



STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

New Delhi, 10 December 2020

On Human Rights Day, Housing and Land Rights Network Calls for a Strong Human Rights Approach to the COVID-19 Recovery Process, with Housing at its Core

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed multiple faults in global systems, including of states and their safeguards for human rights to health, housing, food, water, work, education, sanitation, and social protection, among others. While the magnitude of the pandemic-induced emergency may vary across countries, it has greatly compounded vulnerabilities faced by already marginalized, excluded, and discriminated groups and communities everywhere. The long-term impacts of the pandemic, including recessions, will also disproportionately affect the most marginalized.

Despite the acute public health and economic crisis resulting from the pandemic, human rights violations continue to be perpetuated by states around the world. [Forced evictions](#) and displacement, landlessness, homelessness, agrarian distress, gender-based violence, attacks on civil liberties, and persecution and murders of human rights defenders have continued unabated. In many countries across the world, low-income communities face the imminent threat of eviction, loss of housing, and increased risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

On Human Rights Day, Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) reiterates the need for a strong human rights approach, with the right to adequate housing at its core, in the COVID-19 recovery process. We support the call of the United Nations (UN) and its human rights mechanisms to ‘recover better’ with a human rights-based approach. The pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of adequate housing to the protection of health and life, like never before. In this regard, we call for an urgent moratorium on evictions for any reason; durable solutions, along a continuum, to provide adequate housing with security of tenure to the most marginalized; improved economic and social protection measures, including for subsidized food, social security, employment guarantee, and a universal basic income; and, state accountability and a ‘housing first’ approach to end homelessness. We also recommend that states comply with their international human rights reporting obligations and include [rights-based COVID-19 response](#) measures in their reports to UN treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council for the Universal Periodic Review.

On this seventy-second anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, HLRN stresses the need for states to commit to the progressive realization of the human rights to adequate housing and land for all. As governments shift their focus to a post-COVID world, they must use the crucial lessons of this pandemic to redesign habitats based on principles of equity, gender equality, non-discrimination, and social, environmental, and climate justice. Only then would a ‘better recovery’ for all, as emphasized by the United Nations, be ensured.

Housing and Land Rights Network

G-18/1 Nizamuddin West, New Delhi – 110013, India

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