community has been rendered ineligible and are currently homeless due to the forced eviction.

No notice was served to the pavement dwellers prior to the demolitions and they have been threatened by the Ward Officer, Mr. H. Kale, that if they dare to construct their houses again on that pavement, the BMC would confiscate all their belongings.

We would like to condemn this gross violation of the human rights of the affected community, in particular their right to adequate housing. The community has been rendered homeless because of the forced evictions. The Municipal Corporation needs to comply with India's national and international human rights commitments. It should also adhere to the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development based Eviction and Displacement.

The attempts to rehabilitate pavement dwellers in Mumbai need to be progressive so that no pavement dwellers are left out and rendered homeless. A rehabilitation policy needs to be put in place looking into the vulnerability of such population and also their livelihood needs.

We request you to stop the process of demolitions in pavements due to the Mahatma Gandhi Patakranti Yojana and rehabilitate all those who were rendered homeless in the Baradevi Pavement in Mumbai.

Regards,
Name
Address

C.C.:

Mr. Manukumar Srivastava
Secretary, Urban Development and Special Projects
Email : sec_ud2@maharashtra.gov.in , manukumarsrivastava@maharashtra.gov.in
Fax: +91 (0)22 2285-4573

Prof. Foujiya Tahasin Khan
Minister of State, General Administration
Email: stmin_homeur@maharashtra.gov.in

Mr. Ashok Chavan
Chief Minister, General Administration and Urban Development
Email: chiefminister@maharashtra.gov.in