



## PRESS RELEASE

New Delhi, 4 March 2024

### **More Than Half a Million People (5 Lakh) Evicted in India in 2023, The Highest in the Last Seven Recorded Years; Finds New Report on Evictions in India During 2022 and 2023**

Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), released a new report today, titled, *Forced Evictions in India: 2022 & 2023*, which highlights the unmitigated crisis of forced evictions in India and presents data and analysis on this persisting issue for the years 2022 and 2023. The report, which is the sixth in the series of HLRN's annual reports on evictions, **reveals a record increase** in the number of home demolitions in India and documents the grave impact of forced evictions on the urban and rural poor in the country.

#### **Key Findings from HLRN's Report:**

- 1) In the last two years (1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023), over **1.5 lakh houses** were demolished by state authorities in India—at the central, state, and local levels—thereby, resulting in the forceful eviction of over **7.4 lakh** people from their homes.

In 2023, data indicates that demolitions occurred at an unprecedented pace and magnitude, leading to the forced eviction of at least **515,752 (5 lakh) people** across the country and destruction of over **107,449 (1 lakh) homes**; **this is the highest recorded annual figure in the last seven years since HLRN began publishing this series of reports.**

ACROSS RURAL AND URBAN INDIA	
IN 2022	IN 2023
About <u>46,371 houses were demolished</u> At least <u>222,686 people were forcibly evicted</u>	About <u>107,449 houses were demolished</u> At least <u>515,752 people were forcibly evicted</u>
<i>Around 129 houses destroyed daily, 25 people evicted every hour.</i>	<i>Around 294 houses destroyed daily, 58 people evicted every hour.</i>
From 2017 to 2023, over 1.68 million (16.8 lakh) people have been forcibly evicted 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) In 2022 and 2023, the highest percentage of people (**58.7 per cent**) – were evicted under the guise of ‘slum’ clearance/‘encroachment’ removal/‘city beautification’ initiatives. Evictions were carried out for a range of other reasons, including:
  - Infrastructure and purported ‘development’ projects (**35 per cent** of affected persons);
  - ‘Environmental’ projects, forest protection, and wildlife conservation (**4.7 per cent** of affected persons);
  - ‘Disaster management’ efforts (**0.7 per cent** of affected persons); and,
  - Other reasons such as village conflicts, and demolition of government-constructed housing units (**0.9 per cent** of total population affected).

- 3) The National Capital Territory of Delhi recorded the most incidents of evictions (78) in 2022 and 2023. In 2023, around **2.8 lakh** people were evicted by various state authorities in Delhi, **the highest in any location in India in the year**.
- 4) In 2022 and 2023, **court orders**—including of the Supreme Court of India, state High Courts, and the National Green Tribunal—resulted in the eviction of over **2.9 lakh persons**.
- 5) In both years, at least **31 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 the majority of instances where information was available (**82 per cent** in 2023 and **58 per cent** in 2022), no rehabilitation was provided by the state to the affected persons.
- 7) In nearly all documented cases of forced eviction, state authorities have not complied with due process requirements laid down by the Indian courts and international human rights standards and guidelines, including the United Nations (UN) Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement. Consequently, all incidents of forced eviction resulted in multiple **human rights violations**.
- 8) Housing and Land Rights Network estimates that nearly **17 million people** continue to live under the threat of eviction and displacement across India, for various reasons.

### **Recommendations:**

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

- 1) Impose an **immediate moratorium on evictions for any reason**.
- 2) Ensure that due process is followed, and **free, prior, and informed consent** of all affected persons is taken before any eviction/relocation/redevelopment/in situ upgrading project is finalized. Issue standard operating procedures for all government agencies to follow before carrying out any act of demolition, based on prominent judgments of the High Court of Delhi (*Sudama Singh; Ajay Maken*) and United Nations (UN) Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement.
- 3) Strictly ensure that demolitions are not used by state authorities against communities as a means of meting out summary punishment.
- 4) **Urgently provide rehabilitation/alternative accommodation** to all evicted families, including those eligible families who have been waiting to be rehabilitated for years. *Justice delayed is justice denied!*
- 5) **Recognize and list all informal settlements** as legitimate clusters of housing to remove connotations of ‘illegality’ and ‘encroachment’, that adversely affects the residents and results in forced evictions.
- 6) Recognize and uphold the **right to adequate housing and 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.

Over the last seven years, data collected by Housing and Land Rights Network has demonstrated the extent and magnitude of the crisis of forced evictions in India and highlighted the impacts on over a million affected persons. The new report by HLRN indicates that the situation worsened in the last two years. The persistent acts of home demolition by state authorities deprives the affected persons, who are already marginalized, from accessing the most basic facilities, essential for a life with dignity. It leads to a rise in homelessness, landlessness, and impoverishment in the country. Housing and Land Rights Network hopes that this series of reports will continue to draw attention to this unrelenting issue and that the recommendations presented will be implemented to bring about justice to the affected persons across India.

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The report is available at: [https://hlrn.org.in/documents/Forced\\_Evictions\\_2022\\_2023.pdf](https://hlrn.org.in/documents/Forced_Evictions_2022_2023.pdf)

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

### **Housing and Land Rights Network**

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

[www.hlrn.org.in](http://www.hlrn.org.in) | @HLRN\_India | [contact@hlrn.org.in](mailto:contact@hlrn.org.in)