



PRESS RELEASE

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**New Report Highlights the Unending Crisis of Forced Evictions in India:
In 2021, Over 100 Houses Demolished Every Day, 24 People Evicted Every Hour;
Over One lakh People Already Evicted in 2022.
Nearly 1 Million People Faced Evictions in India in the Last Five Years.**

In 2021, over 36,480 houses were demolished and 207,106 people were forcibly evicted across India by governments – at all levels, reveals a new report by Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN). The report also finds that in 2022 (January to July), over 25,800 houses have already been demolished affecting 124,450 people across the country.

The report, '*Forced Evictions in India: 2021*', was released at a press conference in Delhi, today. It presents data and analysis on forced evictions and demolitions of the homes of the rural and urban poor across the country from January to July 2022. The launch of the report was followed by a panel discussion with independent experts, Miloon Kothari (*former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing*), and Anupradha Singh (*human rights lawyer, Lawyer's Alliance*). Testimonies of affected persons from Sultanpuri and Manglapuri, Delhi highlighted the challenges faced due to the demolition of homes.

Key Findings from HLRN's Report:

- 1) In the past year-and-a-half (1 January 2021 to 15 July 2022), the Indian government—at both the central and state levels—**demolished 62,330 houses, evicting over 331,560 persons**. The report expresses concern regarding the demolition of homes during the second and third waves of the Covid-19 pandemic.

IN THE YEAR 2021, ACROSS RURAL AND URBAN INDIA:

About 36,486 houses were demolished | At least 207,106 people were forcibly evicted

**At least 100 houses were destroyed daily; 567 people lost their homes per day; or
24 people evicted every hour.**

Around 13,750 people were evicted during the peak of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdowns in April and May 2021.

**IN 2022 (1 January 2022 to 15 July 2022), governments – at all levels,
demolished 25,800 houses, thus affecting over 124,450 persons.**

Currently, nearly 15 million people live under the threat of eviction and displacement across India.

The alarming figures presented in the report are a conservative estimate of the actual scale of the national eviction crisis, as they only reflect cases known to HLRN. The total number of people evicted from their homes as well as those under risk of eviction in India, therefore, is likely to be much higher.

- 2) '**Environmental**' projects, which include protection of riverbeds and conservation of forests resulted in the eviction of a majority of people (**57 per cent of people**) in 2021; Evictions were carried out for a range of other reasons, including:
 - 'Slum' clearance/'encroachment' removal/'city beautification' (**14.31 per cent** of affected persons);
 - Infrastructure and purported 'development' projects (**27.13 per cent** of affected persons);

- ‘Disaster management’ efforts (**1.63 per cent** of affected persons); and,
 - Other reasons such as military operations and conflict (**0.14 per cent** of total population affected).
- 3) In 2022, HLRN documented a worrying trend of the state demolishing homes as a **punitive measure** in gross violation of all human rights laws and standards, and disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.
 - 4) In 2021, **court orders**—including of the Supreme Court of India, state High Courts, and the National Green Tribunal—**resulted in the eviction of over 1 lakh persons**.
 - 5) At least **28 per cent** of affected persons, where information is available, **belong to historically marginalized groups**, including, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, nomadic communities, migrant workers, and religious minorities.
 - 6) In 2021, the majority of evicted persons (**59 per cent**) did not receive any rehabilitation from the government.
 - 7) In nearly all documented cases of forced eviction, state authorities have not complied with international human rights standards and guidelines, including the United Nations (UN) Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement.
 - 8) All incidents of forced eviction resulted in multiple **human rights violations**.
 - 9) Nearly **15 million people continue to live under the threat of eviction and displacement across India**.

Research by HLRN, over the last five years, indicates that **over one million people** (1,072,943) have faced forced evictions in India between January 2017 and July 2022, by governments – at all levels.

Recommendations:

Given the severity and magnitude of this unending eviction and displacement crisis, HLRN proposes the following urgent recommendations to the central and state governments –

- 1) Need for an **immediate moratorium on evictions for any reason**.
- 2) Strictly ensure that demolitions are not used by state authorities against communities as a means of meting out summary punishment.
- 3) Follow due process and ensure that **the free, prior, and informed consent** of all affected persons is taken before any eviction/ relocation/redevelopment/in situ upgrading project is finalized.
- 4) **Urgently provide alternative accommodation** to all evicted families who have been waiting to be rehabilitated for years. Ensure that the implementation of government schemes, including the Affordable Rental Housing Complex (ARHC), does not disrupt existing plans to rehabilitate displaced persons.
- 5) Recognize and uphold the **right to land of urban and rural communities**. Take immediate measures to provide security of tenure to all those living in conditions of insecurity in urban and rural areas, consistent with the requirement of international human rights instruments.

Forced evictions lead to displacement of families, loss of homes and livelihood, disruption of children’s education, severe impact on health, and physical and psychological trauma among other consequences. It disproportionately affects marginalized communities and divests them from accessing the most basic facilities, essential for a life with dignity. Housing and Land Rights Network hopes that this report will help draw attention to this unending crisis and that the recommendations presented will be implemented to bring about justice and restoration of the human rights of affected persons.

The report is available at: https://www.hlrn.org.in/documents/Forced_Evictions_2021.pdf

For more information, please contact: 99719-28737 | 97424-09048 | 98319-43885

Housing and Land Rights Network

X-54, Second Floor, Green Park, New Delhi – 110016, India

www.hlrn.org.in | @HLRN_India | contact@hlrn.org.in