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Re: Respect the human and housing rights of all residents at n. 19 Iasny Proezd in Moscow.

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 defense 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 Movement of Moscow Hostel Residents and the Institute for Collective Action (IKD,) concerning the threat of eviction facing people staying in hostels, in particular those resident at n. 19 Iasny Proezd in Moscow. On 24th and 25th June, the Moscow department of the Federal Service for the Enforcement of Sentences (FSIN) tried to evict them by force. Six families were forced out without a court order and without the involvement of superintendents from the Ministry of Justice (UPRAYV) who refused to carry out the evictions. Several people were beaten by the FSIN forces, and received injuries. Around a dozen people who came to help the residents were arrested for no reason. Excessive force was used, including against a member of the Moscow Duma, Sergei Mitrokhin, and against children.

It should be noted that the Moscow court of arbitration ruled on 15th September 2006 that the hostel in question should revert to the control of the city council. The FSIN is therefore attempting to take possession of the premises without a court order, which is unacceptable.

The residents - refugees and former employees of the "Smena" factory - have been living in the hostel for the last ten years or so, along with their families. They have the legal right to live there, and they should have the same right as the rest of the Russian population to take over the management of their residence - a right the Russian government enshrined in law in 2006.

The violent action of FSIN violates the housing right, and it interferes in the private life of families,

In particular, it violates the following articles of national and international law:

- Article 40, (Right to housing) of the Russian Constitution
- Article 12, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

- Article 11, (Right to housing) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by the Russian Federation on 16 October 1973.

- Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the Russian Federation on 16 August 1990:

Article 27

3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

- Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, ratified by the Russian Federation on 5 May 1998.
- Revised European Social Charter, signed by the Russian Federation on 14 September 2000 (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)

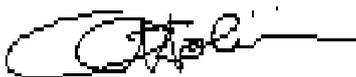
For these reasons we support the demands of the Movement of Moscow Hostel Residents supported by the Institute of Collective Action (IKD) for all the violated rights to be respected immediately, or in other words:

1. An end to any attempt to evict by force, and the right of those already evicted to return immediately to their homes.
3. The recognition of the transfer of the hostel to the Moscow city council, and the right of the residents to privatize their homes.
4. An enquiry into the actions of the Moscow department of FSIN, and in particular into the head of the branch, Mr A Gerbatch, who - according to the testimony of the residents - led the assaults.

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 wide scale 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