



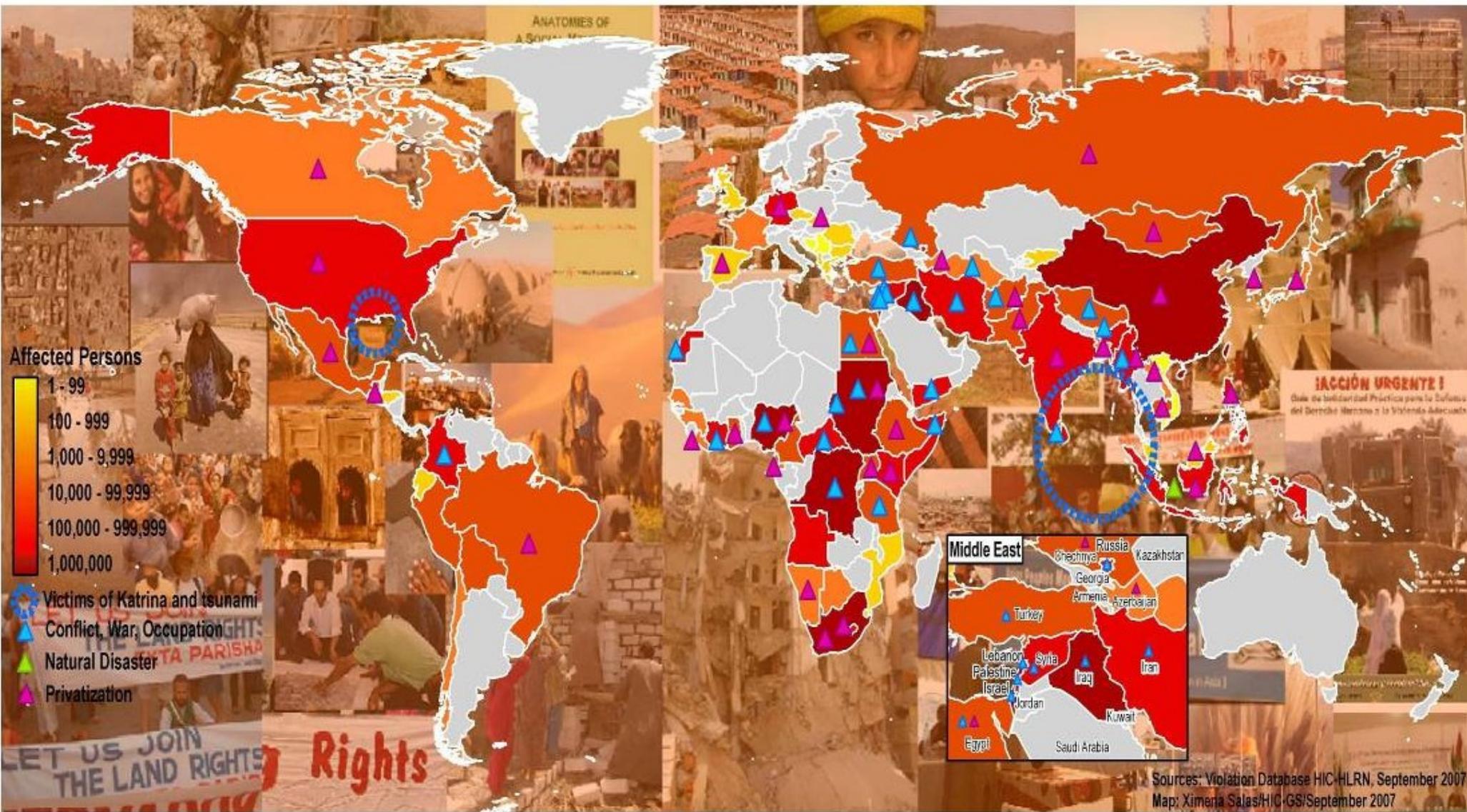
Victims of the Violation of Housing and Land Rights

Total of Victims per Country from 2004-2007

Violations in the Context of Privatization, Natural Disaster, Internal Conflict, War and Occupation

Habitat International Coalition (HIC)

Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN)



Sources: Violation Database HIC-HLRN, September 2007
Map: Ximera Salas/HIC-GS/September 2007



A Pattern of Persecution: The Growing Attack against Housing and Land Rights Defenders

A SOLIDARITY APPEAL TO END THE GLOBAL ATTACK ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

house/community demolition, forced eviction, dispossession,
use of force, and arbitrary arrest and detention

Over the past year, the coordination office of Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), a thematic group of Habitat International Coalition (HIC) Members, has received mounting information from various sources on an apparently increasing global trend of physical attacks, imprisonments and mistreatment of housing and land rights defenders, including several killings and at least one recent death in detention. In defence of the rights of the impoverished, disadvantaged, subjects of discrimination and the voiceless, human rights defenders have long maintained efforts to globalize their struggles and to ensure that each person's housing and land rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in accordance with states' treaty obligations. Essential to that goal is ensuring that vulnerable and marginalized people have, at the very least, a chance for their voice to be heard. Beyond that, housing and land rights defenders are essential sources of relevant information and alternative solutions. Recently, that pursuit has been at great personal—and, in many instances, physical—cost.

On the occasion of World Housing and Land Rights Day (a.k.a. World Habitat Day), 1 October 2007, UN HABITAT is promoting the theme, "A Safe City Is a Just City." For housing and land rights defenders, this year especially, the city is increasingly neither. Human rights defenders and their families often live under a perpetual shadow of insecurity. Diverse governments around the world *actively* have targeted human rights defenders, hiring thugs to attack and even kill housing and land rights activists to ensure a permissive atmosphere for private interests. Employing a variety of public-security pretexts, including newly adopted "antiterror" laws, the official practice combines threats and actual physical assault, dubious arrests and prosecutions.

Our targeted and vulnerable defenders and activists, as well as their communities, now need the international solidarity community to unite actively, in order to protect them globally and to resist dispossession, displacement and further impoverishment. **Your URGENT SOLIDARITY ACTION is needed NOW!**

South Asia Office:
A-1 Nizamuddin East
New Delhi 110 013, INDIA

Tel./FAX: +91 (0)11 2435-8492

E-mail: info@hic-sarp.org
Web: www.hic-sarp.org

Coordination Office:
11 Tiba Street, 2nd Floor
Muhandisin • Cairo, EGYPT

Tel/ FAX: +20 (0)23 760-0755

E-mail: hlrn@hlrn.org; hic-mena@hic-mena.org
Web: www.hlrn.org; www.hic-mena.org

UN Liaison Office:
8, rue Gustave Moynier
1202 Geneva, SWITZERLAND

Tel./FAX: +41 (0)22 738-8167

E-mail: hic-hrc@iprolink.ch

Illustrative Cases

Germany

Germany exemplifies trends within Europe, introducing its 2005 “Hartz IV” reform of the social security system and imposing a new cost ceiling on housing assistance, even as Germany faces exorbitant housing cost increases. As a consequence, potentially 1–3 million unemployed, particularly longer-term unemployed, in Germany are under pressure to leave their homes because they no longer can afford the rent. While the number of forced evictions in Germany is limited, another picture emerges with growing legal and extralegal, market-driven and policy-driven pressures. While these are so far less characteristically violent as in other regions, they are nonetheless effective in forcing inhabitants to leave their dwelling and join the ranks of Europe’s new “rent refugees.” Meanwhile, the German government has been increasing its actions against human rights defenders opposing its policies of gentrification.

On 31 July 2007, the Federal Prosecutor of the German Supreme Court charged seven persons with alleged “membership in a terrorist association.” Three of the arrested persons are urban researchers, including the Dr. Andrej Holm from Alexander Humboldt University, in Berlin, and an urban sociologist specializing in urban gentrification.

Dr. Holm and the other six were charged under paragraph 129a StGB (German Penal Code, Section 7: “Crimes against Public Order”). The Federal Prosecutor accused the group of being members of an urban activist organization, *militante gruppe*.¹ Repeatedly citing various urban research terminology used by Holm in academic papers, including “gentrification” and “inequality,” the Prosecutor’s report has concluded that the overlap in terminology with that used by *militante gruppe* was “striking, and not to be explained as a coincidence.”² According to the arrest warrant against Holm, the Federal Prosecutor listed the charges as follows:

- Commonality of “phrases and key words” in the academic work of the researchers with those used by *militante gruppe*;
- Holm and another of the accused as presumed to be intellectually capable of “author[ing] the sophisticated texts of *militante gruppe*. Additionally, as employees of research institutes, the accused have been indicted on grounds of their having access to libraries in which resources can be inconspicuously used in order to conduct the research for and/or drafting *militante gruppe*’s texts;
- Two of the accused are said to have met with members of *militante gruppe* in “meetings [that] were regularly arranged without, however, mentioning place, time and content of the meetings” and all are being charged with being active in the “extreme left-wing scene”;
- Dr. Holm is alleged to have been active in the “resistance mounted by the extreme left-wing scene against the World Economic Summit of 2007 in Heiligendamm.”

In effect, the charges are tantamount to an indictment, based on the use of Andrej Holm’s work on urban gentrification in the pamphlets of *militante gruppe*, who have long publicized their cause against social violations arising from government housing policies.

Since their arrest, Dr. Holm and some of his fellow accused have been variously detained in Berlin-Moabit Prison under very harsh conditions, including solitary confinement for 23 hours of the day, limited visitation to a total of a half hour over two weeks, and limited contact with their legal counsel. In addition, the friends, relatives and colleagues of the accused all have been under surveillance for knowing alleged “terrorists.”

On 23 August 2007, Dr. Holm was released on bail, a decision that the Federal Prosecutor has contested and whose ruling shall not be made until October. The charges of belonging to a “terrorist association” still remain. Notably, the first hearings in the case are taking place in the week of International Housing and Land Rights Day (World Habitat Day) 2007.

The work of Dr. Holm and the other defendants has been a vital source of information on the violations that typically accompany any gentrification process. In addition, his work serves to highlight the standards by which states must remain accountable to their citizens in ensuring the maintenance, respect and protection of basic human rights. The use, or misuse, of such work is the responsibility of the user and not the publisher. However, the Prosecutor is seeking penal action against them for potential violent acts of others.

In charging Holm and the others with flimsy indictments, the German legal system has tread very dangerously on freedoms of expression and conscience, a historically proven misstep. In addition, the standards of evidence used in this case set a dangerous precedent, whereby the work of any academic, any research activity and/or political work, could be construed as potentially criminal. The German government, while often retaining a progressive international position on basic human rights and freedoms, by its recent actions now joins a circle of governments repressing housing and land rights defenders. HIC-HLRN and its Members appeal to more-democratic forces in Germany to reverse this irrational tide.

China

China has long been notorious for mass housing and land rights violations, ever more so with its construction and urbanization boom, including preparations for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.³ With the rapidly approaching 2008 Olympics, the Chinese government is escalating public repression, specifically targeting human rights defenders who themselves have used the spotlight of the Olympics to intensify their public campaigns.

Within the past ten years, various levels of Chinese government have demolished at least 1.25 million houses and evicted approximately 3.7 million people.⁴ Since 2003 alone, Chinese authorities forcibly have evicted some 647,000 people from their homes, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security has requisitioned the land of an estimated 40 million farmers within the past two decades.⁵ This has been exacerbated by a 20% increase in illegal land seizures within the first five months of 2006.⁶ While negotiations for compensation are possible, eviction processes are not, once a government panel has ruled.⁷ However, compensation takes the form of poor housing far from urban centers and inhabitants’ sources of livelihood.

Consequently, the number of public protests has increased from 74,000, in 2004, to 87,000, in 2005.⁸ The Government of China increasingly has taken brutal measures to silence public and private demonstration against its illegal violations, including arbitrary detainment, mass arrests, mistreatment in detention and torture. One prominent example was the tragic death of Chen Xiaoming in 2006. After the Chinese government expropriated his house in 1994, Xiaoming, a self-taught expert in Chinese law, became an activist publicly contesting the government’s actions against the housing rights of the poor, including by organizing public awareness events and letter writing campaigns. In February 2006, Shanghai’s Luwan District Public Security Bureau arrested Xiaoming on charges of meeting a U.S. diplomat to discuss problems faced by evictees. Xiaoming suffered from a chronic illness, but authorities repeatedly turned down his requests, in

addition those of his family, for needed treatment. On 1 July, Shanghai authorities finally conceded to his family's requests and approved his parole. A few hours after, during transfer procedures, Xiaoming died of a massive hemorrhage.⁹

In tandem with its increased housing and land rights violations, the Chinese government also has increased efforts to use politically motivated persecutions of the most-vocal human rights defenders. Due to the excessive state monitoring of its citizens, particularly media and internet outlets, many defenders have been forced to seek external aid for their local struggles, thus putting them at even higher risks.

Mexico

The right to water is not only a subject of international human rights norms,¹⁰ but is the very essence of human survival. Water wars, crises and shortages have long been a source of conflict. In recent years, water has become increasingly commodified and, consequently, a source of greater deprivation and conflict. The global move to corporatize water resources is resulting in diminished access for impoverished populations and, thus, greater threats to personal and public health. Global corporations, including The Coca-Cola Company, Nestlé, Veolia and Vivendi, are rapidly becoming key violators.¹¹ Their illicit practices include environmental destruction (as Coca-Cola's indiscriminate dumping of sludge and hazardous chemical waste into community water sources, or even its sale as animal feed), illegally seizing communal land, terrorizing civilians, and bribing state officials. This all occurs as many of these corporations are falsely advertising their corporate practices as ethical and "environmentally friendly."¹² Dam projects represent another major source of human rights and environmental violations through harnessing water resources. Often they displace thousands of already-impoverished populations—and millions globally—and have catastrophic environmental consequences, including the destruction of entire ecosystems.

Water human rights defenders have not only had to pay the cost for their opposition to water privatization at the hands of the state, but also have been subject to corporate-led brutality. On 4 July 2007, Santiago Pérez Alvarado, a lawyer and human rights defender, was arrested in Mexico. Accused of a kidnapping that allegedly took place nine years ago, Alvarado is being detained at a prison in Temascaltepec, Mexico. Alvarado is well-known in Mexico for his defense of natural resources. During the time of the alleged "kidnapping," he had been working with the citizens of San Pedro Tenayac to stop the construction of the Tule Dam. The dam project would have taken water from the Temascaltepec River to a water purification plant in the Cutzalmala water system, and then pumped into Mexico City, where experts estimated that an amount of water equal to that delivered in the capital would have been lost in the process through leakage. This is in addition to the project's other destructive environmental and human implications. Most recently, Alvarado was working on a campaign against a ski resort development project in the Nevado National Park, Toluca, an important religious site for the indigenous population and a key water catchment area. Alvarado is one of many examples of Mexican government abuse of activists and farmers movements. Despite continuing public efforts to free him, Alvarado remains incarcerated as of this writing.

Egypt

The year 2007 witnessed concerted attacks by central and local government in Egypt against human rights defenders, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights defenders. Most recently, the Egyptian authorities shut down two human rights organizations, the Association for Human Rights Legal Aid (AHRLA) and the Center for Trade Union and Worker's Service (CTUWS). The authorities informed AHRLA that the

pretext for their closure was a breach of Article 17(2) of Law 84 (2002), which prohibits the expenditure of foreign funding without government permission. AHRLA's work is closely linked with supporting victims of torture and defending housing rights and refugees in Egypt. One of these victims is political detainee Muhammad `Abd ul-Qadir al-Sayyid, whose relatives came to the AHRLA for advice after he died in police custody in 2003.¹³ It is generally believed that their advocacy is the real reason for AHRLA's closure. The decision to shut down the association also will entail the seizure of its assets and further charges against its director.

India

Roma and Shanta Bhattacharya, of the National Forum for Forest Peoples and Workers (NFFPW), are two human rights activists working for the land rights of women, Dalits, tribals and other marginalized communities in the Sonebhadra region of the State of Uttar Pradesh. Local police arrested them in Robertsganj on 3 August 2007, along with several other women from the community. This was followed by the 5 August 2007 arrest of two Dalit activists working with them (Lalti Devi and Shyamlal Paswan), and activist Mohammed Hanif. The arrests were accompanied with violence against the activists and villagers. Reports indicate that, on 10 August 2007, police also attacked Dalit women in Chanduli village in Sonebhadra.

Charges against the arrested range from inciting encroachment on government land to cutting trees and fomenting violence. On 10 August 2007, authorities brought new charges against Ms. Roma under article 4 of the National Security Act, but these were withdrawn on 17 August 2007.

Due to intense mobilization and agitation by communities in the area and civil society pressure on the state government, authorities finally released the activists on bail, on 31 August 2007. However, they continue to face these false charges and receive threats of violence and intimidation while working in the region.

Currently, three cases are pending against the activists, in which 300 villagers also have been implicated. Only 63 have been named; over 50% of them are women. The three pending cases relate to:

1. Violation of the Indian Penal Code, Sections 34, 120(B), 143, 144, 147, 148, 149, 427, 504, 506;
2. Violation of the Indian Forest Act (1927), Sections 5/26 and 63; and
3. Violation of the Forest Conservation Act (1980), Section 2/4.

On 1 September 2007, the High Court of Uttar Pradesh passed a stay order against the arrest of 40 of the 63 implicated community members.

Ms. Roma along with 19 other community members, mostly women, has two other false cases pending against her since 2001. While the charges filed against them are similar—encroachment of forestland and poaching—one is under the Indian Penal Code and the second under the Indian Forest Act.

The community believes that the arrests were a conscious attempt to demoralize the activists and the members of the local organizations. The region has long witnessed violence from authorities reportedly in collusion with the land mafia. The activists have been working in a hostile and difficult environment, battling corruption, discrimination, violence, political unrest, lawlessness and impunity. Despite the odds against them, the communities, especially the women, have managed to retain their land and continue the struggle for the realization of their land rights and the implementation of the recently

passed Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers' (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (2006).

* * *

These are only five examples of a long list of state-sponsored assaults on human rights defenders. The *Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders*¹⁴ has recorded 1,311 cases of repression against human rights defenders in approximately 90 countries in 2006 alone.¹⁵ Within the past year, this list includes: Philippines, Colombia, Thailand, Belarus, Cambodia, India, Jordan and Egypt.¹⁶ And, even while the states of the West actively promote democracy and human rights globally, Germany—not alone—demonstrates that even the “democratic” West is also a focus of concern. Anti-terror laws, unjust policies and treatment toward refugees and migrants, repression of labor movements, the corporatization of national economies and the commodification of basic natural resources all represent ways in which States are degrading human rights, and imperiling those few defenders willing to resist injustice.

In addition, the list¹⁷ below illustrates a sample of human rights defenders, whose work is related to housing and land, attacked or killed in 2006 alone.

HR Defender	Country	Circumstances	Violations
Vahe Grigorian	Armenia	Human rights lawyer who has helped Yerevan residents facing eviction to sue the government.	Held in pretrial detention for over four months on charges of fraud and forgery. Grigorian denies the accusations and believes the charges were in retaliation for his advocacy in the eviction case. The charges against him have not been dropped.
Josias de Barros Ferreira and Samuel Matias Barbosa	Brazil	Defenders of landless populations	Assassinated on 20 August 2006 by three suspected perpetrators who had come to convince the people of Balança Camp, Moreno to leave their homes to make way for private development.
Chen Xiaoming	China	Publicly contested government's actions against the housing rights of the poor	Arrested, jailed, died in detentions (2006)
Gao Zhisheng	China	Human rights attorney and a threat to China for offering human rights defense.	Sentenced to three years in prison with a five-year reprieve on 28 July 2007. He faces more charges from China's State Security Division for his recent involvement in another human rights case.
Huang Weizhong	China	Defending peasant's rights	Sentenced to three years imprisonment (, 17 May 2006)
Niu Yuchang	China	Investigated and documented violations against peasants who had been protesting their forced eviction since 2000.	State officials placed him under house arrest, (July 2006)
Enrique Petro	Colombia	Worked to create "humanitarian zones" for the landless Afro-	Threatened with physical harm by local police and/or paramilitary

		Colombian community who had previously been displaced from their lands and at risk for famine	(9–10 March 2006).
Jean-Claude Katende (African Association for the Defense of Human Rights) and Jean-Pierre Mutemba (New Labour Dynamics)	DRC	Criticized misuse of natural resources by Congolese authorities	Threatened with death by local government and police authorities
Jean-Claude Katende (African Association for the Defense of Human Rights)/Jean-Pierre Mutemba (New Labour Dynamics)	DRC	Criticized misuse of natural resources by Congolese authorities	Threatened with death by local government and police authorities on April 2006.
Members of Organization for the Settling, Literacy and Promotion of Pygmies	DRC	Publicly calling for more transparency in the management of forest resources and respect for indigenous people's rights.	Intimidated and threatened physical harm by local government and police authorities every time they called for more transparency in the management of forest resources or respect for indigenous people's rights.
Association for Human Rights Legal Aid (AHLRA)	Egypt	Defended refugees and victims of housing rights violations and torture.	Government officials closed and confiscated offices (Aug.–Sept. 2007).
Dr. Andrej Holm	Germany	As social researcher writes critically of gentrification and other housing policies.	Federal Prosecutor formally charged him with membership in a “terrorist organization”
Florian L., Axel H. and Oliver R.	Germany	Activists and critics against gentrification and its consequences for impoverished inhabitants.	Federal Prosecutor publicly referred to them as outlaw members in a “terrorist organization”
Matthias B.	Germany	As social researcher writes critically of gentrification and other housing policies.	Federal Prosecutor formally charged him with membership in a “terrorist organization”
Heraldo Zuniga and Roger Ivan Carategna (Olancho Environmental Movement).	Honduras	Called for sustainable management of resources and denounced the role of corporations.	Assassinated by police on 20 December 2006.
Jessica Garcia and Mirna Isabel Santos Thomas	Honduras	Community leaders in the village of San Juan Tela who defended the rights of the minority indigenous Garifunas community.	In 2006, Jessica Garcia was pressured and harassed to sell communal land to private real estate company. Mirna Isabel Santos Thomas was abducted and found dead on 6 August 2006.
Medha Patkar (Save the Narmada Movement)	India	Calling for just and adequate rehabilitation of displaced persons and protesting the increase in the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River, further displacing over 35,000 families and destroying the	Repeatedly arrested, harassed and detained by police

		ecosystem.	
Roma and Shanta Bhattacharya (National Forum for Forest Peoples and Workers)	India	Human rights activists working for the land rights of women, Dalits, tribals and other marginalized communities in the Sonebhadra region of the State of Uttar Pradesh.	Arrested by local police on 3 August 2007, along with several other women from the community on dubious charges. On 10 August 2007, new charges were brought, but withdrawn on 17 August 2007. The activists were released on bail, 31 August 2007, but still face false charges and receive threats of violence and intimidation.
Gabino Quinones	Mexico	Opposed local activities of Italian mining company, Ternium, and government privatization of communal land.	Tortured and killed by police (11 March 2006).
Noe Aguirre Orozco	Mexico	Campaigned against construction of resort and waste water dumping.	Threatened with physical harm on 6 June 2006 through a phone call made to his father by unknown assailants.
Santiago Pérez Alvarado	Mexico	Lawyer and human rights defender	Police arrested him, accusing him of a kidnapping that allegedly took place nine years ago, currently detained at Temascaltepec prison.
Edmundo Becerra Palomino	Peru	Protested San Cirio Hill planned land-exploitation plans of the San Cirio Hill by local company.	Assassinated in his barn, allegedly by members of a private security company, Forza, in his barn on (1 November 2006).
Antonio Adirales	Philippines	Calling for agrarian reforms	State officials assassinated him, (10 January 2006).
Wilfredo Cornea	Philippines	Defender of peasant's rights	State officials murdered him (, 26 June 2006).
Thares Sodsri	Thailand	Defender of the environment and campaigned against illegal forestry procedures	Disappeared (1 December 2006).

The year 2006 saw the consolidation of this growing trend: using the legislative arsenal to repress freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly in States that consider independent civil society as a threat. This method, which is a formidable tool for blocking the activities of human rights defenders, seems to have become generalized through the enactment of restrictive laws on associations that impede their formal registration as organizations, limit their ability to receive funds, facilitate official interference in internal organizational matters and criminalize their activities.

In addition to the violations against human rights defenders, we raise this **Call for Solidarity** against a trend of mounting official violence toward the poor, the homeless, and the vulnerable, notably in Northern countries. Homelessness is a symptom of much deeper societal and political causes, including poverty and a lack of State responsibility to ensure the social welfare of its citizens. For example, while the housing and homelessness crisis in the United States has deepened since 2001, demands for

emergency shelter far exceed supply.¹⁸ In the course of any year, 3.5 million people in the U.S. experience homelessness.¹⁹ Meanwhile, U.S. cities have been responding by applying the criminal justice system to penalize further those people living by necessity in public spaces. Laws against sleeping/camping, eating, sitting, and begging in public spaces, criminalize homeless peoples mechanisms of survival. European countries and Canada are following the U.S. model of “governing social marginality” with an expanding prison population. Among antihomeless legislation introduced in several Canadian cities and provinces during the 1990s, most controversial is British Columbia’s “Safe Streets Act,” implemented since January 2005. That law aims “to ensure public street safety of citizens from aggressive solicitation,” but serves instead as a handy pretext for punishing the poor.

The criminalization of homelessness extends beyond the violation of basic rights. Specifically, the criminalization of homelessness also means the expansion of, and public investment in, prison construction. For example, the U.S. has the world’s highest prison population rate (over 2.3 million, or 738 per 100,000 population),²⁰ and now is projecting its prison population to grow another 200,000 by 2011.²¹ England has the highest prison rate in Europe, and foresees that to expand through 2013.²² Never before have democratic societies resorted to incarcerating so many of their fellow citizens and residents. These measures not only include society’s poorest and most vulnerable, but also now target them explicitly for their poverty and, in particular, their homelessness. Meanwhile, the poor, underhoused and homeless figure also as the most vulnerable to acts of crime against their persons and possessions, including those committed by third parties as well as government officials.

In addition, laws aimed at eliminating human diversity increasingly make it illegal for traveling and migrating populations, including the Roma and pastoralists, to maintain their unique ways of life. In these instances, states, and particularly those of the global North, are implementing unilateral and illegal decisions to punish those who are impoverished and/or live a lifestyle other than what the decision makers identify as the norm. Within this insidious cycle of stripping people from their rights and rendering them automatic outlaws, human rights defenders are paying an increasingly heavy price to bring such issues to light. As such, greater efforts are needed to ensure that defenders themselves do not become the victims.

Legal Duty Holders

The duty—and beauty—of statecraft is first for the State to implement its human rights treaty obligations, at a minimum, and to devise locally appropriate means to do so. The pattern of persecution delivered upon the housing and land rights defenders is contrary to any civilized standard.

The primary duty holder, at all times, is the state, which is legally responsible for the respect, protection and fulfillment of the human rights of its citizens and inhabitants. While the state, or its representative may not necessarily be the direct perpetrator of all human rights violations noted here, violations by omission also constitute a breach of treaty on the part of the State. Inaction that constitutes a failure to protect against violations is inadmissible and does not exonerate public officials of their duties to respect, protect and fulfill human rights.

Various nonstate actors, including paramilitary and opposition groups, also carry a burden of responsibility as secondary duty holders. However, even in such cases, “States often play an indirect role that is just as significant when they foster a climate of impunity or act as accomplices to these militia and paramilitary groups.”²³

Conclusion

In December 1998, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Declaration on Human Rights Defenders). The Declaration contains a set of principles based on norms already enshrined in international human rights law, and delineates the rights of human rights defenders and the specific freedoms and activities necessary to their causes. These include various basic entitlements, including the rights to know and receive information about human rights, to publicize violations and to criticize government actions and raise human rights violations before State mechanisms.

Against this affirmative backdrop it is clear that we need to reinforce and join housing and land rights defenders against the forced evictions, destruction, dispossession and consequent homelessness that characterize current and ominously foreseeable trends. Without our protective efforts, for the impoverished affected persons and their defenders, the city, as well as the countryside, will be neither safe nor just.

Action Requested:

Please write to the international officials, and/or your local politicians and media personnel demanding protection for housing and land rights defenders in your community and country. Additionally, the following Special Rapporteurs hold a special mandate to protect the rights of human rights defenders. Please also include them in any letters of concern sent out.

Adv. Reine Alapini-Gansou

Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)
48 Kairaba Avenue
P. O. Box 673
Banjul, The Gambia
Tel: +220 (0)42 439-2962 / 437-7721
Fax: +220 (0)42 439-0763
E-mail: achpr@achpr.org
Website: http://www.achpr.org/english/info/index_hrd_en.html

Hina Jilani

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Fax: +41 (0)22 917-9006
Website: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/defenders/index.htm>
E-mail:
c/o Mara Steccazzini msteccazzini@ohchr.org
c/o Guillaume Pfeiffle gpfeiffle@ohchr.org

Ignacio J. Ivarez

Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Organization of American States

1889 F Street NW
Washington DC 20006, U.S.A.
Tel: +01 (0)202 458-3796
Fax: +01 (0)202 458-6215
E-mail: jalvarez@oas.org
Website: <http://www.cidh.oas.org/relatoria/index.asp?IID=1>

**Kindly inform HLRN of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in
your reply to: urgentactions@hlrn.org**

- ¹ *militante groupe* (mg) is a left-wing militant underground organization that acknowledges the “revolutionary struggle” as a necessary component of its fight against imperialism. Employing a variety of methods for social struggle, including arson attacks, the group purports to defend social welfare mechanisms, including prevention of welfare cuts, fighting repression and fascism, and ensuring equitable pay for forced laborers. See: [http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=de&u=http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militante_groupe_\(MG\)&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=1&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmilitante%2Bgruppe%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4GGIH_enEG210EG211%26sa%3DX](http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=de&u=http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militante_groupe_(MG)&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=1&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmilitante%2Bgruppe%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4GGIH_enEG210EG211%26sa%3DX)
- ² Kate Connolly, “Protest over Terror Arrest of German Academic,” *The Guardian* (21 August 2007), at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/germany/article/0,,2152984,00.html>.
- ³ Human Rights Watch. “China: No Progress on Rights One Year before Olympics: Human Rights Abuses Shadow Countdown to 2008 Beijing Games” (August 2007), at: http://china.hrw.org/press/news_release/china_no_progress_on_rights_one_year_before_olympics; Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions [COHRE], *Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights* (Geneva: COHRE, 2007), 154–68, at: <http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/COHRE%27s%20Olympics%20Report.pdf>; “China evicts thousands for 2008 Olympics,” at: http://www.hlrn.org/violation.php?vio_id=97.
COHRE, *Forced Evictions: Violations of Human Rights* (Geneva: COHRE, December 2006), at: <http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/GLOBAL%20SURVEY%202003-2006.pdf>
- ⁵ COHRE, “Defender Award-Seven Chinese Activists,” 21 February 2007, at: http://www.cohre.org/view_page.php?page_id=239.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ HIC-HLRN/COHRE, *Parallel Report to the UN Human Rights Committee*, 2005.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ The summary of Xiaoming’s story is credited to COHRE. Original at: http://www.cohre.org/view_page.php?page_id=228.
- ¹⁰ Notably, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, “General Comment No. 15: ‘right to water,’” E/C.12/2002/11, 26 November 2002.
- ¹¹ For more information on the illegal practices of some of the largest TNCs, visit: <http://www.polarisinstitute.org/corporations>.
- ¹² For example, in June 2007 *Coca-Cola* announced a new effort to spend \$20 million to conserve seven of the world’s most critical river basins as it dumped untreated wastewater into surrounding agricultural fields in India and was found guilty by India’s Central Pollution Control Board of releasing sludge containing high levels of toxic metals, including lead, cadmium and chromium. For full case history, see: http://www.polarisinstitute.org/coke_faces_new_charges_in_india_including_greenwashing.
- ¹³ Amnesty International, “Egypt: Legal Concern,” UA 244/07, at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMD120302007>.
- ¹⁴ A joint initiative taken in 1997 between two non-governmental organizations, the World Organization against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).
- ¹⁵ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders [OPHRD], *Steadfast in Protest*, Annual Report 2006, at: http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=4108
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ This list is summarized from various sources, including HIC-HLRN Urgent Action appeals during the period, OPHRD, *Steadfast in Protest* Annual Report (Geneva and Paris: OMCT and FIDH, 2006), at: http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=4108, as well as reports of COHRE and Amnesty International.
- ¹⁸ In 2005, 71 percent of the 24 cities covered in the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America’s Cities: A 24-city Report (2005) reported a 6% increase in requests for emergency shelter; whereas, in 24 U.S. cities, an average 14% of emergency shelter requests and 32% of family shelter request went unmet. National Coalition for the Homeless, and National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, *A Dream Denied: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities* (Washington: NCH and NLCHP, January 2006), 8.
- ¹⁹ Martha Burt et al., *Helping America’s Homeless* (Washington: The Urban Institute Press, 2001), 49–50.
- ²⁰ Roy Walmsley, “Prison Population List (seventh edition) King’s College London International Centre for Prison Studies.
- ²¹ Associated Press, “U.S. prison population projected to soar by 200,000 in five years,” *International Herald Tribune* (14 February 2007), at: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/02/14/news/prison.php>. See also *Forecasting America’s Prison Population 2007–2011: Public Safety, Public Spending* (Washington: Pew Charitable Trust, June 2007).

²² Nisha de Silva, Paul Cowell, Terence Chow, Paul Worthington, "Prison Population Projections, 2006–2013, England and Wales," The Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office (London: Home Office, July 2006), at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/hosb1106.pdf>.

²³ OPHRD, 10.