

Photo essay

Sri Lanka: Thousands of shanty dwellers to be evicted from central Colombo

28 December 2010

The following photo essay provides a glimpse into the harsh living conditions of shanty-dwellers in central Colombo, Sri Lanka. The pictures were taken by photojournalist Shantan Kumarasamy.

Over 70,000 families or more than 50 percent of central Colombo's population are to be removed and their homes demolished by the Sri Lankan government. The mass evictions are part of plans by President Mahinda Rajapakse to free-up nearly 390 hectares of prime inner city real estate and transform the country's capital into a South Asian financial hub.

The government has placed the Urban Development Authority and the Land Reclamation and Development Board—two civilian bodies—under the authority of the defence ministry, which has already deployed soldiers and police to forcibly carry out evictions.

A number of shanty dwellers, with the assistance of the Socialist Equality Party, have formed an Action Committee to Defend the Right to Housing (ACDRH) and issued an appeal to all workers and youth to support their struggle to protect their homes.



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