

A photograph of a demolition site. In the foreground, a large yellow excavator with a hydraulic arm is tearing down a multi-story building. Debris and dust are visible. In the background, a tall, modern apartment building with many windows stands against a clear blue sky. Some trees are visible between the demolition site and the background building.

FORCED EVICTIONS

GLOBAL CRISIS, GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

UN  HABITAT



FORCED EVICTIONS

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A Review Of the Status of Forced Evictions Globally Through the Work of the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions, Un-Habitat and Other International Actors



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD



The practice of forcibly evicting people from their homes and settlements is a growing global phenomenon and represents a crude violation of one of the most elementary principles of the right to adequate housing as defined in the Habitat Agenda and other international instruments. While many communities, grassroots organisations and civil society groups stand up for their rights, some governments at national, district and local levels evict people from their homes every day. These evictions are often carried out in the name of the common public good in order to make way for the economic development of both urban and rural areas. But the public good cannot be properly achieved without following due process and without providing housing alternatives that otherwise would minimize the impacts and losses incurred by those directly affected by evictions.

While UN-HABITAT recognizes and, indeed, advocates urban development and planning, and acknowledges that this may at times necessitate resettlement, it strongly emphasizes that such resettlement must be a last resort after consideration of all alternatives, and must be implemented both in accordance with international human rights law and in a sustainable and socially inclusive manner. The Housing Policy Section of UN-HABITAT develops tools and knowledge to help national authorities, particularly at the municipal level to devise more sustainable and inclusive urban policies that make provision for proper resettlement procedures.

This report reviews the status of forced evictions globally through the work of UN-HABITAT, the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions to the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, and other international actors. It describes and evaluates the important successes and significant challenges related to the prevention, monitoring and assessment of forced evictions. We need to drive forward the political, normative, and operational processes necessary to reverse the continuing increase in forced evictions globally. This report goes some distance towards improving our understanding of the phenomenon in its outline of five of the most common causes of forced evictions, namely: urban development; large scale development projects; natural disasters and climate change; mega-events; and, evictions related to economic forces and the global financial crisis.

Apart from providing a succinct global overview and analysis of the state of global evictions today, we also encourage readers to use the text as a practical tool to inform public policy decisions related to urban planning and development. It is important that we develop and implement sustainable alternatives to forced evictions which are grounded in a human rights based framework.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director
UN-HABITAT





LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ACR	Association of Climate Refugees (Bangladesh)
AGFE	Advisory Group on Forced Evictions
BMA	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
CBO	Community based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CLA	Space Launch Centre of Alcantara (Brazil)
COHAB	Municipal Company of Popular Housing (Brazil)
COHRE	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ECSR	European Committee of Social Rights
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (United States)
HIC	Habitat International Coalition
IAI	International Alliance of Inhabitants
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person/People
LAA	Land Acquisition Act (India)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MNLM	National Movement on the Struggle for Housing (Brazil)
NBA	Narmada Bachao Andolan (India)
NDRF	National Disaster Recovery Framework Working Group (United States)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NWDT	Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (India)
OG/HK	Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle (Zimbabwe)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OM	Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order)
RSG	Rivers State Government (Nigeria)
RSPPD	Rivers State Physical Planning and Development Law (Nigeria)
SACC	South Africa Council of Churches
SDI	Slum Dwellers International
SSP	Sardar Sarovar Projects (India)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WUF	World Urban Forum
ZLHR	Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The practice of forcibly evicting people from their homes is an egregious human rights abuse that in most cases could be prevented. Forced eviction targets the most marginalized and vulnerable populations, most often with far-reaching implications with respect to their housing, employment, education, physical and mental health, family life, culture, and overall well-being. Moreover, forced eviction deepens poverty, destroys communities, and irrevocably adversely impacts the future of millions of people.

Despite the persistence of this global phenomenon and its grave ramifications, it is too often overlooked by the international community. Forced evictions take place every day around the world. There are few human rights violations with such far reaching implications that continue to be perpetrated with relative impunity. Forced eviction is a global crisis, requiring global solutions through heightened attention and action, particularly by the international community.

This report critically analyzes the global phenomenon of forced eviction and presents this analysis with a view to informing public policy decisions related to urban planning, including how best to develop and implement

against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.” Forced eviction has been deemed *prima facie* incompatible with human rights and a gross violation of the human right to adequate housing by United Nations human rights bodies.

Concurrently, the report is clear that to address and remedy forced evictions requires collaboration, cooperation and often negotiation between multiple stakeholders including members of the affected communities and their associations and organizations, different levels of government, regional and international groups and human rights bodies.

Forced evictions are contrary to the principles articulated in the Habitat Agenda as well as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, in particular, Goal 7, Target 11: to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The United Nations has adopted a number of relevant guidelines and standards to define, clarify, and evaluate instances of forced eviction. These include: the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and

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