

Forced Evictions in India in 2020

A Grave
Human
Rights Crisis
During the
Pandemic



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FORCED EVICTIONS IN INDIA IN 2020:

**A GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS
DURING THE PANDEMIC**



PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The world has been dealing with a deadly coronavirus pandemic since March 2020. At a time when secure housing is critical for the protection of health and life, it is an issue of great concern and alarm that the Government of India—at the central and state levels—has continued to treat low-income communities with contempt and has relentlessly demolished their homes, rendering thousands of people homeless and at increased risk during this grave public health emergency. Evictions were carried out during India’s first wave of COVID-19 in 2020 and also during its ravaging second wave earlier this year, even during strict lockdowns and curfews, when people were ordered to stay at home and no movement or activity was permitted.

Forced evictions are a gross violation of human rights, at any time. But during a pandemic—when people are struggling to protect their lives and livelihoods—they are unconscionable and constitute a failure of the state, at every level, to protect fundamental rights, especially of the most marginalized.

The critical crisis of forced evictions in India is entirely a state-created one. It continues unquestioned and unabated—year after year—because of complete state impunity and the lack of accountability, investigation, or punishment for those responsible for the systematic destruction of people’s homes and lives.

Despite the worsening scale of such dispossession and destitution across the country, the Government of India, at the central, state, and local levels, does not maintain data on evictions, home demolitions, and internal displacement. When questioned about these practices, it generally denies them. Media reporting on the issue, though better than before, is still limited and often incorporates a strong language of criminalization of the poor, referring to low-income communities as ‘encroachers’ and ‘illegal’ residents.

In an attempt to break the silence and false notions around India’s crisis of forced evictions and to overcome gaps in the paucity of official data, **Housing and Land Rights Network** (HLRN) established the **National Eviction and Displacement Observatory** in 2015. The Observatory aims to document, monitor, highlight, and address forced evictions and displacement across India while attempting to provide relief and support to affected communities. Without accurate data and information on this issue, we believe that policy response cannot be adequate.

At HLRN, we have, therefore, continued to invest time, energy, and resources in highlighting forced evictions across the country, every year. We find it extremely disconcerting that despite growing awareness on this issue, state authorities as well as several non-state actors continue to engage in and support this anti-people and unlawful practice. Forced evictions constitute not only a flagrant violation of the Constitution of India and national and international laws, but during this pandemic, particularly constitute a gross violation of the fundamental right to life.

Since 2017, HLRN has been publishing an annual report on Forced Evictions in India to highlight the gravity of this unabating catastrophe. These reports are the result of extensive primary and secondary research by the HLRN team as well as the provision of data and information from our network of partners across the country. Without their sustained support, these annual reports would not be as accurate or comprehensive. We owe each of our collaborators our gratitude and appreciation.

For their contributions to this report, in particular, we would like to deeply thank: Vanessa Peter, Beena Jadav, Ranjit Sutar, Bilal Khan, Themson Jajo, Anuradha, Isaac Arul Selva, Sanjeev Kumar, Feroze Ahmed, Dorothy Fernandes, Lakhi Das, Anand Lakhan. We also acknowledge the assistance of A. D. Nundiny, A. Dilip Kumar, Akshay Chettri, Ashok Pandey, Balamma, Ishita Chatterjee, Jessica Mayberry, Jiten Yumnam, Manish Kumar, Mayalmit Lepcha, Mrinali Karthick, Navin Narayan, Pankaj Kumar, Shweta Tambe, Stalin K, Suvarna Damle, Tushar Dash, and V. Ramachandran.

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- Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities
- Kalpavriksh
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- Madhya Pradesh Navnirman Manch
- Montfort Social Institute
- Prakriti
- Rahethan Adhikar Manch (Housing Rights and Human Rights Group)
- Shahri Gareeb Sangharsh Morcha
- Sikkim Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association
- Slum Jagatthu
- Video Volunteers

We hope that our efforts of consistently highlighting this serious national human rights and humanitarian crisis will help bring justice to affected persons while leading to the cessation of the unconstitutional practice of forced evictions, which results in multiple human rights violations and detrimental long-term consequences, not just for affected populations but for the entire nation. Any government that is serious about meeting its national and international legal and moral commitments must work to uphold the human right to adequate housing and prevent forced evictions. During this pandemic, when adequate housing has been widely recognized as a key determinant of the rights to life and health, the need for an immediate moratorium on evictions and restoration of the rights of evicted and displaced persons is extremely urgent.

We would like to dedicate this report to all those who have experienced forced evictions and suffered extensively from the loss of their homes, lands, habitats, livelihoods, and health. May their voices be heard and may they see justice, soon.

Shivani Chaudhry

Executive Director, Housing and Land Rights Network

New Delhi, September 2021

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBMP	Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CIDCO	City and Industrial Development Corporation
CPWD	Central Public Works Department
DDA	Delhi Development Authority
DTCP	Department of Town and Country Planning, Gurugram
DUSIB	Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board
GDA	Ghaziabad Development Authority
HSVP	Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran
HLRN	Housing and Land Rights Network
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IRCDUC	Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities
JJ	Jhuggi Jhopri [‘informal settlement’]
LIT	Ludhiana Improvement Trust
NGT	National Green Tribunal
PMAY	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
TNSCB	Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board
UN	United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION



I. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in an acute global public health emergency as well as a major economic and social crisis, with devastating impacts on millions of people around the world.

While revealing glaring gaps in social protection systems, the pandemic has highlighted, like never before, the critical importance of adequate housing – both as a means of prevention from the coronavirus and for recovery from it.

In India, over 4 million people live in homelessness¹ and at least 75 million people² live in ‘informal settlements’ in urban areas without access to essential services, including water and sanitation. A large majority of the rural population also lives in inadequate housing, without access to basic facilities. This situation has exposed the impossibility of the urban and rural poor to follow COVID-19 (‘Covid’) preventive measures, including to practice physical distancing, wash hands frequently, and most importantly, to stay at home.

Measures to contain the spread of the virus, including strict lockdowns, have increased impoverishment and the vulnerability of already marginalized groups through the extensive loss of livelihoods, income, and access to food, healthcare, and education. In India, the lockdowns in March–May 2020, during the first wave of the pandemic, and in April–May 2021, during the second wave, adversely affected the urban and rural poor, including daily-wage workers, agricultural labourers, single women farmers, older persons, indigenous/tribal/Adivasi communities, Dalits/Scheduled Castes, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, and people living in homelessness and inadequate housing.

Instead of acting to protect its people during this life-threatening pandemic—including through the provision of secure housing—the Indian government, shockingly, has been forcibly evicting and demolishing homes of thousands of marginalized and low-income persons in both rural and urban areas. Union and state government authorities have blatantly violated the critical call of the World Health Organization and India’s Ministry of Health and Family Welfare asking people to ‘stay at home.’ Destroying homes and rendering people homeless at this time directly increases their exposure to the highly-contagious virus, impedes their ability to recover from Covid if they contracted it, and presents adverse risks to their health and lives.

“Housing has become the frontline defence against the coronavirus... Evictions are not only inconsistent with the ‘stay home’ policy, but forced evictions are a violation of international human rights law, including the right to housing, as are any evictions that result in homelessness. **In the face of this pandemic, being evicted from your home is a potential death sentence**” [emphasis added].

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, April 2020³

Recognizing the crucial importance of housing in protecting people from the pandemic, the United Nations (UN) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in March 2020, called on State parties to impose a moratorium on evictions during the pandemic.⁴ The former UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, in a guidance note emphasized that the human right to adequate housing could not be derogated in times of emergency and urged all states to end all evictions, for any reason, until the end of the pandemic and for a reasonable period of time thereafter.⁵ In light of the economic recession that would follow the pandemic, she also called for measures to protect security of tenure and to ensure that no one is rendered homeless for a reasonable time after the end of the pandemic. The current UN Special Rapporteur on Housing has also reiterated the need for a moratorium on evictions, in all countries, especially during the pandemic.⁶

“Forced evictions constitute gross violations of human rights law in normal times, and during a pandemic may also constitute grave violations of humanitarian law... **In particular during the pandemic, there must be a zero-eviction commitment from Governments to avoid forced evictions**” [emphasis added].

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, A/75/148, July 2020

Several Indian courts also directed state authorities not to evict people or demolish homes during the pandemic. These include, *inter alia*, the Allahabad High Court [Writ C 7014/2020], High Court of Bombay [W.P. (L) 900/2020], High Court of Karnataka [W.P. 6435/2020], Madras High Court [W.P. 7413/2020], High Court of Orissa [W.P. (C) 9095/2020], and the High Court for the State of Telangana.

Despite these various international and national orders and advisories, Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) has documented **at least 245 incidents of forced eviction across India during the pandemic (from March 2020 to July 2021)**. Of these incidents, 119 have occurred in 2021 (from 1 January to 31 July 2021), and 126 took place in 2020 (from March to December 2020). Home demolitions by state authorities even continued during the pandemic-induced lockdowns in 2020 and 2021. At a time when people were ordered to stay at home, authorities resorted to unlawful demolitions, probably taking advantage of the curfew-like conditions when movement of people and access to remedy, including to courts, was limited.

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (FROM MARCH 2020 TO JULY 2021), THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT FORCIBLY EVICTED:

Over **257,700 people**; or

Over **15,160 people per month**; or



Over **505 people per day**; or

Over **21 people every hour**

**THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RENDERED HOMELESS AT A TIME
WHEN THEY MOST NEEDED THEIR HOMES TO STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY.**

Housing and Land Rights Network has consistently stood against the practice of forced evictions, which are a gross violation of human rights, particularly the human right to adequate housing, as asserted by the UN human rights system on multiple occasions.

Since 2017, HLRN has been publishing an annual report presenting the findings of its ‘**National Eviction and Displacement Observatory**’ that monitors, documents, highlights, and aims to provide redress and seek solutions to this egregious but still unaddressed national crisis of forced evictions of the urban and rural poor.

Definition of ‘Forced Eviction’

This report uses the definition of ‘forced eviction’ provided by General Comment 7 (1997)⁷ of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: **“The permanent or temporary removal against the will of individuals, families or communities from their homes or land, which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.”**

This report, the fourth in this series,⁸ presents data and an analysis by HLRN on forced evictions across India in the year 2020 as well as an overview of major incidents of forced eviction carried out from 1 January to 31 July 2021. The report aims to highlight critical issues related to evictions in India over the last year-and-a-half. It also proposes recommendations to the government to end this rapidly worsening crisis and to provide justice and ensure restitution of the human rights of affected persons.

II. OVERVIEW OF FORCED EVICTIONS IN 2021



II. OVERVIEW OF FORCED EVICTIONS IN 2021

This report presents comprehensive data and a detailed analysis of evictions carried out in India in the year 2020. However, given the continuing health and economic emergency resulting from the pandemic, HLRN has also compiled preliminary data on homes demolished and forced evictions carried out by the Indian government from 1 January to 31 July 2021.

Even as India reeled under the effects of the deadly second wave of the pandemic in the first half of 2021, multiple incidents of forced eviction were recorded across the country. At a time when the raging virus wrecked people's lives, livelihoods, and health, and when people needed to stay at home to protect themselves from the even more contagious Delta variant, low-income families witnessed horrific demolitions of their homes, thereby losing their fundamental protection against the virus: housing. Already suffering from the pandemic-induced financial crisis, the loss of homes and personal belongings during demolition drives has further exacerbated their harsh living conditions and their vulnerable health.

A preliminary analysis by HLRN reveals that between 1 January 2021 and 31 July 2021, state authorities across India demolished at least 24,445 homes, affecting over 169,176 people. Of these, about 13,750 people were evicted during the peak of the second wave and resultant lockdowns in April and May 2021.⁹

Table 1: Some Major Incidents of Forced Eviction in 2021 (1 January to 31 July 2021)

SITE OF EVICTION	REASON FOR EVICTION
Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Metro project, Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor, removal of 'illegal' constructions, and road widening
Bengaluru, Karnataka	Removal of 'encroachments'
Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu	Smart Cities Mission project, and removal of 'encroachments'
Delhi	Removal of 'encroachments' and city 'beautification'
Different locations in Assam	Removal of 'encroachments' on forestland
Different locations in Odisha	Lower Suktel Irrigation Project, 'encroachment' removal, and city 'beautification'
Faridabad, Haryana	Order of the Supreme Court of India to clear 'encroachments' from forestland, and expressway construction
Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh	Noida International Greenfield Airport
Gurugram, Haryana	Land clearance and construction of a sports stadium
Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh	Forestland clearance
Kavaratti, Lakshadweep	Order to remove 'encroachments' on government land
Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh	Forestland clearance
Ludhiana, Punjab	Removal of 'encroachments' removal and rejuvenation of the Buddha Nullah
Mumbai, Maharashtra	Mangrove protection, metro station construction, and removal of 'encroachments'
Mysuru, Karnataka	Expansion of railway tracks
Nalgonda, Telangana	Yadadri Thermal Power Plant
Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, Karnataka	Tiger conservation and eco-tourism
Pune, Maharashtra	Road widening and drain widening
Ranchi, Jharkhand	Court order to remove 'encroachments' along water bodies
Seetharam Village, Andhra Pradesh	Polavaram Project
Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir	Court order to remove 'encroachments' on forestland
Siddipet, Telangana	Mallannasagar Project
Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh	Expansion of the Mahakaleshwar Temple - Smart Cities Mission
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	Smart Cities Mission project

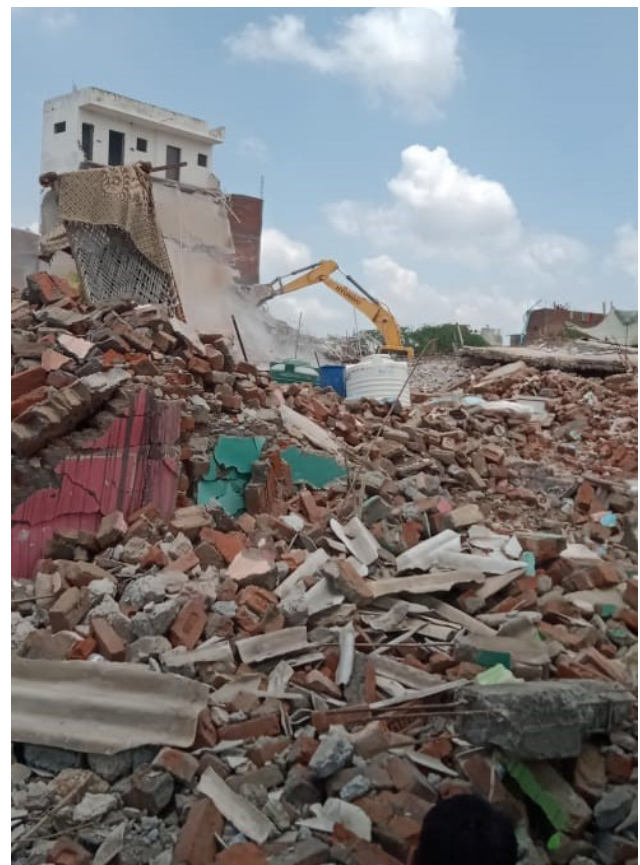
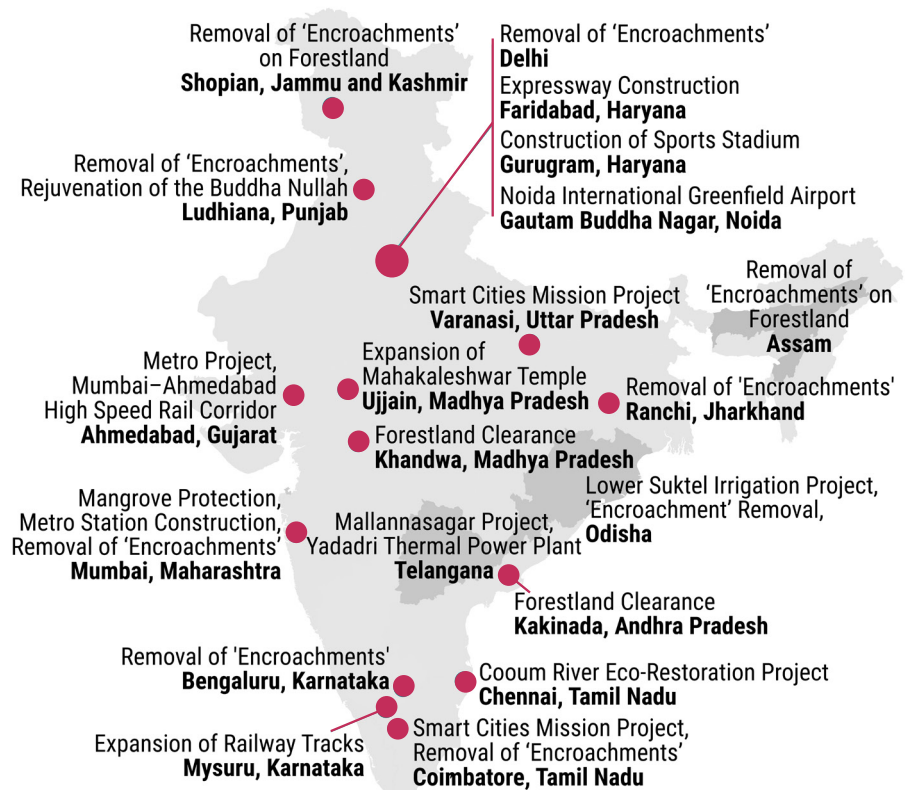
The act of demolition of homes of the urban and rural poor has been sanctioned not only by the Indian government but also by courts.

Acting on the orders of the Supreme Court of India, the Faridabad Municipal Corporation demolished at least 12,000 houses belonging mostly to daily-wage workers in Khori Gaon, Haryana in the months of July and August 2021.¹⁰ Several weeks prior to the eviction—at the height of summer—authorities cut off water and electricity supply to the settlement, resulting in extreme hardship to affected families.¹¹ This also impeded children’s ability to study. The evictions—reportedly carried out with force—rendered 10,000–15,000 families homeless during the monsoon season.¹² Displaced persons include pregnant and lactating women, new-born babies, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Despite an appeal by UN human rights experts to halt the evictions,¹³ the Supreme Court of India refused to grant any stay on the demolitions.¹⁴ In the absence of a comprehensive and inclusive rehabilitation plan, affected persons continue to live in the open, many of them on the rubble of their demolished homes, as they have nowhere to go.

The High Court for the State of Telangana also issued an order that resulted in the South Central Railway demolishing 120 houses constructed on its land in Medhara Basti, in July 2021.¹⁵

Between March and July 2021, India’s capital city of Delhi witnessed several incidents of home demolition, largely by central government authorities. Despite pandemic-related restrictions imposed by the Delhi government in April 2021, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) demolished 50 houses in Yamuna Khadar. This arbitrary action was undertaken without the provision of any notice, allegedly to implement orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal

Some Major Incidents of Forced Eviction in 2021 1 January to 31 July 2021



Devastation in Khori Gaon after demolition of over 10,000 houses

Ishita Chatterjee

Bench] to remove all ‘encroachments’ on the floodplains of the Yamuna River. All the families were rendered homeless, and as of August 2021, a few of them had left the area while others continue to live at the same site.¹⁶ Almost 135 families living near Shastri Park were also rendered homeless in February 2021, on the basis of the aforementioned NGT order.

“On 15 April 2021, officials from DDA demolished my home without notice. How could we maintain ‘social distancing’ when they demolished our home? I am afraid of contracting Covid. I am unable to study in such fear. Where will we go during this pandemic?”

A 15-year-old boy whose home was demolished in Yamuna Khadar, Delhi

In March 2021, officials from DDA demolished 70 houses in Usmanpur under the guise of removal of ‘encroachments.’ In the absence of alternative housing or compensation, affected families reconstructed temporary dwelling units in the same area. In June 2021, DDA again demolished 20 of these temporary structures, causing grave distress to the residents.¹⁷ In July 2021, amidst the heavy monsoon rain, officials from DDA demolished 15 houses in Rangpuri Pahadi. As per reports received from affected persons, they have been living at the site for over a decade and some of them also had documents to prove their residence in the area. As of August 2021, they still continue to live in the same area in highly inadequate conditions, without access to basic facilities.¹⁸ In a demolition drive spanning over four days, DDA officials demolished more than 300 houses of daily-wage earners in Ramesh Park, in July, during the monsoon. Reportedly, they have been living in the area for over 30 years and the eviction and destruction of their belongings have compounded their challenges, including their access to food.¹⁹ In June 2021, authorities demolished temporary tents of homeless persons living in Urdu Park, as part of a ‘city-beautification’ drive. At least five families were forced to live on the pavement without any basic shelter, during the peak of the summer. As they were unable to access adequate shelter, their exposure to the subsequent rain and lack of access to healthcare, resulted in the death of an 11-day baby in July 2021.²⁰

Between April and July 2021, an estimated 2,850 families from five villages in Gautam Buddha Nagar District of Uttar Pradesh were evicted for the first phase of construction of the Noida International Greenfield Airport. Affected families resettled at Jewar Bangar Village, at a distance of 11 kilometres, have complained about the lack of basic amenities and poor quality of alternative housing provided.²¹

The state of Odisha also saw several home demolitions in 2021. In July, the Bolangir district administration demolished 60 houses in Pardhiapalli Village for the Lower Suktel Irrigation project despite people’s resistance against eviction during the pandemic.²² Between February and April, the Cuttack Municipal



Homeless families evicted from Urdu Park, Delhi in the peak of summer

Corporation razed 500 homes along the Taladanda canal for the expansion of a medical college and hospital. Reportedly, affected families have been forcibly moved to a resettlement site that lacks basic facilities.²³ In January, ‘encroachment’-removal drives were conducted in several parts of Bhubaneswar. For instance, authorities demolished 138 houses in Arabinda Nagar and 207 houses in Maa Tarini Basti.²⁴

In Mumbai, the Mangrove Conservation Cell demolished 250 houses in Borivali in April 2021.²⁵ Similarly, in Chheda Nagar, the Cell cleared 450 ‘huts’ in February 2021.²⁶

In Assam, several evictions were carried out between January and June 2021, allegedly to clear government land and forestland; affected persons are mostly landless Muslim families.



Ranjit Sutar

Demolition drive at Maa Tarini Basti, Bhubaneswar

In various parts of Gujarat, state authorities destroyed homes of low-income communities. For instance, in April 2021, 130 houses were demolished in Fathewadi for various infrastructure projects. A similar drive demolished 90 homes in Juhapura, Ahmedabad, in January 2021.²⁷ In March, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation along with Indian Railways officials evicted 350 people for the construction of the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor project (bullet train project). The affected people, who had been living in the area for over 30 years, were rendered homeless without any rehabilitation.²⁸

“We went to our village for the Holi festival, when we came back, we saw our houses had been demolished. We don’t get work these days, how do we survive now?”

Person evicted for the Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project in April 2021

Gurugram has also witnessed several forced evictions in 2021. For instance, in June, the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority and the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram destroyed 60 houses in Chakkarpur and Sikanderpur, in June 2021, to create an ‘urban forest.’²⁹ In March, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, along with a heavy police contingent, demolished 2,500 houses in Wazirabad for the construction of a sports stadium.³⁰ The Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran demolished 350 homes, mostly of nomadic families, to construct a school.³¹

In South Kashmir’s Shopian District, forest department officials demolished 24 houses of the Gujjar community following an order of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to remove ‘encroachments.’ Residents allege that force was used against them and a few of them suffered injuries during the demolition process.³² In Jharkhand, the Jamshedpur district administration and police officials razed 200 homes in Khasmahal in order to vacate government land of ‘encroachments’ in March 2021. Reportedly, the police detained a few people who were protesting against the demolition.³³

For the expansion of railway tracks, the Karnataka Slum Development Board razed over 200 houses in Mysuru in April 2021 during the peak of the second wave of the pandemic.

“We have been living in Krishnappa Garden for more than 30 years. Our homes were demolished, without any prior notice, on 21 January 2021. For the last two years, the government is just saying “corona, corona” but we have not received any support from the state. Officials call us to get vaccinated, but not to give us food to fill our empty stomachs. We often feel like ending our lives, what to do?”

A woman evicted in Bengaluru in January 2021

In Chennai, the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board demolished 130 houses in Arumbakkam, in July, for the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project.³⁴ In Coimbatore, 141 houses were destroyed along the Selvampathy Tank bund as part of an ‘encroachment’-removal drive.³⁵

In Khandwa District of Madhya Pradesh, officials of the forest department destroyed homes, crops, and fields of 40 families (affecting 200 people), belonging to a Scheduled Tribe. Affected families allege that officials assaulted them. Reportedly, their belongings and valuable items, including cash, jewellery, phones, and livestock were also stolen during the demolition drive.³⁶

In Varanasi, the district administration evicted over 100 low-income families in January 2021, without any rehabilitation, for a Smart Cities Mission project.³⁷

Almost all incidents of eviction documented by HLRN from 1 January to 31 July 2021³⁸ have rendered low-income communities homeless at the peak of the pandemic. The widespread devastation caused by these demolitions during this public health emergency has resulted in the blatant violation of human rights of affected persons, including their right to life guaranteed by the Constitution of India. The destruction of people’s housing at this time needs to be strongly denounced, with an immediate suspension of all planned demolitions and evictions.



HLRN

III. MAIN FINDINGS ON FORCED EVICTIONS IN INDIA IN 2020



III. MAIN FINDINGS ON FORCED EVICTIONS IN INDIA IN 2020

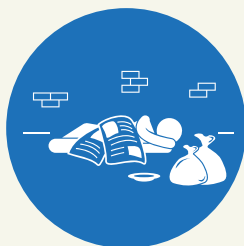
Key findings from HLRN's primary and secondary research on forced evictions in India in 2020 include the following:

1. In 2020, HLRN documented the **demolition of homes of over 36,812 households/families, resulting in the forced eviction of a minimum of 173,333 people** across the country.
2. Forced evictions of the urban and rural poor and demolitions of their homes **occurred across the country** – in megacities, smaller cities, towns, and villages.
3. **Evictions were carried out for a range of reasons and under various guises**, including: 'slum-clearance/encroachment-removal/city-beautification' drives; infrastructure and ostensible 'development' projects, including 'smart city' projects; environmental projects, forest protection, and wildlife conservation; 'disaster management' efforts; and other reasons such as political rallies and targeted discrimination. In 2020, HLRN documented that **ostensible 'environmental' reasons displaced the highest number of people – 49 per cent of the total number of people evicted in the year.**
4. In 2020, **court orders**—including of the Supreme Court of India, state High Courts, and the National Green Tribunal—**were responsible for the eviction of over 88,560 persons** across the country, accounting for 51 per cent of the total population evicted in the year.
5. **The overwhelming majority of evicted people (87 per cent) did not receive any rehabilitation from the government. Resettlement/partial resettlement/some compensation** was provided in only **13 per cent of the documented cases** of eviction in 2020 for which information is available. In the absence of resettlement, most affected persons have had to make their own provisions for alternative housing or have been rendered homeless. For those who received some form of resettlement from the state, the sites they have been relocated to are remote and devoid of adequate housing and essential civic and social infrastructure facilities.
6. In nearly all of the documented cases of forced eviction, **state authorities did not follow due process** established by national and international human rights standards.
7. All incidents of forced eviction documented by HLRN have resulted in multiple, and often gross, **human rights violations.**
8. Through these persistent acts of eviction and demolition of homes during the pandemic, central and state government authorities have **violated national and international laws**, policies, guidelines, and schemes, including humanitarian laws and standards.
9. The **majority of evicted people do not have access to justice** and their right to effective remedy has not been fulfilled. Where they have been able to approach courts and received favourable orders, relief has mostly been in the form of stay orders related to further demolition/eviction. Seldom have courts ordered restitution and restoration of human rights of aggrieved persons to resettlement, return, adequate housing, and other rights that are violated as a result of forced evictions.
10. **Over 15.5 million people** across India are currently faced with the threat of eviction and displacement.

IN THE YEAR 2020, ACROSS RURAL AND URBAN INDIA



Over 36,812
houses demolished



At least 173,333
people forcibly evicted

At least **101 houses destroyed daily**

About **475 people lost their homes every day**

At least **20 people evicted every hour**



Nearly
16 million people
live under the threat of
eviction and displacement

While these recorded numbers are extremely alarming, they are a conservative estimate and present just a part of the real picture and actual scale of forced evictions in the country, as they only reflect cases known to HLRN. It is likely that many more incidents of forced eviction occurred during the last year but have not been documented. Also, HLRN has not included all displacement resulting from land acquisition under the auspices of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013. Furthermore, for the documented incidents of forced eviction, HLRN has used the Census of India average family size of 4.8 persons to calculate the total number of people evicted. However, in many of the evicted families, the family size is much larger but could not be determined exactly. **The total number of people evicted and displaced in India as well as those under risk of eviction, therefore, is certainly much higher than documented in this report.**

The number of state-induced evictions over the last year also would have been higher had it not been for the strategic intervention and active resistance of local communities to save their homes in many parts of the country. Housing and Land Rights Network has documented that a large number of evictions have been prevented through effective advocacy by local communities with the support of social movements and civil society organizations, as well as through positive stay orders from courts. By employing effective strategies, including, but not limited to legal interventions resulting in positive stay orders from courts, HLRN—with the support of other civil society organizations—was able to prevent the demolition of at least 1,665 houses in Delhi in 2020. For instance, in January 2020, the demolition of 1,500 houses in Yamuna Khadar was averted after obtaining a positive order from the High Court of Delhi [W.P (C) 10900/2019]. In September 2020, the removal of 65 houses in Pant Nagar was prevented due to a positive order by the High Court of Delhi [W.P. (C) 5999/2020]. Efforts by HLRN also resulted in the prevention of demolition of houses in Nala Camp in November 2020. The community was mobilized to prepare a petition, and the concerned authorities were approached, including the local Member of the Legislative Assembly, after which the demolition was prevented.

Similarly in Chennai, advocacy and resistance by local communities threatened with eviction has resulted in eight settlements being saved from demolition.³⁹

Across the country, including in rural areas, a large number of local communities are actively resisting projects that threaten to displace them from their homes and habitats. Without their sustained and strategic action, many thousands more could have lost their homes. However, even though evictions may have been stalled temporarily in some sites, the majority of these communities live in uncertainty and fear of impending eviction.

Also, though the incidence of forced evictions in 2020 is very high, it would have probably been even higher had the rate of investment in the country been higher. As a result of the pandemic and a consequent drop in industrial activity and projects, many land acquisition, real estate, and infrastructure projects have been delayed or stalled.⁴⁰ As more projects get sanctioned and implemented, it is feared that a large number of people living at or near sites marked for such projects, including for mining, ports, dams, airports, roads, and highways, will be evicted and displaced.

Post-Covid economic recovery plans of the Indian government have already resulted in the creation of ‘land banks’ for industries,⁴¹ easing of land acquisition procedures in several states, and dilution of environmental laws.⁴² The push for infrastructure projects could lead to a greater rise in the number of evictions in the coming years.

It is ironic that forced evictions and demolitions of homes have continued in opposition to the union government’s purported goal of providing ‘housing for all’ in India by 2022, under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY or Prime Minister’s Housing Scheme/Housing for All–2022 scheme)⁴³ and other state government programmes that intend to provide housing for marginalized and low-income groups in urban and rural areas.

In the last four years—from 2017 to 2020—state agencies forcibly evicted over 741,300 people in rural and urban India. On average, between 2017 and 2020, 185,300 people were evicted annually in India.

The findings of HLRN’s research on forced evictions in India in 2020 are elaborated in greater detail below.

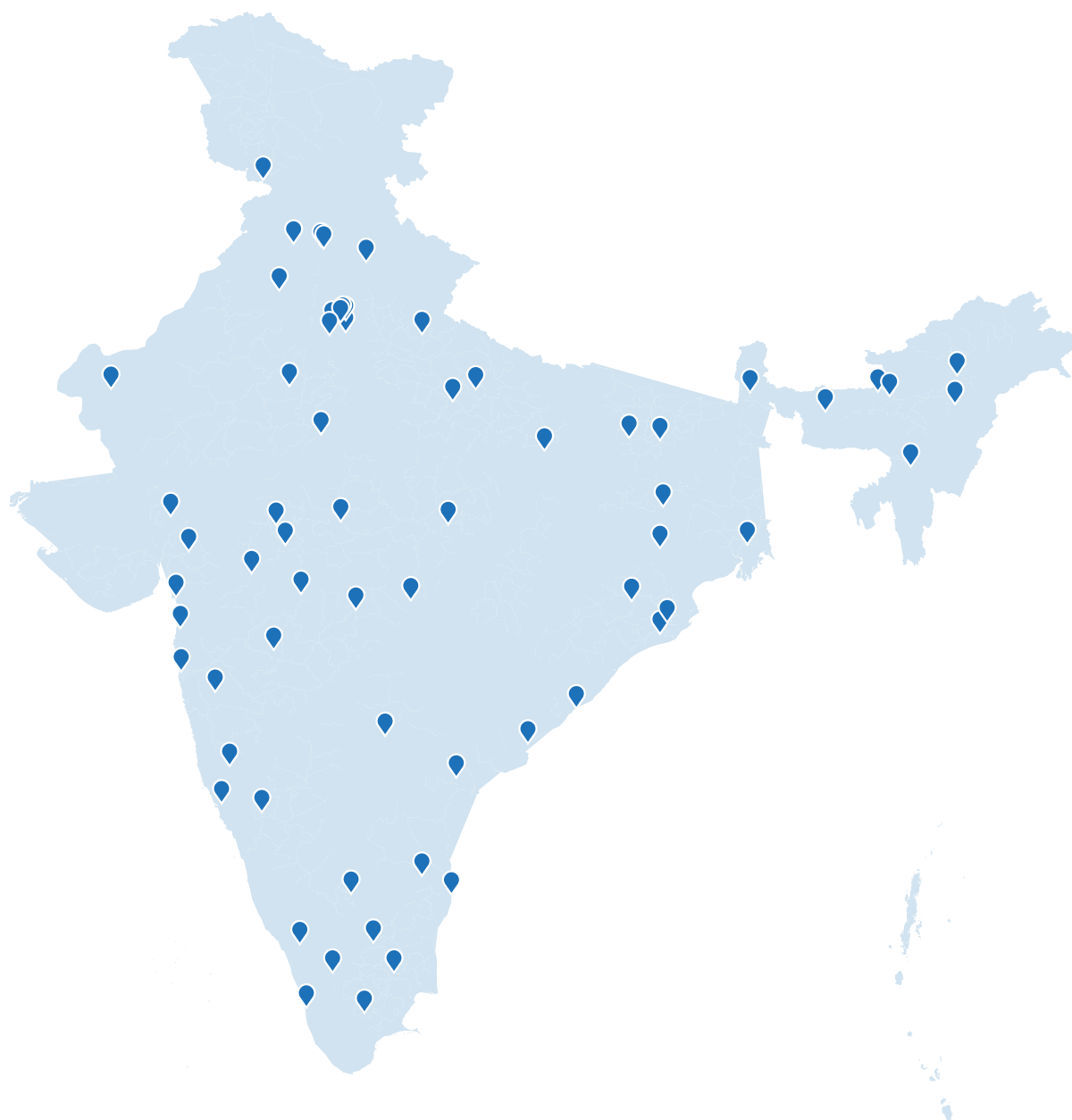


HLRN

1. Geography of Forced Evictions

In the year 2020, HLRN recorded incidents of forced eviction across urban and rural India, in **at least 21 states** and **two Union Territories** (see Annexure IV and Annexure V). It is, however, likely that evictions also took place in other states/Union Territories for which we do not have information. A large number of people lost their homes in ‘**megacities**’⁴⁴ (Delhi and Mumbai) and in other ‘**million plus urban agglomerations**’/cities⁴⁵ (Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Coimbatore, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Kota, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Madurai, Nagpur, Nashik, Patna, Pune, Rajkot, Ranchi, Surat, and Varanasi). Demolitions of homes were also reported in urban agglomerations or **Tier I**⁴⁶ **cities** (Anantapur, Baleshwar, Bathinda, Bhilai, Bilaspur, Budaun, Bhubaneswar, Dang, Dehradun, Dhamtari, Guna, Gurugram, Guwahati, Hubballi, Imphal, Kadapa, Khammam, Khordha, Korba, Mysore, Patiala, Puri, Raebareli, Raigarh, Rewa, Siddipet, Ujjain, and Yamunanagar); **Tier II cities** (Itanagar and Maharajganj); **Tier III cities** (Kondagaon and Mussoorie); **Tier V cities** (Mamit and Saligao); and, also in many **villages** (including in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana). The Union Territories where evictions occurred in 2020 are: Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir.

Sites of Eviction in India in 2020

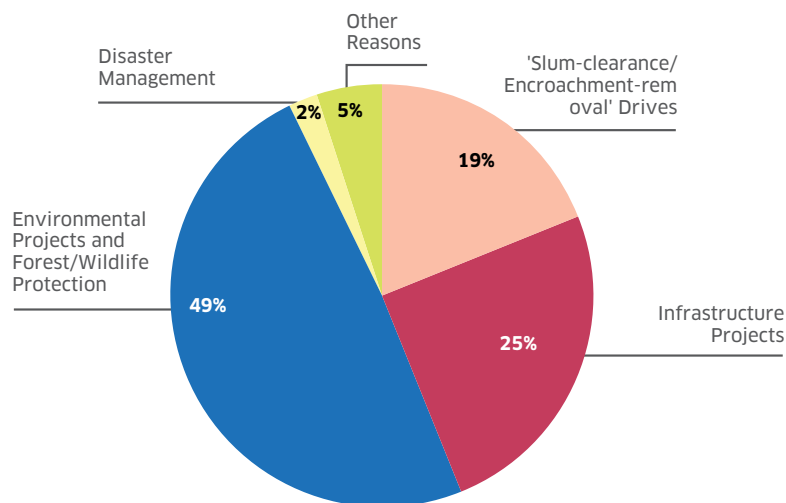


2. Reasons for Forced Eviction and Home Demolition

Across India, in most incidents of forced eviction, affected persons and communities are not provided with the reason for eviction/demolition of their homes; this information is also generally not made public. The National Eviction and Displacement Observatory at HLRN, however, has analysed the available data on evictions, and has identified five broad categories for which individuals and communities were forcibly removed and displaced from their homes and habitats in the year 2020:

- 'Slum-clearance/anti-encroachment/city-beautification' drives [19 per cent of affected persons];
- Infrastructure and ostensible 'development' projects, including road widening, highway expansion, bridge construction, and 'smart city' projects [25 per cent of affected persons];
- Ostensible environmental projects, forest protection, and wildlife conservation [49 per cent of affected persons];
- 'Disaster management' efforts [2 per cent of affected persons]; and,
- Other reasons, including political rallies, religious discrimination, and reasons not covered by the above four categories [5 per cent of affected persons].

Graph 1: Percentage of People Evicted for Different Reasons in 2020



In 2020, for the first time, HLRN has recorded that the highest number of people (85,033) witnessed loss of their homes for reasons related to ostensible environmental projects, including wildlife and forest conservation efforts: 49 per cent of affected people.

An analysis of all documented evictions in 2020 reveals that the **vast majority of evictions**, as in the preceding years since 2017, **were not carried out for 'exceptional circumstances'** as stipulated by the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement (2007),⁴⁷ which are the global operational human rights standards to be complied with by state and non-state actors before, during, and after any proposed eviction or relocation. In many of the recorded incidents, the reason for the eviction was not communicated to the affected persons and also was not justified.

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

21. **States shall ensure that evictions only occur in exceptional circumstances.** Evictions require full justification given their adverse impact on a wide range of internationally recognized human rights. Any eviction must be: (a) authorized by law; (b) carried out in accordance with international human rights law; (c) **undertaken solely for the purpose of promoting the general welfare**;^{*} (d) reasonable and proportional; (e) regulated so as to ensure full and fair compensation and rehabilitation; and (f) carried out in accordance with the present guidelines. The **protection provided by these procedural requirements applies to all vulnerable persons and affected groups, irrespective of whether they hold title to home and property under domestic law** [emphasis added].⁴⁸

Details on evictions carried out in 2020 for various reasons are elaborated below.

a) 'Slum'/Land Clearance/'Beautification'/Removal of 'Encroachments'

While HLRN does not advocate the use of the term 'slum' for housing of low-income groups because of its derogatory connotations in many parts of the country, the term used by the Indian government in official discourse, including in laws and policies, is 'slum.' We also do not support the general use of the term 'encroachments' for housing of the poor, which creates an artificial construct of legality that discriminates against low-income residents who have limited or no choices with regard to housing and where to live. Furthermore, use of public land for housing, livelihoods, and other survival-related purposes cannot be criminalized by the state and residents on public land cannot be viewed as 'encroachers.'

In the case of *Ajay Maken v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 11616/2015], the High Court of Delhi has emphasized this point by stating:

The decisions of the Supreme Court of India on the right to shelter and the decision of this Court in *Sudama Singh* require a Court approached by persons complaining against forced eviction not to view them as 'encroachers' and illegal occupants of land, whether public or private...

Despite such court orders, homes of the urban poor across India continue to be considered as 'illegal' or 'encroachments' by all branches of the government—the legislature, executive, and often the judiciary—and are demolished without any consideration that people have been living at those sites for decades, sometimes 40–50 years, and possess documents such as election and ration cards that validate their 'legality' and proof of residence. Communities work on improving the quality of the land, develop vibrant neighbourhoods and settlements, and contribute to the local economy, but when the value of the land on which they live appreciates or when the state decides to commercially develop that land, they are considered dispensable and arbitrarily evicted, often in violation of existing laws and policies.

In 2020, the union and state governments undertook a large number of demolition drives in several cities across the country, resulting in the destruction of self-built homes of the working poor, based entirely on the perception of the state and its agencies that they are 'illegal' or 'encroachments.'

This persistent disturbing view resulted in 'slum'-clearance, 'encroachment'-removal, and 'city-beautification' drives that rendered at least **33,358** persons homeless in 2020, accounting for about **19 per cent** of the total number of people evicted during the year. Though the percentage of people affected by such evictions is lower than in previous years, these inhumane 'clearance' drives account for the highest number of incidents of forced eviction in 2020 – at least 73 incidents as recorded by HLRN (*See Annexure I for details*).

In 2020, HLRN recorded that state authorities demolished about **7,690** houses of low-income communities resulting in the forced eviction of over **33,358** people for purposes of 'slum'/ 'encroachment'/land clearance and 'beautification' projects.

The implementation of 'slum-free' policies by demolishing homes of the poor not only violates their human rights but also goes against the very premise of creating 'slum-free' cities, which is to improve living conditions of the poor by helping them to transition from 'slums' to adequate and dignified housing. Furthermore, the

continued assumption of government authorities—as reflected in these rampant home-demolition drives—that ‘city beautification’ implies removing the poor from certain areas of cities, highlights the deep-set discrimination against the country’s most marginalized populations. This is all the more ironic given that they are the ones who build cities, contribute to their economy, and are largely responsible for their functioning.

In the northern Indian city of Ludhiana, in the bitter cold of December 2020, the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation demolished about 80 houses on its land in Prem Nagar, on grounds that the occupants were ‘encroachers.’ The affected families—Class IV employees of the civic body—alleged that they were not given adequate notice and rendered homeless amid the persisting threat of the coronavirus and extreme cold weather conditions. Reportedly, the civic officials reached the site at 9.00 a.m. and gave families only two hours time to vacate their houses before pulling them down. An official, however, claimed “enough time” was given to the families before the drive was conducted.⁴⁹

The Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) in Gurugram, Haryana, demolished over 1,500 houses, affecting about 4,000 people in Behrampur Village, in November 2020. Allegedly, the drive was conducted to vacate *panchayat* land. Affected families, mostly daily-wage workers, had been living on rent in the hutments and were evicted at the onset of winter, without the provision of any alternative housing.⁵⁰ In a similar ‘slum and encroachment’ removal drive in the same month, officials from DTCP demolished about 650 houses of a low-income community living along Saraswati Kunj Golf Course Road.⁵¹

In November 2020, the Ludhiana Improvement Trust (LIT) along with police officials demolished 50 houses in Model Town Extension Part 1, in order to vacate its land, rendering poor families homeless in the winter.⁵² Earlier, amid the pandemic-induced lockdown, in the rainy month of July, officials of LIT demolished 60 houses in the area. Affected families, mostly labourers, had been living in the area for the past two decades.⁵³

Following an order of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP), with the support of the police, demolished 72 houses in Sector 57, Gurugram, in October 2020. Reportedly, HSVP wanted to vacate its land that was under litigation for more than a decade.⁵⁴ In January 2020, HSVP demolished 100 houses in Sector 53, Gurugram, reportedly to vacate its land of ‘encroachers.’ Affected families were mostly migrants who were involved in domestic work, ragpicking and garbage segregation, and other daily-wage work.⁵⁵

In Chhattisgarh’s Rainpur Village in Korba District, local authorities—in October 2020—ironically demolished houses of 50 tribal families that had been allotted to them under PMAY. Tribal families were rendered homeless without any prior warning. Allegedly, their houses were demolished to clear the land to set up a shelter for cows. Affected families state that they were evicted from forestland, which they claim to have ownership rights under The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (‘Forest Rights Act’).⁵⁶

Under the guise of removal of ‘encroachments’ from Sarkhej Circle in Ahmedabad, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation demolished 55 houses and shops in October 2020.⁵⁷ Affected persons include shopkeepers who had constructed small houses behind their shops. They were already facing challenges of reduced income during the pandemic; the destruction of their shops and homes greatly increased their suffering.

In Manipur’s Lamphel Sanakeithel area, district and police officials demolished 200 houses, evicting 600 people, in September 2020. Families were evicted from their homes on grounds that they were ‘illegally’ occupying government land. However, affected families claim to have land ownership certificates. They were given less than a day’s time to vacate the land and were not provided with any resettlement.⁵⁸

In Guwahati, Assam, the Kamrup Metro District Administration demolished 15 houses near Raj Bhavan in September. Affected persons allege that they were not given any prior notice and authorities mistreated women residents during the demolition process.⁵⁹

In Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, the Land and Revenue Department along with police personnel, demolished 200 ‘illegal encroachments’ to vacate the campus of the India Reserve Battalion headquarters at July in September.

The demolition was authorized by the Gauhati High Court. According to a district official, such drives are part of the state's efforts to keep the state capital "clean" and retain its "splendour".⁶⁰

In Uttar Pradesh, the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) demolished 600 houses between September and October 2020. Following an order of the Allahabad High Court [PIL 2014/2015], GDA destroyed 250 houses in Bhovapur and then repeatedly evicted affected families from the site and destroyed their temporary dwellings. In Bhopura, GDA demolished 300 houses in September.⁶¹ After protests by activists and a writ petition filed in the Allahabad High Court, the Court issued a stay order [PIL 1185/2020] halting evictions in Ghaziabad during the pandemic, and directed authorities to rehabilitate displaced 'slum-dwellers.'⁶² The state government, however, has not provided any rehabilitation; affected families have had to reconstruct temporary dwellings on their own.



Demolition process underway in Bhopura

HLRN

In July and August 2020, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram demolished an estimated 3,500 houses from several locations in Sikanderpur.⁶³ This includes the eviction of 600 families from Shyam Jha Colony in July 2020⁶⁴ for the creation of a 'biodiversity park' in the area.⁶⁵ Affected residents took to the streets to protest the arbitrary eviction during the pandemic and to demand adequate rehabilitation.⁶⁶ A complaint by the affected families to India's National Human Rights Commission—seeking action against the drive and for their rehabilitation—was disposed by the Commission on the grounds that the matter is *sub judice* in the High Court of Punjab and Haryana.⁶⁷ Also in the month of July 2020, the state administration razed 35 houses of the marginalized Gadia Lohar community in Gurugram, without any prior notice. Authorities not only destroyed their homes but also their personal possessions and livelihood items during the demolition process.⁶⁸

In June 2020, the state administration in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, evicted about 400 families living in government housing to accommodate those evicted from 160 houses in Tilak Nagar for the 'beautification' of the Arpa River.⁶⁹

In May 2020, local authorities in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh evicted 103 families for the 'beautification' of the Ratahara pond, rendering daily-wage labourers homeless.⁷⁰ Officials in Patna, Bihar, evicted 100 landless families from Gardanibagh in May without the provision of any rehabilitation, forcing them to live on the roadside.⁷¹

In April 2020, local authorities evicted 12 Dalit families in Malar Kocha Basti in Ranchi, Jharkhand. Affected families claim to have been living in the area for over 100 years. The local administration wants to relocate affected persons to another site but families have refused to move.⁷²

In Odisha, officials of the state forest department evicted 32 tribal families in Sagada Village of Kalahandi District in April 2020, allegedly to vacate forestland of 'encroachments.' The action of the officials rendered about 90 people homeless without the provision of alternative housing and basic services amid the pandemic-related lockdown.⁷³

In Mumbai, in March 2020, police officials forcibly removed 20 homeless families of the Pardhi community living under the Western Express Highway flyover in Vile Parle. The drive was carried out at 3.00 a.m. in the

morning, allegedly to ‘clean’ the streets. Reportedly, the police beat up children, men, and women while evicting them from the site.⁷⁴

Also in March 2020, the Patna Municipal Corporation demolished 73 houses in Kankarbagh Circle, Patna, to remove ‘encroachments’ along the Yogipur drain.⁷⁵ In February 2020 too, Patna’s district administration carried out a number of demolitions to remove ‘encroachments’ along drains in the city, destroying over 400 houses. For example, it demolished 240 houses demolished in Anandpur, Kurji, and Patel Nagar; and, 150 houses in Kamla Nehru Nagar.⁷⁶

The Bathinda Development Authority—in February 2020—demolished houses of 35 families in Preet Nagar and Dhobiana Basti in the city of Bathinda, reportedly to remove ‘illegal structures’ on land of the Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority. The drive was conducted without any prior notice, leaving all affected persons homeless.⁷⁷

Between January and February 2020, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation demolished 69 houses in a settlement near the Sardar Patel Stadium (renamed Narendra Modi Stadium) allegedly for ‘city beautification’ ahead of the visit of former U.S. President, Mr Donald Trump to Ahmedabad. On 23 January 2020, the civic body demolished 24 houses without any prior intimation to the residents. The affected families, mostly comprising daily-wage labourers, had gone out for work when their houses were razed down. They found their houses demolished and belongings scattered outside upon returning. The civic body had given a seven-day notice to 45 other families in the area to vacate the land. Their houses were demolished in the month of February. The families had been living at the site for the past 20 years. Affected families did not receive any alternative housing or compensation after their eviction.⁷⁸

“Our houses were destroyed with all our belongings, no court document was given. We were told that big ‘sirs’ are coming here. We are labourers, we go to work in the morning and come back in the evening. We have young children. Where do we go now? What do we do?”

Woman evicted before the visit of former US President, Mr Donald Trump, to Ahmedabad in February 2020

In January 2020, the Municipal Corporation of Patiala, along with police officials, demolished 100 temporary dwellings of homeless people on Mall Road for a ‘city beautification’ drive under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission).⁷⁹ Reportedly, officials of the civic body asked affected persons to leave the city after dropping them to the railway station. Unwilling to stay at temporary shelter homes constructed by the civic body, the affected families were living in temporary dwellings they had set up along the roadside.⁸⁰ In a similar drive to ‘beautify’ the city of Pune for a higher rank under the Swachh Survekshan⁸¹ scheme, the Pune Municipal Corporation evicted 100 homeless people living at Congress Bhavan Road in January 2020.⁸²

In Bengaluru, in January 2020, officials of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) razed 500 houses in Devarabeesanahalli and 200 houses in Bellandur and Kariyammana Agrahara to remove ‘encroachments.’ Affected residents, who were migrant workers, were wrongfully labelled ‘illegal Bangladeshi’ and this was used as a justification for demolishing their homes.⁸³ Providing relief to the families, the High Court of Karnataka stayed further eviction by BBMP and asked the state government to provide rehabilitation to the affected families.⁸⁴

“I came to Bengaluru from Nadia District, West Bengal. We all have official government documents (Aadhaar cards and election cards) to prove that. Most of us work as ragpickers. We only collect and sell waste that has monetary value; we do not generate any waste here. We pay rent to the person who owns this land. When officials from BBMP (Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike) accused us of being from Bangladesh, we showed them our official documents. Then they claimed we were responsible for the pollution of Kudlu Lake and asked us to vacate the area within two hours. When they did not pay heed to our requests to give us a few more days, we started packing our belongings. But the officials brought bulldozers and garbage trucks and demolished our homes.”

Person evicted from Kudlu, Bellandur, Bengaluru, in January 2020

Evictions in Delhi

India's capital city of Delhi witnessed a number of forced evictions between June and October 2020. Most of these were carried out by union government agencies, especially the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the Indian Railways. For instance, in October, DDA demolished 150 houses (out of 500 identified) near Akshardham Temple to remove 'encroachments' on its land. No prior notice was provided to the affected families. During the demolition drive, DDA also destroyed crops of some of the families for whom farming was the only source of livelihood. Affected persons had been living in the area for the past 40 years.⁸⁵ Families living in 350 houses at the site continue to face the threat of imminent eviction. In the same month, a team of Delhi Police officials evicted 150 families living in Israeli Camp, Rangpuri Pahadi at night, without any prior notice. Residents were given only 10 minutes to remove their belongings and vacate the area. About 1,000 people, including children and older persons, were rendered homeless and forced to live in the open in the bitter cold.⁸⁶ Also in October 2020, 15 families living in Shradhanand Colony, Bhalaswa, Delhi lost their homes during an 'encroachment' removal drive – carried out by a local factory owner with the assistance of the Delhi Police.⁸⁷



Destroyed homes in Rangpuri Pahadi, Delhi

Following an order of the National Green Tribunal to remove 'encroachments' along the floodplains of the Yamuna River in Delhi, DDA demolished over 35 houses near the Dhobi Ghat area in Jamia Nagar in September 2020.⁸⁸ Affected families, who were rendered homeless, refute the claim of DDA that their houses had been temporarily built over the past few months.⁸⁹ They claim to have been living in the area for several years. The authorities not only bulldozed their houses but also deprived them from accessing basic services like water supply and toilets by destroying these facilities. This further increased their vulnerability to contracting the coronavirus. In the absence of any government support for their rehabilitation, families, who have approached the High Court of Delhi for relief, are still living in makeshift tents at the site, which they have to remove during the day as a result of persistent threats from DDA.⁹⁰



HLRN

Devastation after demolition, Dhobi Ghat, Delhi

In the month of September 2020, the Block Development Office (South) demolished 30 houses in Sangam Vihar while the Indian Railways demolished 10 houses in Keshavpuram and Nangloi, and six houses near the railway track in Mansarovar Park.⁹¹ The settlement consists of around 35 houses, mostly of families who have been living in the area for more than 40 years. They have faced the brunt of repeated incidents of demolition, year after year, including in 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2021. As a result of immediate legal intervention by civil society organizations, including HLRN, the demolition of the rest of the houses in the settlement was prevented in September 2020.

Officials of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation and the Delhi Police demolished 40 houses of migrant and daily-wage workers, in Bhatt Camp, Badarpur in August 2020.⁹² Affected families claim to have been living in the area without adequate services for the past 30–40 years. They were involved in artisanal work, including teaching children paper crafts in schools. The closure of schools during the pandemic has adversely impacted their livelihoods. The loss of housing further increased their marginalization. In the absence of any rehabilitation, they are living in makeshift tents at the same site.



HLRN

Salvaged belongings of families evicted in Bhatt Camp, Delhi

“For the last 40 years, I have been living here, in Bhatt Camp, with my family. I earn my living by selling books in schools. I have a physical disability, which prevents me from doing other work. My house was first demolished in 2016; this resulted in a loss of Rs 200,000–300,000. Most of our belongings were destroyed. When the lockdown was enforced in March 2020, my work came to a halt. In August 2020, my house was demolished again. We are now living under a tarpaulin sheet with our few salvaged belongings. Officials from MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) keep threatening to evict us from here. Where should I go with my family when I have been living here for 40 years and have identity documents as proof of my residence? I am very worried about my family. I request the government not to make us homeless but to arrange alternative housing for us.”

An 84-year-old man whose home was demolished twice in Delhi

An order of the High Court of Delhi—to remove ‘encroachments’ on a service road—led to the eviction of 150 families, mostly of sanitation workers, in East Laxmi Market in Chitra Vihar in July 2020.⁹³ The East Delhi Municipal Corporation and the Delhi Public Works Department carried out the three-day demolition drive rendering affected families homeless.



Demolition drive at East Laxmi Market, Delhi

In June 2020, after officials from the Indian Railways threatened to demolish houses in Shakur Basti for expansion of the railway track, 13 families living in the settlement were forced to demolish their own homes. As a result, they were rendered homeless in the peak of summer.⁹⁴ As of 16 August 2021, work on the expansion of the railway track had not commenced.⁹⁵ Repeated evictions and threats of eviction continue in the settlement, despite a March 2019 order of the High Court of Delhi, in the case of *Ajay Maken v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 11616/2015], to provide relief to families in Shakur Basti—who had been first evicted in December 2015—and affirming their right to adequate housing and right to the city.

In December 2015, the Indian Railways demolished over 1,500 houses in Shakur Basti, Delhi, rendering as many as 5,000 people homeless in the extreme cold. The High Court of Delhi in the case of *Ajay Maken v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 11616/2015] prohibited further evictions in the area without rehabilitation. In its final order of March 2019, the Court laid down important guidelines for state authorities to comply with before proceeding with any eviction. The Indian Railways has not implemented the Court’s orders but has continued to threaten residents with eviction. Since 2015, at least 37 houses have been demolished in the settlement without due process, including 25 houses during the pandemic. With frequent notices of eviction from Railways officials, residents continue to live without basic facilities and in persistent fear.

Such acts of discrimination against the poor, by destroying their homes and rendering them homeless, indicate the increasing criminalization of poverty and go against the foundational principles of the Constitution of India that guarantees everyone the right to equality and the freedom to reside in any part of the country. Further, they also indicate the distortion of the notion of ‘public land,’ as the state that is entrusted with the protection of such land for the people continues to act against the people, by evicting them arbitrarily, at its whim.

b) Infrastructure and Ostensible ‘Development’ Projects

Infrastructure projects and those carried out for purported ‘development’ purposes continue to displace thousands of low-income families across India without due process, and in many cases, without compliance with laws. Since India’s independence in 1947, independent experts estimate that over 70 million people in the country have been displaced for such projects that include, *inter alia*, dams, mining, road construction, building of ports and industries, and urban renewal.

Primary and secondary research by HLRN reveals that in 2020, at least 8,658 houses were demolished for such projects resulting in the eviction of at least 42,320 people (25 per cent of the total number of people evicted in 2020). The reasons for these evictions include road-widening projects; road, highway, and bridge construction; tourism; coal mine expansion; and, ‘smart city’ projects (See Annexure I for details). It is likely that many more infrastructure and other project-related incidents of eviction and displacement occurred across the country, which HLRN has not been able to document, particularly in the absence of public information. As mentioned, we have not included all people that have been displaced as a result of legal land acquisition processes.

In 2020, infrastructure projects resulted in the destruction of at least **8,658** houses, resulting in the forced eviction of over **42,320** people.

Though many of these evictions are justified by the state as ‘public purpose’ projects, the term continues to be misused in the absence of a human rights-based definition and interpretation. Also, the population that benefits from these ostensible ‘public purpose’ projects is always different from the one that pays the price for them, including through the loss of their homes, habitats, livelihoods, health, education, and security.

Between February and December 2020, over 500 people had been rendered homeless in Khidkiya Ghat in the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The eviction of families in the area started after India’s Prime Minister inaugurated a series of projects, including the construction of a helipad, jetty, food plaza, and crafts shop. In the month of November 2020, ahead of the visit of the Prime Minister to inaugurate the Varanasi–Prayagraj road project and attend the ‘Deepotsav’ event, 50 houses in Suzabad were removed as a part of a ‘city-beautification’ drive rendering over 250 people homeless. The same families witnessed demolition of their homes in February 2020, ahead of the Prime Minister’s visit to the area to unveil a statute of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay. Since their eviction, they were living in makeshift tents, which were destroyed in November.⁹⁶ Most of the affected families are Dalits and earn their living as daily-wage workers. The state authorities did not provide any prior notice or alternative accommodation to the evicted persons. They were forced to live in the open in cold weather conditions and amid the persisting threat of the coronavirus.

Road construction continues to be a major source of displacement without rehabilitation across India. **In 2020, about 4,870 people lost their homes for road and highway construction and expansion projects**, including road overbridges. For instance, about 70 houses along University Road in Rajkot, Gujarat, were demolished for a ‘road clearance’ project in October 2020. No prior notice or any rehabilitation was provided to the affected families.⁹⁷ Also in October, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation demolished houses of 59 families living at Amar Mahal Junction in Chembur, Mumbai in order to increase the width of a road for the smooth movement of the traffic. Reportedly, 40 families were rehabilitated in the Tilak Nagar market area.⁹⁸ In March 2020, the Jaipur Development Authority razed 219 houses—out of 603 houses identified for demolition—in Fauji Basti for the construction of the Jhotwara elevated road. The residents were resettled in Sikar Road, in houses constructed under the erstwhile Basic Services for the Urban Poor (Anand Lok) scheme.⁹⁹ Families were asked to pay between Rs 30,000 and Rs 100,000 in instalments for the alternative housing.¹⁰⁰ The construction of a road overbridge in

Rajkot, Gujarat—in March 2020—resulted in the eviction of 100 families living along the Laxmi Nagar drain. The families did not get any prior notice of the drive, nor were they provided any rehabilitation or resettlement.¹⁰¹

In the north Indian city of Ludhiana, the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation demolished 200 ‘structures’ in Gopal Nagar in the peak of winter in December 2020 to vacate land earmarked for the construction of a ‘leisure valley’ and a road. Some of the affected families said the civic body did not give them any prior notice and alleged that only poor people’s houses were demolished; no action was taken against rich families living in the area. The demolition drive left families, including children and older persons, without any shelter in the extreme cold.¹⁰²

Railway and metro projects resulted in the displacement of 2,750 people in 2020.

For instance, in Ahmedabad, construction of a metro station for the Ahmedabad Metro Rail project resulted in the demolition of 200 houses in Shankar Bhuvan, Shahpur in November and December 2020.¹⁰³ Over the months of September and October 2020, officials from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation also demolished 150 houses and shops in different areas of Juhapura for the metro rail project and for town-planning purposes.¹⁰⁴ In Jharkhand, the Indian Railways evicted about 27 tribal families in Hatia, Ranchi, in November 2020, for the expansion of a railway track. The evicted families did not receive any rehabilitation.¹⁰⁵ In Varanasi, a team of officials from the Public Works Department, Uttar Pradesh State Bridge Corporation Limited, and the District Urban Development Authority demolished 59 houses in Ghosiyana, in September 2020, to clear ‘encroachments’ on defence land for the construction of a railway overbridge on the Shivpur–Phulwaria–Lehartara Road. Affected families claim to have been living in the area for the past 100 years. The demolition resulted after the Allahabad High Court dismissed a petition filed by the families in 2019 against the move of the administration to remove ‘encroachments.’ The families were allotted houses under the Kanshi Ram Shehri Awas Yojana.¹⁰⁶



Beena Jadav

Demolished houses, Shahpur, Ahmedabad

Other displacing projects in 2020 include construction of power plants, reservoirs, ropeways, and a college. The construction of a thermal power plant by the National Thermal Power Corporation resulted in the destruction of 10 houses in Raham Village in Chatra District of Jharkhand in October 2020. Affected families did not get any prior warning before their houses were removed.¹⁰⁷ Construction work for the Gandikota Reservoir Project in Kadapa District of Andhra Pradesh resulted in the eviction of 1,300 families in Thallaprodatur Village in September 2020.¹⁰⁸ Reportedly, families were not provided any compensation or rehabilitation. Families claim that construction of the Jogulpuram Resettlement Colony, where they were supposed to be resettled, has not been completed.¹⁰⁹ Between September and October 2020, the local administration in Tamando Mouza, in Khordha District of Odisha, destroyed about 80 houses for the construction of a Physical Education College under the Sports and Youth Services Department of the state government on 10 acres of land. In June 2020, construction of a road resulted in the eviction of 60 families in Mainshakhal Basti in Bhubaneswar.¹¹⁰



Ranjit Sutar

Razed houses, Tamando Mouza, Odisha

The district administration of Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, razed 85 houses in Shifan Court between August and September 2020 for the Purkuk–Mussoorie ropeway project. The eviction of families followed an order of the High Court of Uttarakhand to clear the area and hand over the land to the state tourism department for the project. Contrary to a statement by district officials that some families vacated the land on their own and temporary shelters were given to those who could not make immediate living arrangements, affected families—under the banner of the Shifan Court Permanent Rehabilitation Committee—have been protesting against their arbitrary eviction and demanding adequate rehabilitation from the state government.¹¹¹

The Ujjain Municipal Corporation, along with a team of revenue and police officials, demolished over 100 houses in Moti Nagar in January 2020 for the construction of a river overbridge. During the eviction, officials allegedly misbehaved with the residents. A local area minister announced a compensation of Rs 5,000 to each affected family and sought construction of alternative housing under PMAY.¹¹²

Late at night on 19 April 2020, during the nationwide lockdown, revenue officials in Siddipet District, Telangana evicted 30 families—mostly Dalits—in Kochaguttapalli Village, for the construction of the Anantagiri Reservoir. The officials did not even consider their pleas for time until the next morning to vacate their houses.¹¹³ Similarly, following an order of the High Court of Telangana to vacate land that would be submerged as a result of the Kondapochamma Reservoir project, police officials evicted 40 families in Mamidyala Village, also at night, in April 2020.¹¹⁴

“They have taken advantage of the prevailing situation and conducted the destruction in the middle of the night. It is unfair on the part of the officials to render us homeless at a time like this when there is fear of coronavirus.”¹¹⁵

Dalit farmers whose homes were destroyed in the middle of the night in April 2020, in Siddipet, Telangana

The Bhubaneswar Development Authority, in May 2020, evicted 105 families, mostly migrant workers, in the Nilamadhav area of Chandrasekharpur in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, for a housing construction project. The Authority provided alternative accommodation to some of the affected families in apartments, while others either moved into transit housing or with their relatives.¹¹⁶

Several evictions in 2020 were undertaken for projects related to India's Smart Cities Mission.¹¹⁷ Research by HLRN indicates that forced evictions occurred in 28 of the 100 'smart cities' being developed across the country. While it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of 'smart city'-related evictions, HLRN has found that **'smart city' projects directly resulted in over 7,080 people losing their homes in 2020.**

From 2017 to 2020, nearly **30,000** people lost their homes for implementation of the Smart Cities Mission, as recorded by HLRN.

For instance, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation demolished over 1,000 houses near Muthannankulam Tank to remove 'unauthorized constructions' and 'encroachers' in June 2020. The drive was conducted as a part of the civic body's proposed plan to develop the canal under a Smart Cities Mission¹¹⁸ project.¹¹⁹ Affected families were provided alternative flats constructed by TNSCB in Keeranatham, Kuniamuthur, Malumichampatty, Ukkadam, and Vellore. However, 19 of the affected families from Sundapalayam Road did not receive any resettlement on grounds that they lacked address proof.¹²⁰

c) Ostensible Environmental Projects, Forest Protection, and Wildlife Conservation

In 2020, several incidents of forced eviction (19) were carried out, purportedly, for the implementation of environmental projects and for wildlife and forest protection. This resulted in the forced eviction and displacement of at least **85,033 people (49 per cent** of the evicted population in 2020) across the country (See Annexure I for details). In 2020, environmental reasons accounted for the highest number of people evicted in India. Some of these evictions were ordered by courts. Such cases, unfortunately, create an artificial conflict between the environment and human rights of local communities, even though most communities live harmoniously with nature and contribute to its conservation and sustainable development.

Projects related to the environment, forest protection, and wildlife conservation resulted in the eviction of over **85,000** people in 2020, and at least **181,450** people from 2017 to 2020.

Forestland-clearance drives and forestry projects resulted in the eviction of thousands of low-income and tribal communities living in forests, affecting at least 84,202 people in 2020. For instance, in Dhamtari District of Chhattisgarh, 35 families, belonging to the Dhoba Kachhar tribe, lost their houses in the villages of Dinkarpur and Dugli in October 2020. The Joint Forest Management Committee, in a bid to vacate forestland, allegedly demolished houses, destroyed standing crops and set on fire food grains stored by the affected families. During the demolition process, reportedly, people were mistreated. The drive left all families homeless; later they took refuge in makeshift tents in Dhamtari. This is not the first time that the affected families were evicted from their land and had their crops destroyed. Their demands for land leases saw some members of the community being imprisoned a few years ago. Activists working in the area allege that the tribals' demands for land and forest rights have been illegally rejected in order to facilitate their eviction from forestland that they have been living on for generations.¹²¹

In September 2020, the Faridabad Municipal Corporation, along with a large police force, razed 1,200 houses in Khori Gaon/Village, rendering over 5,000 people homeless. The drive was carried out following a Supreme Court of India order to vacate forestland of 'illegal occupation.' Evidence, however, indicates that the site of habitation was not forested.¹²² The night before the demolition, police detained 85 people from the site to prevent any resistance during the demolition, and on the day of the eviction, held over 150 people who protested against the destruction of their homes.¹²³



Khori Gaon, Faridabad

The Telangana government evicted 80 Koya tribal families, in Satyanarayanam Village of Bhadradi Khotagudem District in June 2020, for a plantation drive under the Haritha Haraam programme. A similar clearance drive resulted in the eviction of 35 tribal families in Mulakapalli Village of Khammam District. Affected families allege that attempts are being made to deprive them of their right to forestland.¹²⁴ In Gujarat's Dang District, six tribal families belonging to the Bhil, Konkani, and Warli communities were evicted from their land in April 2020. State forest officials—after giving an 'oral warning' to the families—damaged their homes and property, in a drive to clear forestland that the evicted families claim to have been living on for generations.¹²⁵

In Bihar's Kaimur District, forest officials demolished 50 houses in Sarainar Village. They also pressurized residents of Gullu Village to vacate their land by digging pits on their farmland, under the guise of carrying out an afforestation drive. The residents of nearby villages, in the same district, continue to live in constant fear of being evicted. On 10 and 11 September 2020, some of the affected villagers surrounded the premises of the Forest Department. Officials retaliated by firing in the air, injuring three of the protestors. Police personnel, reportedly, also mistreated women and children. Over 25 First Information Reports were registered against several of the protesting villagers, while over 20 people were arrested. Charges were levelled on them under Sections 147 and 148 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for rioting, and rioting with dangerous weapons, respectively; they were also charged with the 'attempt to murder' under IPC Section 307.¹²⁶ It has been alleged that forest-dwelling communities have been targeted for eviction from the Kaimur forest area that is slated to become the second tiger reserve in the state.¹²⁷

Such eviction drives from forest areas have continued despite the Supreme Court's stay on its order of February 2019 [W.P. (C) 109/2008] to evict those living in forest areas with no valid claims, which impacts millions of people living in forest areas across India.

A large number of people in Maharashtra lost their homes, allegedly, for the preservation of mangroves. In February 2020, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and officials of the Bombay High Court-appointed Mangrove Cell and police personnel demolished 150 houses in Chedda Nagar area of Chembur, Mumbai, to protect mangroves.¹²⁸ In Thane, Maharashtra, the district administration razed 384 *chawls* (a *chawl* comprises at least 40 rooms) in Diva, rendering over 73,000 people homeless in January 2020. The demolition was sanctioned by a 2019 High Court of Bombay order [PIL 54/2016] to demolish illegal constructions on mangrove land in

Diva. According to affected persons, they were neither given prior notice of the demolition nor any alternative housing after their houses were destroyed. They lost their belongings and valuable documents during the eviction process. A 65-year-old woman fainted while protesting the destruction of her home. Reportedly, some of the families had house-ownership documents, had paid taxes, and had been assured by developers that their homes would not be razed.¹²⁹ In 2019, the affected families had witnessed loss of housing and personal belongings during monsoon floods.

Expansion of National Parks and declaration of tiger reserves have also displaced a large number of people. For instance, in Assam, Kaziranga National Park authorities and forest department officials evicted over 600 families living in Haldhibari Village. The demolition was carried out a month after a Gauhati High Court order, passed in October 2020, asking authorities to remove ‘illegal’ occupants of the Park land. Affected families, mostly farmers, have lived in the forest area for generations. They have faced multiple evictions since Kaziranga received the status of a national park in 1974. The expansion of the park area earlier for the protection of tigers and now for rhinoceros has allegedly resulted in the eviction of families living within the park area. In September 2020, the Government of Assam approved adding 30 square kilometres to the current park size for the conservation of rhinoceros population.¹³⁰ Under the guise of protecting forestland and wildlife, in January 2020, forest officials evicted 100 families belonging to the Khadia tribal community from Khejuri Village, located in Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha. Affected families were relocated to Saleibeda in Mayurbhanj District, under a rehabilitation programme of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.¹³¹

In Coimbatore, the Municipal Corporation demolished 31 houses at Sunnambu Kalvai, along the Noyyal River for a river restoration project in November 2020.¹³² In the same month, the city municipality demolished 27 houses at Muthannankulam Tank for lake rejuvenation and restoration purposes.¹³³

d) ‘Disaster Management’

In 2020, several evictions were executed under the guise of ‘disaster management’ that affected **2 per cent** of the total evicted population in the year. All these took place in Tamil Nadu (*See Annexure I for details*).

Since 2015—when Chennai witnessed destructive floods—the city has witnessed a massive and continuous eviction drive, carried out under the guise of ‘disaster management’, conservation of water bodies, and provision of disaster-resilient housing for vulnerable communities. From 2015 to 2020, 18,723 families—consisting of nearly 75,000 individuals from 69 settlements—were forcibly evicted from their homes and relocated to remote and inadequate sites. These include 65 settlements—comprising 16,400 families—that were resettled from the banks of the Adyar and Cooum Rivers, of which 12,266 families living along the Cooum River were evicted under the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project funded by the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust, and over 4,134 families were evicted from the banks of the Adyar River.¹³⁴

Over the last 20 years—from 2000 to 2020—the Government of Tamil Nadu has evicted and relocated nearly 59,000 families to various resettlement sites located in the city peripheries: Perumbakkam, Gudapakkam, Navalur, Athipattu, Kannagi Nagar, Semmenchery, AIR site, and Tsunami Nagar. However, the sites to which affected communities have been relocated are also located in flood-prone areas, with no disaster-resilient components included in the design of tenements.

Evictions for the purported reason of ‘disaster management’ received impetus from an order of the Madras High Court, and have continued over the years, including for the alleged purpose of ‘restoration of water bodies.’ In response to a 2015 order [W.P. 39234/2015] of the Madras High Court to take “expeditious steps for early removal of encroachments by construction of alternative tenements,” the Government of Tamil Nadu has demolished several thousand houses.

From 2015 to 2020, nearly **75,000** people have been forcibly relocated in Chennai for ‘disaster management’ purposes, including the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project.

During the pandemic (from March 2020 to June 2021), the Tamil Nadu government evicted 2,045 families in the cities of Coimbatore, Chennai, and Madurai, thereby further increasing their vulnerabilities, impoverishment, and indebtedness.

In a two-day demolition drive carried out in Chennai in December 2020, the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board razed 30 houses in Thideer Nagar and 190 houses in Sathyavani Muthu Nagar, under the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project. As a mark of protest against their forced eviction and relocation, some of the families from Sathyavani Muthu Nagar stood neck-deep in the sewage-laden Cooum River for five hours.¹³⁵ Affected families were offered alternative flats in the resettlement site of Perumbakkam, located 30 kilometres away. While 160 of the 190 affected families from Sathyavani Muthu Nagar have moved to Perumbakkam, the others are still staying at the site of demolition, as they have not received any resettlement. Similarly, in November, the TNSCB demolished 221 houses in Padi Kuppam, near Rail Nagar in Chennai. The affected families received resettlement four kilometres away at Athipattu.¹³⁶ In August 2020, officials of the Greater Chennai Corporation demolished 90 houses living along Alapakkam Lake near Maduravoyal in Valasaravakkam. The civic body carried out the eviction as a part of Chennai's water body restoration project.¹³⁷



Current living conditions of families from Sathyavani Muthu Nagar that were not resettled

The Erode Corporation demolished five houses in Marapalam, in December 2020, and asked residents of 48 houses to vacate their homes within a week's time.¹³⁸

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation evicted 119 families from under Shivaji Bridge in Hyderabad, in September 2020, reportedly to remove 'encroachments' from storm water drains, as part of its flood mitigation measures.¹³⁹ The families had been evicted from the same site in 2019 as well but in the absence of any rehabilitation had moved back and were living in makeshift conditions.

e) Other Reasons for Forced Eviction in 2020

About **5 per cent** of the population affected by forced evictions in 2020 lost their homes for reasons other than those documented above (*See Annexure I for details*). For instance, in Assam, the police—along with paramilitary personnel and other administrative officials—evicted 64 Muslim families from their homes in Bharasingri Village in October 2020. The demolition drive, which left about 500 people homeless, was allegedly carried out to remove 'illegal settlers' from government land. However, affected residents claim that their houses were razed, without due process, following a campaign by members of the ruling party in the village calling them 'illegal Bangladeshis.' Contrary to the allegation of them being 'illegal settlers,' affected families reportedly hold land deeds and also feature in the National Register of Citizens.¹⁴⁰

In a similar eviction drive, the local administration in Indore partially demolished 13 houses in Chandan Khedi Village in December 2020, on the pretext of removing ‘encroachments’ on government land. Reportedly, the demolition was carried out a day after communal clashes broke out in the minority-dominated village during a fundraising rally for by right-wing organizations.¹⁴¹ A similar violent clash in the Begum Bagh area following another fundraising rally resulted in the demolition of one house, rendering 19 people homeless.¹⁴²

An extremist group demolished 15 houses of Christians in Kakadabeda Village, Chhattisgarh in September 2020. The affected families were earlier warned by the group to renounce their religious faith or else they would be forced out of their homes. Fearing for their lives, the families fled to nearby villages. When they returned, they found their houses and other property destroyed.¹⁴³

Between September and October 2020, authorities demolished 31 houses in Shanti Nagar Colony, Ghaziabad to vacate government land for the establishment of an institute for ‘political training.’¹⁴⁴

In Karnataka, 170 houses of migrant workers in Kacharakanahalli were razed by miscreants in April 2020. The workers had gone to their villages during the national lockdown when the incident took place. To vacate the land for personal gain, miscreants set 55 houses on fire in March 2020 and then destroyed the remaining 170 houses using an earth mover machine in April. The High Court of Karnataka, taking *suo moto* cognizance of the issue, ordered the state government to pay compensation to affected persons and rebuild their houses. The Supreme Court of India has, however, stayed the High Court’s order for the state government to reconstruct houses till further hearing.¹⁴⁵

In a similar act, miscreants demolished 35 houses in Munekolalu, Bengaluru, in February 2020, by allegedly labelling migrant workers from Assam, Karnataka, and Odisha as ‘Bangladeshis.’¹⁴⁶

In January 2020, Railway officials demolished 108 houses in Colony Number 10 in Ludhiana, Punjab, on grounds that the houses were unsafe for habitation. Affected families were allotted alternative houses, which according to them were equally unsafe and uninhabitable.¹⁴⁷



3. Lack of Due Process

In almost all incidents of forced eviction recorded by HLRN in the year 2020, state authorities did not follow due process, as established by human rights guidelines, including the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement. Even fundamental requirements of providing advance notice of the eviction/demolition, organizing a consultation with affected persons, and refraining from carrying out evictions in inclement weather and during the academic year or before school examinations, were not complied with by both the union and state governments.

This section highlights examples of various forms of violation of due process.

Lack of Survey, Prior Notice, and Impact Assessment

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

41. Any decision relating to evictions should be announced in writing in the local language to all individuals concerned, sufficiently in advance. The eviction notice should contain a detailed justification for the decision, including on: (a) absence of reasonable alternatives; (b) the full details of the proposed alternative; and (c) where no alternatives exist, all measures taken and foreseen to minimize the adverse effects of evictions.

The Supreme Court of India, in *S.L.P. (C) 30026–30027/2018*, had declared that protocol must be followed before an eviction, including issuance of adequate notice and opportunity to be heard. Several judgments of Indian High Courts have also called for due process, including comprehensive surveys to be conducted prior to any eviction drive, the requirement of meaningful engagement with affected persons, and provision of advance notice and adequate rehabilitation.¹⁴⁸ For example, in *Mala Pentamma v. Nizamabad Municipality* [W.P. 15581/2005], the High Court of Hyderabad held that:

Even for removal of encroachments, the encroachers are entitled to notice and without following due process of law, they cannot be evicted.

In the case of *Ajay Maken v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 11616/2015], the High Court of Delhi emphasized that evictions conducted without adhering to due process would be considered illegal. The Court held that:

... conducting a detailed survey prior to the eviction; drawing up a rehabilitation plan in consultation with the dwellers in the JJ bastis and jhuggis; ensuring that upon eviction the dwellers are immediately rehabilitated – will all have to be adhered to prior to an eviction drive. **Forced eviction of jhuggi dwellers, unannounced, in coordination with the other agencies, and without compliance with the above steps, would be contrary to the law** [emphasis added].

In almost all incidents documented by HLRN in 2020, state authorities did not provide affected communities with prior notice or sufficient time to remove their possessions from their homes before evicting them. Furthermore, in many of the reported cases, authorities did not have a legal basis for the eviction, nor did they provide a justifiable reason to people before forcing them out of their homes and razing their houses to the ground. The majority of state-sanctioned eviction and demolition drives resulted in the destruction of not only housing but also of cash savings and personal belongings of residents, including vital documents such as ration cards and voter cards, cooking utensils, food supplies, furniture, medical records, mobile phones, jewellery, and children's school books, uniforms, and certificates.

In Rainpur Village in Chhattisgarh, local authorities demolished houses of 50 tribal families and rendered them homeless without any prior warning.¹⁴⁹ In Varanasi, multiple evictions were carried out under the guise of 'city beautification'—including those ahead of the Prime Minister's visit—without advance notice to affected persons. These include incidents of forced eviction of 500 people in Khidikya Ghat and 50 families in Suzabad.¹⁵⁰

The Ghaziabad Development Authority evicted 250 families in Bhovapur, multiple times, without prior warning on all occasions.¹⁵¹ In Thane, 384 *chawls*—consisting of over 73,000 people—were demolished without giving the residents any notice.¹⁵² In Raham Village, Jharkhand, the National Thermal Power Corporation demolished 10 houses without providing residents with any prior warning.¹⁵³

In most evictions reported in Delhi in 2020, affected communities did not receive prior written notice of the impending demolition of their homes. These include the sites of Akshardham Temple, Bhatt Camp, Bhalaswa, Dhobi Ghat, East Laxmi Market, Keshavapuram, Mansarovar Park, Nangloi, Rangpuri Pahadi, and Shakur Basti, among others. Similarly, in none of the sites of eviction in Gujarat did authorities provide affected communities with advance notice before demolishing their homes. For instance, no prior notice was provided by officials before the destruction of homes of 70 families living along University Road in Rajkot and before the eviction of 100 families in Laxmi Nagar. In Dang District of Gujarat, six tribal families were rendered homeless after the provision of only an oral warning.¹⁵⁴

In Assam, 64 Muslim families, who were evicted from their homes in Bharasingri Village, alleged the complete lack of due process.¹⁵⁵

Primary research by IRCUDC in Chennai reveals that from 2015 to 2020, in 97 per cent of the evicted settlements, no consultation was held with residents prior to eviction, while in 99 per cent of the settlements, authorities did not provide any legal notice of eviction to affected residents.

Despite the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement calling for ‘eviction impact assessments’ prior to evictions, these were not conducted for any of the incidents of eviction in India recorded by HLRN in 2020.

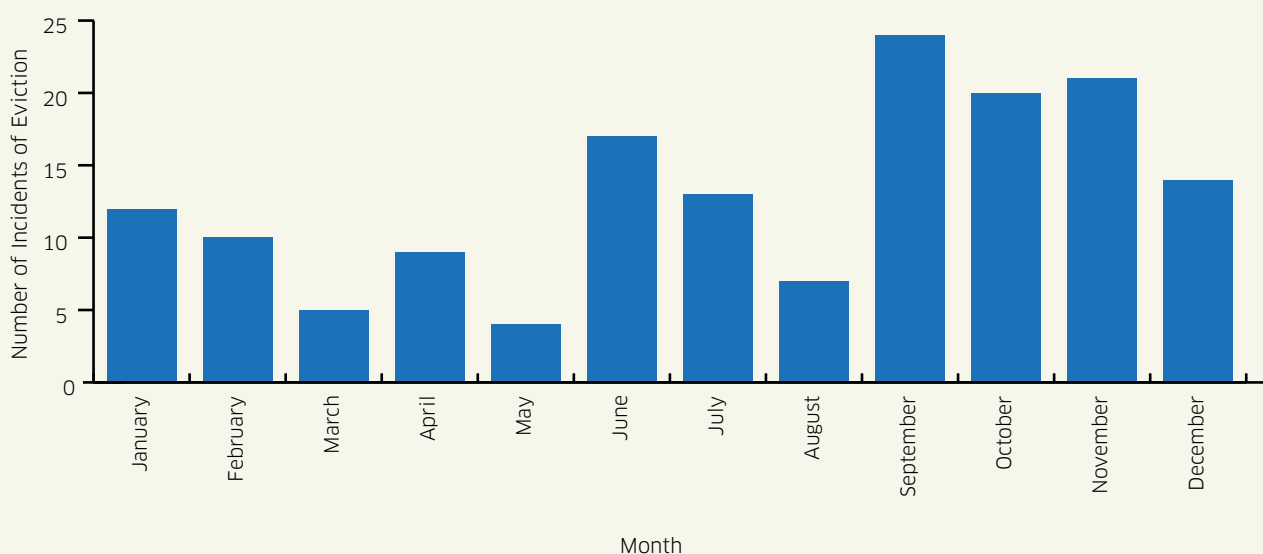
Evictions in Inclement Weather

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

49. Evictions must not take place in inclement weather, at night, during festivals or religious holidays, prior to elections, or during or just prior to school examinations.

Forced evictions and home demolitions occurred throughout the year, including in extreme weather conditions – during the intense heat of summer, in the bitter cold, and in the monsoon season.

Graph 2: Month-wise Evictions in 2020



According to HLRN's analysis, most evictions in 2020 took place in the summer heat of June; in the month of September; and, in early winter (October and November). A large number of people also were rendered homeless during the monsoon season in July and the bitter cold of December.

The Ludhiana Municipal Corporation razed about 80 houses on its land in Prem Nagar by giving families only two hours time to vacate their houses in the peak of winter in December 2020.¹⁵⁶ The civic body also demolished about 200 'structures' in the Gopal Nagar area of the city in December, leaving families, including children and older persons, without any shelter in the bitter cold.¹⁵⁷

In November, at the onset of winter, the Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) in Gurugram, demolished over 1,500 houses, affecting around 4,000 people in Behrampur Village without making prior arrangements for their rehabilitation.¹⁵⁸ Also in November, DTCP officials demolished 650 houses near the Saraswati Kunj Golf Course Road.

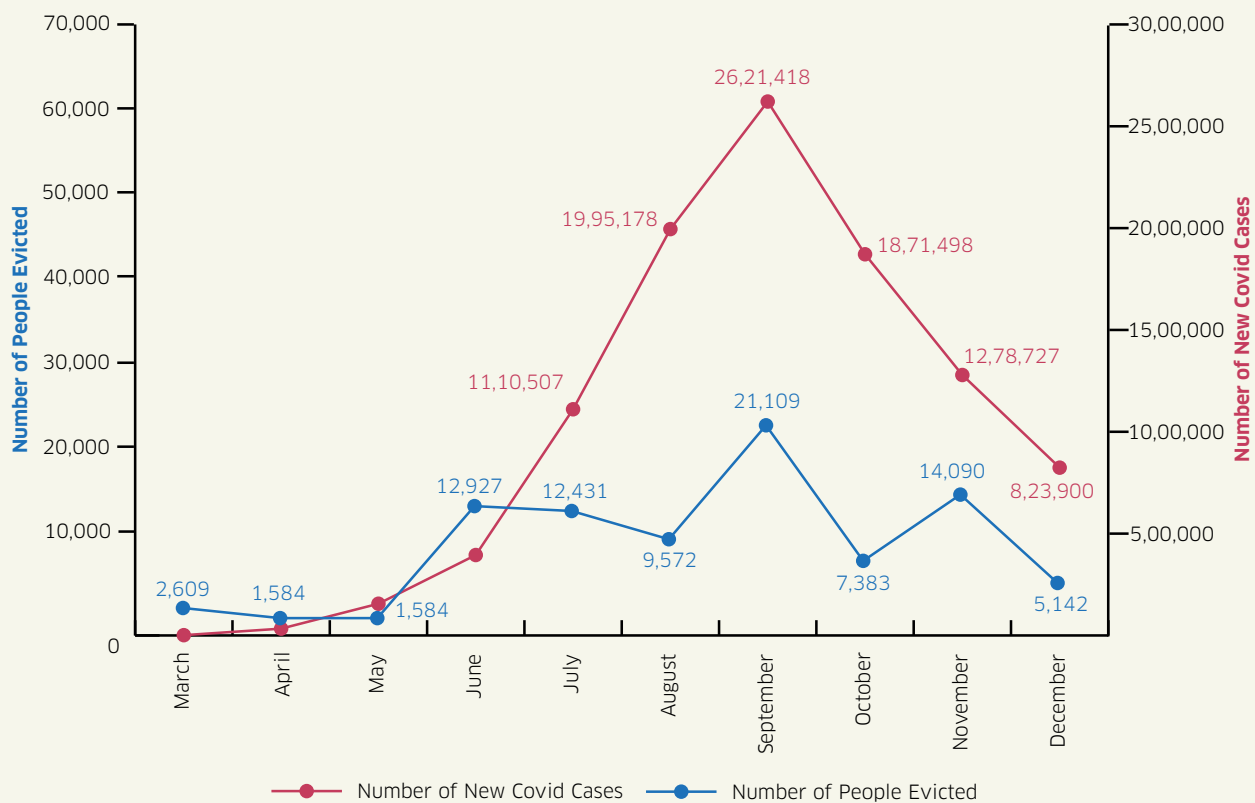
The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram demolished an estimated 3,500 houses from several locations in Sikanderpur during the monsoon season, between July and August 2020,¹⁵⁹ rendering families homeless in the heavy rain. The demolition of 40 houses in Bhatt Camp, Delhi also took place during the monsoons, in August 2020. In the intense heat of June 2020, 13 families living in Shakur Basti, Delhi were forced to demolish their own homes.



Site of demolition, Shakur Basti, Delhi

HLRN

Graph 3: Month-wise Number of People Evicted and New Covid Cases in 2020



Extrapolating the officially-recorded new Covid cases by month in 2020 with the number of people affected by evictions, it can be seen that a large number of people were evicted by the government in months when Covid cases were highest in the country.

Use of Force and Violence During Evictions

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

50. States and their agents must take steps to ensure that no one is subject to direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence, especially against women and children, or arbitrarily deprived of property or possessions as a result of demolition, arson and other forms of deliberate destruction, negligence or any form of collective punishment.

Housing and Land Rights Network has documented the use of force and violence during some incidents of eviction in 2020. For instance, in Siwal, Madhya Pradesh, forest officials set fire to the house of an Adivasi family.¹⁶⁰ In Chhattisgarh, the Joint Forest Management Committee, reportedly, used force during the demolition of homes in the villages of Dinkarpur and Dugli. In Macheng Village, Manipur, the police, reportedly, used force as well as tear gas and rubber bullets residents to disperse residents who were protesting against their forced eviction.¹⁶¹ The local administration in Dhamtari District, Chhattisgarh—in a bid to vacate forestland—not only demolished houses of 35 tribal families, but also burnt their stored food grains. Furthermore, reports indicate that affected persons, including children, were mistreated during the demolition process.¹⁶²

In July 2020, police officials beat Dalits in Jaganpur Chak Village of Guna District to forcefully evict from their land.¹⁶³

Mumbai police officials reportedly beat up homeless children, women, and men living under the Western Express Highway flyover while evicting them.¹⁶⁴ During the process of demolition of 100 houses in Moti Nagar, officials of the Ujjain Municipal Corporation, allegedly, misbehaved with residents.¹⁶⁵



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4. Low Rate of Resettlement and Inadequate Resettlement

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

16. All persons, groups and communities have the **right to resettlement**, which includes the right to alternative land of better or equal quality and housing that must satisfy the following criteria for adequacy: accessibility, affordability, habitability, security of tenure, cultural adequacy, suitability of location, and access to essential services such as health and education.

52. The Government and any other parties responsible for providing **just compensation and sufficient alternative accommodation, or restitution when feasible, must do so immediately upon the eviction...** [emphasis added].

Several Indian courts also have established that the right to housing includes the right to resettlement.¹⁶⁶ For instance, in *Dev Nath Yadav v. State of U.P.* [W.P. 44391/2010], the Allahabad High Court held that:

The right of re-settlement of the persons, who do not have proper homes, is a part of the fundamental right to housing, which is now well recognised by the Supreme Court, being a part of life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

Courts have also warned against resettlement that is not adequate. For example, in *Sudama Singh v. Government of Delhi* [W.P. (C). 8904/2009], the High Court of Delhi held that:

It is the State's constitutional and statutory obligation to ensure that if the jhuggi dweller is forcibly evicted and relocated, such jhuggi dweller is not worse off. The relocation has to be a meaningful exercise consistent with the rights to life, livelihood and dignity of such jhuggi dweller. The lack of basic amenities like drinking water, water for bathing and washing, sanitation, lack of access to affordable public transport, lack of schools and health care sectors, compound the problem for a jhuggi dweller at the relocated site.

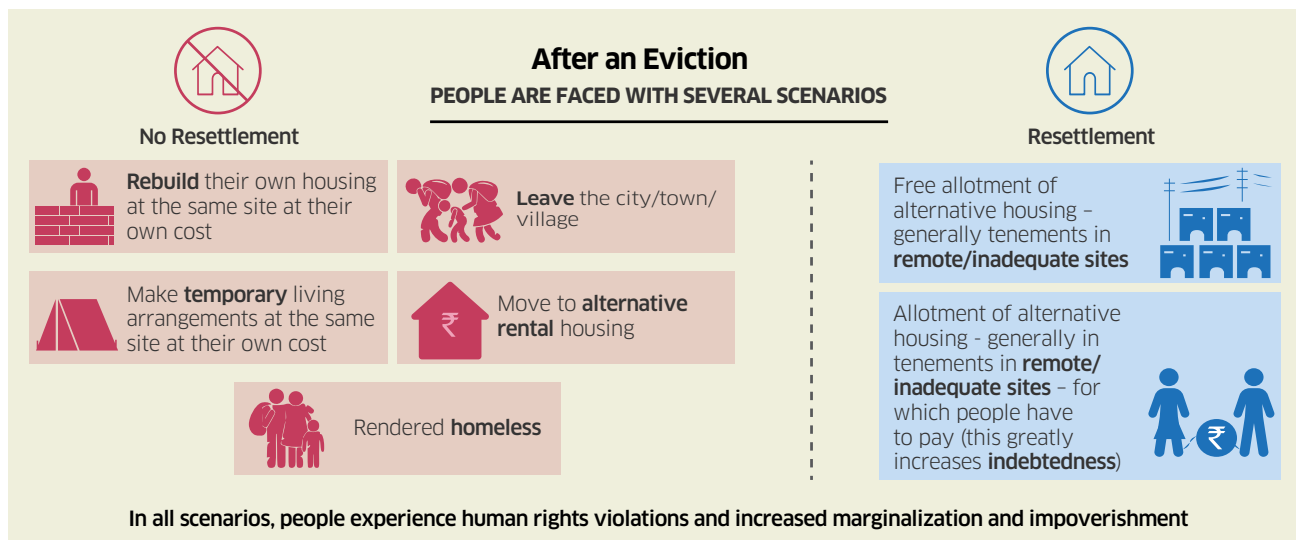
Similarly, the High Court of Bombay in *Sahyadri Punarvasan Gaothan Vikas Sanstha v. Pandharpur Municipal Council* [W.P. 4000/1991] stated that:

In the name of resettlement and rehabilitation virtually nothing is provided. This is the grievance on most occasions. People get thrown out and displaced physically, mentally and socially. Communities which are residing together for decades have to adjust with totally different living conditions

Research and analysis by HLRN, including primary research from the field, indicates that the vast majority of those evicted in 2020 as well as in previous years have not been resettled by the state.

Of the 147 incidents of forced eviction recorded by HLRN in 2020, information on resettlement is available for only 127 incidents. Of these, HLRN found that the state provided some form of resettlement/alternative housing in only 12 (or 9 per cent) of the affected sites; partial resettlement in three (2 per cent) of the sites; and, some compensation in only two (1.5 per cent) of the sites. **No resettlement was provided by the state to affected persons in 87 per cent of the cases of eviction in 2020 for which information is available.**

In the three years of 2018, 2019, and 2020, HLRN recorded that resettlement was provided in only 24 per cent of the total incidents of forced eviction in India, for which information on the status of resettlement is available. In 76 per cent of the cases, people had to fend for themselves or were rendered homeless.



The flawed notion of the state and its prejudicial perception of the poor as ‘encroachers’ and ‘illegal’ residents also continue to exclude millions across India from receiving rehabilitation, including compensation, for the extensive losses incurred by them as a result of forced evictions.

As a result of the abysmally low rate of state-provided resettlement, the overwhelming majority of evicted and displaced persons across India are forced to fend for themselves, at their own expense. The high economic costs of evictions and the lack of resettlement, however, are never documented. Most affected persons have to make temporary living arrangements at or around their original sites of residence—mostly in makeshift structures or tents—as they cannot afford to reconstruct their homes or move to other sites, largely because of the need to live close to places of work and education. The imminent threat of repeated demolition also prevents them from rebuilding their homes. While some people manage to find alternative rental housing, or move in with relatives, or move back to other towns/villages, a large percentage of evicted persons are rendered homeless.

Research by HLRN over the last five years confirms that forced evictions in India directly contribute to homelessness. During the pandemic, this is of particular concern, as it directly increases people’s risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus and other infectious diseases.

For instance, in the absence of resettlement, 168 people evicted from forestland in Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, are now living in tents in dismal conditions in the same area. Similarly, families displaced from the Melghat Tiger Reserve have had to fend for themselves and are living in makeshift shelters. In Assam’s, Bharasingri Village, 546 people evicted on grounds of contestations of ‘citizenship’ have been living along the river bank in tarpaulin tents. In Jaipur, 850 families displaced from multiple locations between June and July 2020 did not receive any alternative housing and had to make their own arrangements; in the absence of adequate resources, they are forced to live in insecure conditions.

In Lucknow, 35 families evicted during an ‘encroachment-removal’ drive in April 2020 have been forced to live on the pavement near Faizabad Road. Fifteen families evicted from Patna City Circle also did not receive any resettlement from the Bihar government and have made makeshift arrangements at the same site. In Hyderabad, families living under Shivaji Bridge have witnessed repeated evictions, over the years, without any form of resettlement. As a result, they are forced to live in inadequate tents that authorities keep destroying.

In Lidroo Village, Pahalgam, evicted families have been forced to take refuge in homes of their relatives and are living in overcrowded conditions. Families evicted in Gardanibagh in Patna have been living on pavements in the city in abysmal conditions.¹⁶⁷

In Bhovapur, Ghaziabad, 250 families suffered multiple evictions in 2020, as a result of which they have been forced to live out in the open for the last ten months.¹⁶⁸ Despite an Allahabad High Court order calling for their

rehabilitation, the local administration has not provided them with any relief or resettlement. Consequently, affected persons continue to live in makeshift conditions at the site, at grave risk to their health and safety.

Though the High Court of Karnataka ordered the state government to provide compensation of Rs 14,100 to each family—whose home was demolished in Kacharakanahalli—and to rebuild houses for them at the same site, the Supreme Court stayed the order and reconstruction of houses.

In Siddipet, Telangana, 30 families evicted for a reservoir project were forcefully shifted—against their will—to a resettlement site that is devoid of adequate housing and basic facilities. Of the 103 families evicted in Rewa for ‘beautification’ of the Rathara Pond, only 17 families received alternative housing under PMAY, for which they had applied much earlier. The remaining 86 families were rendered homeless; of them 61 families were accommodated in the parking lot of PMAY buildings in Rewa while the other families moved back to their villages.

In Ahmedabad, families evicted for the metro rail project have still not been rehabilitated.¹⁶⁹ Reports indicate that as of July 2021, the process to determine families ‘eligible’ for alternative housing had been completed but affected families had not received any information on this. They still continue to live in the same area in inadequate conditions.¹⁷⁰

“They said everyone would get a house but then they demolished all the homes here. Surveys are not done properly, people are left out. We do not know what will happen. A metro station is going to be constructed here.”

Person evicted for the Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project in November 2020

In all sites of eviction in Delhi, responsible government agencies did not provide any resettlement or compensation to evicted families, leaving them to fend for themselves in the midst of the serious public health emergency and economic crisis. For instance, 150 families living in Israeli Camp, Rangpuri Pahadi, lost their homes under an ‘encroachment-removal’ drive but have been forced to live in makeshift tents in the same area, as they did not receive any alternative housing.¹⁷¹

Residents of Mansarovar Park—living near Shri Nanak Niwas Gurudwara, alongside the railway track—have faced multiple evictions over the past five years. The Indian Railways, responsible for the repeated demolition of their homes, has not provided any rehabilitation to the affected families. As a result, they have to keep rebuilding temporary structures at the same site with their own resources, and live in great insecurity, without access to basic facilities. After the demolition of their homes in July 2020, 150 families of East Laxmi Market were left to fend for themselves. Some of them had to leave the area as they could not find alternative housing; some families have moved into rental housing in the same area, which has created an excessive financial burden on them; and, other families have been rendered homeless.¹⁷²



Inadequate living conditions of families evicted in Mansarovar Park, Delhi

Even though over six years have elapsed since the demolition of 5,000 houses in Shakur Basti, Delhi by the Indian Railways in the winter of December 2015 and despite a positive order from the High Court of Delhi [W.P. (C) 11616/2015], affected families have not received any alternative housing or compensation from the state. The 13 families whose homes were demolished in June 2020 also have not received any compensation or resettlement. The constant fear of arbitrary eviction and the lack of legal security of tenure over housing has resulted in most of the affected families reconstructing temporary dwelling units and continuing to live in grossly inadequate conditions without access to water, sanitation, and other basic amenities. The lack of adequate housing has also increased their vulnerability to extreme weather conditions and the pandemic.



In the absence of resettlement, evicted families in Shakur Basti continue to live in makeshift housing at the same site

Delhi Development Authority demolished 150 houses behind the Akshardham Temple in Delhi but failed to provide any alternative housing or compensation to the evicted families. After being forced into homelessness, most of the affected families left the area while a few of them continue to live at the site in inadequate conditions. In addition to the economic challenges caused by the pandemic, the loss of housing without any resettlement has further compounded their vulnerabilities.

Residents of Dhobi Ghat, Jamia Nagar—whose homes were demolished by DDA in September 2020—filed a case in the High Court of Delhi. In June 2021, the Court passed an order directing DDA to provide basic amenities, including drinking water and toilets.¹⁷³ The Court also observed that the affected persons “cannot be left on the streets to fend for themselves” and are entitled to protection from the rains and the COVID-19 pandemic. Primary research by HLRN, however, reveals that, as of August 2021, no facilities had been provided and the families continue to live in the same area in dismal conditions.

In Karimpur, Odisha, evicted families received only Rs 5,000 each from the district administration. This was not sufficient, but affected families have moved into rental accommodation.

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

56 (b) Resettlement must ensure that the human rights of women, children, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups are equally protected, including their right to property ownership and access to resources...

In the few cases where people have been resettled by the government, living conditions at most resettlement sites, reportedly, are not adequate. This reflects the absence of a human-rights based approach to resettlement

and the lack of participation of affected communities in the design, location, and planning of such sites. It should be noted that mere relocation to remote sites and the provision of inadequate housing without access to basic services does not qualify as resettlement or rehabilitation. The right to resettlement, which is a human right, implies a considerable improvement in the standard of living of affected persons and restitution of their rights.

In Chennai, in the resettlement site of Perumbakkam—where most evicted families have been relocated after 2015—problems of



Flooded resettlement site of Perumbakkam, Chennai

IRCD/UC

poor quality of housing, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to essential services still persist. Residents complain of water leakage in their houses as well as the lack of adequate sanitation and safety at the site. Though these tenements are stated to be ‘eco-friendly construction fit for diverse climatic quality standards and disaster-proof houses,’ the site is in an ecologically-sensitive and low-lying area. During the winter monsoon in December, almost every year, families living in Perumbakkam and the neighbouring resettlement site of Semmenchery face flooding, often for up to a week. This is all the more ironic, given that families from various settlements across Chennai were relocated to these sites to protect them from floods. In December 2020, residents were confined to their flats for over three days without electricity supply. Both settlements also witnessed infestation of snakes.

Despite the inadequate living conditions and the fact that 18,700 families in Perumbakkam are facing severe constraints resulting from loss of livelihoods during the pandemic, in January 2021, the Prime Minister of India laid the foundation stone for an additional 1,152 houses to be constructed in Perumbakkam under the union government’s Light House Project.¹⁷⁴

The persistent discrimination against the country’s poor is further perpetuated in policies of several state governments that use the exclusionary tool of ‘eligibility criteria’ to determine whether an evicted family should be rehabilitated or not. Even when families have lived for many years at a site, if they fail to meet the state’s documentation requirements or happen to be omitted from state-conducted surveys, they are denied any form of relief or resettlement despite losing their homes, which are generally built incrementally, over years of hard work and investment. For instance, the Delhi Slum and JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy 2015 requires ‘proof of residence’ of individuals at the site before 1 January 2015 and existence of the settlement before 2006 to be considered ‘eligible’ for resettlement. It also requires affected non-Scheduled Caste¹⁷⁵ families to pay Rs 142,000 in cash, as a one-time down payment, for an alternative flat in a resettlement site. Many families are not able to generate the funds, as they do not have access to formal financial markets and are not able to afford the high interest rates of the ‘informal’ market. As a result, they are rendered homeless after losing the capital invested in their homes. Those who manage to raise the requisite amount by taking loans from multiple sources are pushed into cycles of greater indebtedness and impoverishment.

As documented by HLRN, several thousands of families evicted across the country between 2017 and 2019 have still not been resettled and live in increased impoverishment and precarious conditions, at grave risk to their health and lives. For instance, over 1,500 homeless persons evicted in Delhi in 2017 for ‘beautification’ of the city’s flyovers, have still not received any relief or resettlement by the state but are forced to live on roadsides

and pavements, at extreme risk to their health and lives. Families evicted by DDA from Kathputli Colony in Delhi and considered 'eligible' for rehabilitation have been living in an overcrowded and inadequate 'transit camp' in Anand Parbat for over five years, without any assurance of permanent housing.

In the absence of state-provided resettlement, hundreds of families in Delhi whose houses were demolished in 2019, including in the sites of Mayapuri, Nehru Place, and Safdarjung, have been compelled to rebuild their dwellings at their own cost. Without tenure security, they continue to live in uncertainty and fear of eviction.



Inadequate living conditions in the 'transit camp' in Anand Parbat, Delhi

HLRN

Members of the marginalized Gadia Lohar community evicted in 2019 in Faridabad (Haryana) and Sahibabad (Uttar Pradesh) have not received any rehabilitation or state support, as a result of which they continue to live at the same sites in makeshift dwellings without basic services. The pandemic has further heightened their distress and vulnerability, especially in the absence of adequate food, housing, and livelihoods.¹⁷⁶

From 2017 to 2018, over 15,000 houses situated along the Tansa Pipeline in Mumbai were demolished, pursuant to an order of the High Court of Bombay [PIL 140/2006]. Over 4,000 of the 10,500 affected families were relocated to Mahul, a critically polluted site on the outskirts of Mumbai. When residents highlighted the adverse impacts on their health from living in toxic conditions, the High Court of Bombay [W.P. 14102/2018] directed the state government to rehabilitate them at different locations. After much delay and as a result of sustained action by affected persons, several families were allotted alternative housing in Gorai and Malad while the rest continue to wait to be relocated from Mahul.¹⁷⁷ Five hundred families from Mahul that have been allotted alternative housing in Malad, however, report uninhabitable living conditions and damaged buildings at the new resettlement site.¹⁷⁸

The low rate of resettlement as well as the coerced relocation of the urban poor to the margins of cities is contributing to a rise in impoverishment as well as an increase in the number of people being forced into insecure and inadequate living conditions across the country, which greatly affects their health and well-being. The continued absence of a comprehensive and mandatory resettlement policy in India constitutes a violation of multiple human rights of affected persons who are then forced to live in conditions of protracted displacement that is unrecognized and unaddressed. During the pandemic, especially, the need for human rights-based rehabilitation is urgent.

5. Multiple Human Rights Violations

“The practice of forced eviction constitutes a gross violation of human rights, in particular the right to adequate housing.”

United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Resolutions 1993/77 and 2004/28

Primary and secondary research by HLRN on forced evictions in India in 2020 finds that government authorities have violated multiple human rights of affected persons, including their human rights to life, adequate housing, land, work/livelihood, health, food, water, sanitation, education, security of the person and home, information, participation, and freedom of movement and residence. In all reported incidents of eviction and demolition of homes, there has been minimal or no compliance with human rights safeguards and guidelines, including the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement and the special pandemic-related guidance notes of UN Special Rapporteurs.¹⁷⁹

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

58. Persons, groups or communities affected by an eviction should not suffer detriment to their human rights, including their right to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

As also affirmed by the United Nations, the act of forced eviction is a gross violation of the human right to adequate housing. When the state demolishes houses, people lose not just the roof over their heads but their security, safety, as well as investment in that housing, which is often built over many years with hard-earned savings and personal labour. Since resettlement is seldom provided to affected families, they are either rendered homeless or forced to live in extremely inadequate conditions. This affects the realization of multiple human rights and results in an overall deterioration in their standard of living and well-being.

“What very often is overlooked is that when a family living in a Jhuggi is forcibly evicted, each member loses a ‘bundle’ of rights - the right to livelihood, to shelter, to health, to education, to access to civic amenities and public transport and above all, the right to live with dignity.”

Sudama Singh v. Government of Delhi, High Court of Delhi, February 2010

Violations of the right to health accompany forced evictions, especially during the pandemic when destruction of housing rendered people homeless—without adequate protections—and directly exposed them to the coronavirus. Risks to health of affected persons are heightened when evictions are carried out in extreme weather conditions and make people homeless in the summer heat, monsoon rain, or winter cold. Inadequate living conditions resulting from loss of housing directly contribute to a deterioration of the health of affected persons, including over the long-term. For instance, Gadia Lohar families that lost their homes in Mansarovar Park, Delhi in 2017 continue to suffer from adverse health impacts, as a result of inadequate housing and water and sanitation facilities.

Evicted persons who are already suffering from chronic or acute health issues often face increased morbidity after evictions, as a result of living out in the open or in makeshift conditions, and thus succumb to their illnesses much sooner. Often, people die after losing their homes and being forced to live in inadequate conditions. Such loss of life is seldom documented and the link between the eviction and increased mortality of affected persons is generally denied by state authorities, who avert any form of accountability.

Also, the mental health implications and psychological impacts of forced evictions, including on children, are seldom acknowledged or addressed.

Forced evictions violate the human right to security of the person and home, and increase vulnerability of

evicted/displaced persons, in particular of women and children, to a range of violations, including sexual violence and abuse and an increased threat of trafficking.

A direct result of forced evictions on marginalized communities is the increased rate of malnourishment and hunger. In the aftermath of a forced eviction, families are not able to cook food or spend money on food. This is also because they lose food supplies and cooking implements during demolition drives. For instance, during the eviction process, the local administration not only demolished houses of 35 tribal families in Dhamtari District of Chhattisgarh, but also destroyed their standing crops and set on fire their stored food grains. In Delhi, after demolishing homes of 150 families engaged in agriculture and gardening along the Yamuna Banks, DDA also destroyed their crops and plants, which were not only their source of livelihood but also their source of food.



HLRN

The surge in expenditure related to rebuilding homes or relocating, and the inevitable loss of income resulting from loss of livelihoods also contribute to a much lower expenditure on food and healthcare, which directly contributes to increased morbidity and vulnerability of evicted persons, especially children, older persons, persons with chronic and serious illnesses, and pregnant and lactating women.

“I have been living near Akshardham Temple for the last 20 years. I earn my living by growing plants in the area. In October 2020, officials from DDA demolished my house and nursery, without any prior notice. While the lockdown had already affected my work, DDA completely destroyed my source of livelihood and my home. I have documents that prove I have been living here. We now live in a temporary tent, as we got no resettlement. The DDA officials frequently threaten to remove our belongings. The government claims it has to remove houses in this area to increase greenery along the banks of the Yamuna River. But at the same time, it uprooted plants I have been growing here for 40 years. The toilet that I'd built was also destroyed during the demolition. This has forced my daughter and wife to defecate in the open. The government has not built a single toilet in this settlement with nearly 500 families. I don't know where to take my family now. I request the government to provide us with a house.”

A 45-year-old man evicted in Delhi

Evictions, displacement, and involuntary relocation adversely impact affected persons' right to work/livelihood. When people's homes are demolished, they are not able to go to work for several days until they find alternative accommodation or are able to rebuild their houses. This results in many people losing their jobs. Those who are forced to move to distant resettlement sites or to other locales, have to seek new employment, which is often difficult to find. As a result of the pandemic-induced economic crisis, low-income communities across the country have been suffering from the acute loss of livelihoods and incomes. Studies indicate that an additional 230 million people in India fell below the poverty line as a result of the pandemic.¹⁸⁰ Forced evictions during this time have driven affected persons into greater distress and impoverishment. Women's livelihoods have been most adversely affected.¹⁸¹



Loss of homes, plants, and crops - near Akshardham Temple, Delhi

HLRN

“They have been demolishing houses and shops here for three days. We spent thousands of rupees constructing our house, now not even half of it remains. We built our houses behind the shops, but now we don’t have our houses or our shops. How will we do our business? Where will we store our goods? What do we do?”

A shopkeeper whose house and shop were demolished in Ahmedabad in October 2020

The financial losses incurred by already economically-marginalized communities as a result of forced evictions—including the increased cost of rebuilding homes or relocating and paying for rental housing, purchasing destroyed essential items, and securing vital documents lost during the demolition process—also contribute to a sustained deterioration in their standard of living with long-term impacts.



Extensive destruction of personal property of residents, Bhovapur, Ghaziabad

“I used to live with my husband and three children near a pond in Karimpur Village in Puri District. Four other families also lived at the same site. Our families had been living in the area for about 90 years. In July 2020, a group of villagers bulldozed our homes in front of our eyes. Not only were our homes razed to the ground but women were abused and our belongings were also stolen. A two-year-old girl child was mercilessly thrown into the pond during the demolition process. The child was rescued with great difficulty and had to be hospitalized.

Our homes were dismantled for the construction of a house for the Mahila Samiti (women’s committee) for which the village community had given us 15 days to vacate our homes. We pleaded for at least six months time to move to a new location. But they didn’t listen and evicted us.

We are fishermen and belong to the Below the Poverty Line category. Fishing was the only source of livelihood for us. We used to catch fish from the Chilika Lake and sell it in the local daily market. Since we were prohibited from entering the lake area for fishing after our eviction, we started earning our living by either working as construction workers or street vendors. The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown further escalated our problems since street vending and construction work were restricted. During the lockdown, for even two square meals a day, we had to mostly rely on ration supply; we also borrowed money and sold our jewellery to arrange food and pay house rent; this has depleted our savings. We are unable to provide adequate food to our children. Even though my husband is a job cardholder under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, we don’t get any work. The forced eviction and the pandemic have affected us enormously with no alternative means of survival.”

A 28-year-old woman evicted in Odisha during the pandemic

Violation of the Right to Remedy

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

59. All persons threatened with or subject to forced evictions have the right of access to timely remedy. Appropriate remedies include a fair hearing, access to legal counsel, legal aid, return, restitution, resettlement, rehabilitation and compensation...

The majority of people affected by forced evictions in India are not able to access their right to effective remedy and do not have access to justice. This has been further compounded during the pandemic and related lockdowns when courts have been closed or working online.

In most cases, affected persons are left to fend for themselves with limited recourse to relief and justice. Most state grievance redress mechanisms do not address issues related to forced evictions and displacement. As the urban and rural landless poor are generally perceived as ‘encroachers’ by the state and its law-enforcement authorities, their pleas for justice are often ignored. Where they are able to generate resources or receive support and legal aid from civil society organizations, they approach courts or national and state human rights institutions for relief. Across India, several complaints are registered with relevant national and state human rights institutions. These institutions generally respond by seeking explanations in the form of reports or replies from responsible state agencies. Independent investigations into evictions, including through a Special Rapporteur, or punitive action against responsible officials, however, are seldom undertaken.

Violation of Children’s Rights, including the Fundamental Right to Education

The impacts of forced eviction, displacement, and inadequate resettlement on children are acute and include psychological trauma, mental illness, fear, insecurity, anxiety, loss of education, loss of health, and increased vulnerability to sexual abuse and violence. The loss of housing for children has serious long-term effects and greatly impedes their development as well as their ability to study, play, and grow in a safe and secure environment.

One of the immediate impacts of a forced eviction is that children are not able to attend school. This is due to several reasons. Evictions often occur during the academic year and often during or just before school examinations. This greatly impedes children’s access to education, including their ability to study; in some cases, children are forced to drop out of school. Children who are unable to appear in examinations, lose an entire academic year and consequently, drop-out of school.

Primary research by IRCDUC found that in Chennai, of the 69 settlements evicted from 2015 to 2020, 88 per cent were evicted during the middle of the academic year, thereby affecting children’s ability to study and appear in school examinations. In 2020 too, children from various sites across Chennai were evicted in the middle of the academic year and had to contend with inadequate infrastructure facilities at the resettlement sites.

“I have a sister and a brother. My parents lost their work after we came to Perumbakkam. I used to study in a private English-medium school before our eviction but after shifting to Perumbakkam, my parents were unable to pay the fees. Also as Perumbakkam is too far from my old school, I had to leave, and am now enrolled in a government school closer to the site.

My father has tuberculosis and hence cannot work. My mother has to meet the families’ needs. After we were moved here, my mother could not find any jobs because of COVID-19. We had to take loans and were completely dependent on relief for survival. We have only one phone that three of us use to access online education. My father is unable to go to school and my mother is working hard.”

A 14-year-old girl evicted from Sathyavani Muthu Nagar in Chennai and relocated to Perumbakkam with her family

Reports from several sites in Delhi, such as Rangpuri Pahadi and behind the Akshardham Temple, reveal that the demolition of homes has severely affected children's education. While the closure of schools during the pandemic and the switch to online education had already disrupted education of children from low-income families, sudden homelessness experienced after loss of their homes further exacerbated their challenges and in many instances, even forced children to drop out of school.



HLRN

In Karnataka, the demolition and fire of migrant workers' houses in Kacharakanahalli resulted in the loss of children's school books and study material. This affected the ability of children who had to take their examinations, especially their Secondary School Leaving Certificate exams.

Girls are often more seriously affected, forced to drop out of school, and also are more prone to trafficking. In some instances, early marriage of adolescent girls has been reported in the aftermath of an eviction, as parents, worried for their daughters' safety, prefer to marry them off rather than have them live on the streets or in insecure and remote resettlement sites.

Violation of Women's Rights

Forced evictions, displacement, and inadequate resettlement disproportionately affect women. In the aftermath of an eviction, challenges faced by women are multi-fold. These include loss of livelihoods and access to food, breakdown of social structures and support systems, debilitating health impacts, and increased vulnerability to gender-based violence. Incidents of home demolition and eviction also adversely impact economic and social vulnerabilities of women and exacerbate pre-existing and intersectional challenges faced by women in accessing their rights to housing, land, health, work, water, sanitation, privacy, and security.



HLRN

Women across India have been facing disproportionate burdens during the pandemic, including through the loss of livelihoods and additional challenges related to managing education, childcare, and access to food and healthcare for themselves and their families. Losing their homes at such a time of crisis has greatly expounded their economic, social, psychological, and physical distress without adequate means of access to remedy or relief.

“I have five children. During the lockdown, Railway officials demolished my jhuggi. We were already facing a great financial crisis. At that time my husband was very unwell. As I did not have money to reconstruct our home, I was forced to take my children and ill husband back to our village. The lack of resources and medical aid resulted in the untimely death of my husband. My children had to drop out of school after our eviction and relocation. I am finding it very difficult to survive and to look after my children now.”

A 40-year-old woman whose home was demolished in Keshavpuram, Delhi, in September 2020

For instance, women whose homes were demolished without prior notice in Bhowapur, Ghaziabad in September and October 2020 have been suffering greatly since their forced eviction. At least 15 women were pregnant and lactating at the time of the demolition and were forced to live out in the open, without access to housing, food, water, and healthcare facilities. After being rendered homeless, a few pregnant women were forced to give birth in the open, which is not only detrimental to the health of both mother and child, but is also a gross violation of their human rights to life, dignity, and health.¹⁸² Close to 50 families (250 people) living in Suzabad, Varanasi, were rendered homeless multiple times in 2020. Women from the community reported that they were not allowed to cook after the demolition of their homes. They also allege misconduct by police officials towards young girls and women.¹⁸³ In Delhi, families living along the railway track in Mansarovar Park have witnessed multiple incidents of demolition of their homes. In the absence of state relief or rehabilitation, women of the community have had to endure the burden of living without secure housing and also of constantly reconstructing their houses. A single woman living at the site was gravely injured while rebuilding her home and has been unable to walk properly since then.¹⁸⁴



Women rendered homeless after demolition of their homes in Bhowapur, Ghaziabad

HLRN

Women relocated amidst the pandemic to the site of Perumbakkam in Chennai, report facing increased challenges, including the loss of access to state relief measures, loss of livelihoods, and loss of their children’s education.¹⁸⁵

The long-term impacts of forced eviction on women—including increased vulnerability to gender-based violence, absence of adequate cooking facilities and space, and the lack of access to secure sanitation facilities—are clearly visible among women of the excluded Gadia Lohar community in Mansarovar Park, Delhi. Forcibly evicted by officials of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation in 2017, they have still not received any rehabilitation and continue to live in precarious conditions.¹⁸⁶

A single mother with five young children has been homeless in Delhi for the last five years, since the government demolished her home in Rajiv Camp for a highway-expansion project in 2016. Despite an order of the High Court of Delhi for resettlement, she has been denied alternative housing and continues to live in a tent alongside a highway, at grave risk to the health and security of her family.

“Even though we received a favourable court order and I have complied with all official requirements, the government refuses to give me alternative housing. I have been living in great insecurity since my home was destroyed. We have nowhere to go and are forced to live alongside an unsanitary drain near this highway. I have four young daughters and fear for their safety. We face routine harassment from passers-by, especially men.”

A single mother rendered homeless after demolition of her home in Delhi in 2016

6. Violation of National and International Laws, Policies, and Standards

Almost all acts of forced eviction and demolition of homes documented by HLRN in India in 2020 have violated the Constitution of India, national and international laws, and progressive Indian court judgments on the right to housing.

Demolitions by state authorities also have infringed several state and central laws, particularly those with provisions for due process, such as the requirement of prior notice before evictions. These include the Delhi Development Act 1957; Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act 1956; Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act 1971; and, The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014, among other laws. They also violate The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, by directly disrupting or impeding the education of children.

Forced evictions during the pandemic also contravene emergency laws in force such as the Disaster Management Act 2005 (Sections 24, 34, 36, and 39), which enlists the duties of the central and state governments to mitigate a disaster and provide shelter to affected persons.

By these acts of forced evictions, state authorities have breached India's treaty obligations under, *inter alia*, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The reported acts of forced eviction disregard key international human rights standards and guidelines related to the right to housing, including General Comment 4 ('The right to adequate housing') and General Comment 7 ('Forced evictions') of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement; the UN Guiding Principles on Security of Tenure for the Urban Poor; the New Urban Agenda; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Others Working in Rural Areas, and, The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Furthermore, acts of forced eviction and displacement compromise India's commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

COVID-19 Guidance Note: Prohibition of Evictions (2020)

States must take the following urgent measures, in conformity with their obligations under human rights law:

1. Declare an end to all evictions of anyone, anywhere for any reason until the end of the pandemic and for a reasonable period of time thereafter.
6. Ensure that any evictions or foreclosures that were approved before the pandemic commenced are suspended.¹⁸⁷

The practice of forced evictions during the pandemic has greatly ignored international guidelines to protect people during the public health emergency, including the guidance notes issued by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing on the prohibition of evictions¹⁸⁸ and protection of renters.¹⁸⁹

"...the right to housing must be central to any response to the pandemic, and such norms contain calls for a rights-based response in measures to tackle it. Under international human rights law, the right to adequate housing cannot be subject to any derogation, and thus exceptional circumstances do not allow States to ignore the prohibition on forced evictions or to flout their obligation to protect the right to adequate housing."

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, A/75/148, July 2020¹⁹⁰

By forcibly evicting people without due process and resettlement, state authorities also have violated progressive judgments of the Supreme Court of India and state High Courts that have upheld the right to housing as an integral component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. For instance, the Supreme Court of India, in *Chameli Singh v. State of U.P.* (1995), stated that:

Right to shelter when used as an essential requisite to the right to live, should be deemed to have been guaranteed as a fundamental right. As is enjoined in the Directive Principles, the State should be deemed to be under an obligation to secure it for its citizens (...).

Several High Courts in India have denounced forced evictions as violations of human rights and international law and called for due process during authorized demolitions. In the landmark judgment of *Sudama Singh v. Government of Delhi* (2010), the High Court of Delhi recognized and upheld the human right to adequate housing and the state's legal obligation to fulfil it, including for low-income communities. The Court adopted a human rights-based approach to hold that forced evictions violate multiple human rights, while also recognizing the right to resettlement.

By conducting demolitions during the pandemic, state authorities have also violated interim orders of several High Courts to not take any coercive action, including any acts of demolition, dispossession, and eviction during the pandemic and lockdown.

Additionally, the act of demolishing homes of low-income communities across India directly goes against the objectives of the union government's Housing for All-2022 scheme/Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) as well as housing schemes of various state governments that cite provision of housing for economically weaker sections and low-income groups as their goal. With each home destroyed, the government backtracks on its commitment to provide 'housing for all.' Government data reveals that as of August 2021, 11.3 million (1.13 crore) houses had been sanctioned under PMAY – Urban; about 8.4 million houses had been 'grounded' for construction while 5 million houses had been completed.¹⁹¹ With regard to the rural component of the scheme, PMAY – Gramin, as of 16 August 2021, 15,362,802 (15.3 million) houses had been constructed since the launch of the scheme.¹⁹²

The demolition of houses of the urban poor, including of migrant workers, also contravenes the objectives of the new scheme of Affordable Rental Housing Complexes—a sub-scheme of PMAY – Urban—that aims to provide affordable rental housing with necessary civic amenities to the urban poor, near their place of work.¹⁹³ Additionally, forced evictions also go against the provisions of the newly legislated The Model Tenancy Act 2021.¹⁹⁴ The Act, purportedly, aims to protect the interests of tenants by regularizing the eviction process and prescribing specific grounds for removal of tenants.

Given the widespread demolition of homes and the imminent threat of eviction faced by almost 16 million people across India, progress made under any housing schemes could be offset considerably

7. Impacts on Dalits, Adivasis, and Other Marginalized Communities

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India have disproportionately borne the brunt of the country's 'development' paradigm and suffered extensively from evictions and displacement. Since India's independence in 1947, independent experts claim that of those displaced across the country for ostensible 'development' projects, 40 per cent are Adivasis/tribal peoples, while 20 per cent are Dalits/Scheduled Castes.¹⁹⁵

Despite protections in the Constitution of India and in national laws, Dalit and tribal communities continue to face forced evictions for a variety of reasons, including infrastructure projects, 'beautification' projects, and 'encroachment' -removal drives.

Research by HLRN finds that forced evictions and home demolitions in 2020 severely affected Dalits/Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes/Adivasis/Indigenous/tribal peoples, as well as other marginalized groups and communities in several states, including in Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.

For instance, a family belonging to the Korku tribal community was forcibly evicted from Pastalai Village in the Melghat Tiger Reserve. Rendered homeless, the family is living in makeshift accommodation, eight kilometres away from the village. Reportedly, forest department officials arrested two male members of the family for violating the Wildlife Protection Act 1972. They are currently out on bail. They allege that they are being evicted and involuntarily relocated, as part of the government's Project Tiger.¹⁹⁶ In Ranchi, expansion of a railway track resulted in the eviction without rehabilitation of about 27 tribal families in Hatia.¹⁹⁷

The Madhya Pradesh government carried out several incidents of forced eviction of tribal and Dalit families over the months of June and July 2020. In June, forest officials set fire to the house of an Adivasi family in Siwal and threatened to destroy more homes in the area, reportedly, to prevent villagers from cultivating the land.¹⁹⁸ On 12 July 2020, the Forest Department razed houses of over 100 tribal families in Hardi Village of Rewa District, reportedly to clear 'encroachments' on forestland. Affected villagers, however, claim to have been living in the area for over 30 years with rights to the land under the Forest Rights Act 2006.¹⁹⁹ On 14 July, a Dalit couple in Jaganpur Chak Village of Guna District attempted suicide by consuming pesticide, after they were forcefully evicted from their land and beaten by police officials.²⁰⁰

Houses of 50 tribal families were destroyed in Rainpur Village, Chhattisgarh. Local authorities denied families their land rights and demolished their houses—without prior warning—after their applications for land claims were rejected. In the absence of any resettlement or compensation from the local administration, families were rendered homeless. They allege that dilution of the Forest Rights Act 2006 has been making it difficult for them to claim their generations-inherited land rights.²⁰¹ Also in Chhattisgarh, the Joint Forest management Committee used force and razed houses of 35 families of the Dhoba Kachhar tribe in the villages of Dinkarpur and Dugli.

In Kamat Village of Gujarat, state forest officials destroyed homes and property of six tribal families belonging to the Bhil, Konkani, and Warli communities in April 2020.²⁰² In Odisha, officials of the forest department evicted 32 Kondh Adivasi families in Kalahandi District in April,²⁰³ while in January 2020, forest officials evicted 100 families of the Khadia tribal community from the Similipal Tiger Reserve, under the guise of forest and wildlife protection.²⁰⁴ In Manipur's Macheng Village, forest officials with the help of the police, evicted families of the Rongmei Naga tribe, early in the morning, on grounds that they were 'encroaching' on forest land. Villagers who protested the drive were dispersed by the police, reportedly with force involving the use of tear gas and rubber bullets.²⁰⁵

Between June and July 2020, authorities in Jaipur forcefully evicted about 850 families, mostly belonging to Dalit and denotified tribal communities, from different locations across the city under various pretexts.²⁰⁶ Twelve Dalit families, living in Ranchi's Malar Kocha Basti for over 100 years, lost their homes and are being

forced to relocate against their will.²⁰⁷ In Siddipet District of Telangana, 30 families, mostly Dalits, were evicted from their homes in the middle of the night, without considering their pleas to wait until the morning.

Minority communities have also found themselves being targeted by the state for evictions. For example, in Assam, police officials, paramilitary personnel, and administrative officials evicted 64 Muslim families from their homes in Bharasingri Village on grounds that they were from Bangladesh.²⁰⁸ In Indore, the local administration partially demolished houses of 13 Muslim families in Chandan Khedi Village in December 2020 on the pretext of removing ‘encroachments’ on government land.²⁰⁹ A violent clash in the Begum Bagh area following a fundraising rally resulted in the demolition of one house of a Muslim family, rendering 19 people homeless.²¹⁰

Housing and Land Rights Network has also documented evictions by state authorities of homeless people, who are among the poorest and most marginalized. For instance, the Municipal Corporation of Patiala and the city police evicted 100 homeless people from Mall Road, as part of a ‘city beautification’ drive under the national Swachh Bharat Mission²¹¹ while 20 homeless families from the Pardhi community were evicted in Vile Parle, Mumbai.

These are just a few of the incidents documented by HLRN that demonstrate the disproportionate impact of forced evictions on marginalized communities, who in the absence of state support, find themselves being pushed further into impoverishment and subject to increased discrimination.



8. Role of Indian Courts in Evictions in 2020

The Supreme Court of India and several state High Courts, in numerous judgments, have upheld the right to housing/shelter as an inalienable component of the fundamental right to life. In spite of these judgments and despite the severe impact of the pandemic on access to justice mechanisms in the country, HLRN has found that orders from courts and tribunals led to at least **15 incidents** of forced eviction in 2020, resulting in the eviction of over **87,841** persons across India. Overall, **51 per cent** of the people evicted in 2020 lost their homes as a result of the implementation of court orders.

While several court orders sanctioned demolitions in 2020, some orders of the Indian judiciary also recognized the need to prohibit evictions during the pandemic. For instance, in March 2020, the Indian judiciary took cognizance of the nationwide alarm regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of government advisories and restrictions on movement, High Courts acknowledged the difficulties of people in accessing legal remedies. Consequently, several state High Courts extended their interim orders and temporarily suspended the implementation of earlier orders for demolition. For instance, on 26 March 2020, the Allahabad High Court [PIL 564/2020] stated that:

As per the address of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the order of the Home Ministry dated 24th March 2020, stringent measures will be implemented from midnight which will make it difficult for citizens to approach Courts of law and take recourse to legal remedies. Only with the view to ensure that citizens are not deprived of their right to approach the Courts of law, we propose to exercise our jurisdiction under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution of India by issuing certain directions.

(...)

iii) If any orders of eviction, dispossession or demolition are already passed by the High Court, District or Civil Courts, the same shall remain in abeyance for a period of one month from today;

iv) Considering the fact that it will be practically impossible for the citizens to approach the Courts for redressal of their grievances for a period of twentyone days specified in the order of the Ministry of Home Affairs dated 24th March 2020, we sincerely hope that the State Government, Municipal Authorities and the agencies and instrumentalities of the State Government will be slow in taking action of demolition and eviction of persons.

Initially issued for a limited period, these orders were extended by the respective High Courts several times throughout the year as a result of the serious crisis resulting from the pandemic.

Table 2: Implementation of 'Stay Orders on Evictions' Issued by High Courts in India During the Pandemic

State	High Court	Case Number	Effective Period	Approximate Number of Houses Demolished in the State During this Period
Andhra Pradesh	High Court of Andhra Pradesh	W.P. 8130/2020	26 March 2020 to 12 September 2020	1,756
Karnataka	High Court of Karnataka	W.P. 6435/2020	24 March 2020 to 8 February 2021	264 (up to 31 December 2020)
Maharashtra	High Court of Bombay	Suo Moto W.P. 93432/2020	26 March 2020 to 31 January 2021	234 (up to 31 December 2020)
Odisha	High Court of Orissa	W.P. (C) 9095/2020	5 May 2020 to 17 February 2021	305 (up to 31 December 2020)
Tamil Nadu	High Court of Judicature at Madras	Suo Moto W.P. 7413/2020	26 March 2020 to 6 November 2020	1,391
Uttar Pradesh	High Court of Judicature at Allahabad	Writ C 7014/2020 and PIL 564/2020	18 March 2020 to 5 January 2021	1,916

Despite these interim orders, courts did not acknowledge forced evictions as a clear violation of human rights during the critical public health emergency and hesitated in issuing unequivocal directions against demolitions.

In April 2020, when the functioning of courts was disrupted by the pandemic, the High Court for the State of Telangana, in the case W.P. 35059/2017, permitted the eviction of 40 families during an online hearing. The affected persons were small farmers whose lands were required for the Ananthagiri Sagar Reservoir under the Kaleswaram Irrigation Project. Giving precedence to the completion of the project, the Court stated that it “cannot be held up indefinitely as the Irrigation Project is in the interest of larger public. (...) Therefore, in order to permit the State to complete the Irrigation Project, it is imperative that the petitioners be shifted from their present place of stay, to the temporary/permanent accommodation constructed by the State.” The affected farmers approached the High Court for relief, alleging that they had been forcibly evicted and coerced to give up their lands. In June 2020, the Court [W.P. 37769/2017] acknowledged the need to protect the rights of the “land-losers” and issued directions for enhanced compensation and harvesting of their standing crops before the water could be released.

Pursuant to an earlier order of the High Court of Delhi, about 150 houses situated in East Laxmi Market, Delhi were demolished in July 2020 in complete disregard of the pandemic. The residents, who were mainly sanitation workers, claimed that they were not even given the opportunity to remove their belongings before the demolition of their homes.²¹² In a subsequent petition for relief, the High Court of Delhi [W.P. (C) 4478/2020] noted the dire living conditions of the affected persons. The Court stated that, “post the demolition of their houses the petitioners and their families are now shelter less. Their miseries have been compounded by the on-going monsoons. Photographs annexed to the petition show that they are sitting under tarpaulins, amidst rubble of the demolition.” Consequently, the Court ordered the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board to provide affected persons with temporary accommodation in a government school with appropriate measures to protect them from COVID-19. In January 2021, an order of the Court revealed that the affected persons had been removed from the school where they had been living for several months and were still awaiting rehabilitation.

Against the impending demolition of houses in Dhobi Ghat, Delhi, the High Court of Delhi [W.P. (C) 7032/2020] refused to grant any relief to the families under the threat of eviction. Consequently, hundreds of persons were evicted without rehabilitation in September 2020, contrary to the due process guidelines established in an earlier judgment of the same court: *Ajay Maken v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 11616/2015].

Demolitions continued to occur under pre-pandemic orders of the judiciary despite the abeyance of eviction orders in many states, In Assam, 672 people living near the Kaziranga National Park were evicted pursuant to a 2015 order of the High Court of Gauhati order [PIL 66/2012]. The same order has resulted in several incidents of demolition in Assam over the years.²¹³

In a departure from established jurisprudence, the Supreme Court of India, in several decisions failed to uphold the human right to adequate housing of marginalized persons in 2020. Just before the onset of the pandemic, the Supreme Court of India [S.L.A. (C) 7220/2017] exhorted state authorities to demolish ‘unauthorized’ houses of migrant workers in Khori Gaon, Haryana despite the pendency of the proceedings. The Court’s order was in stark contrast to the impugned order of the High Court of Punjab and Chandigarh [C.W.P. 19148/2010] on the same issue which had stated that:

Admittedly, the respondents have initiated the demolition drive in the area where the members of the petitioner-association are residing, which includes hundreds of families, and also some of the shanties (slum clusters) have been demolished. (...) The demolition of their shanties without any notice and not providing alternative accommodation, as has been held by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in *Olga Tellis v. Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay*, (1985) 3 SCC 545, appears to be an inhumane action of the respondents.

In September 2020, the Supreme Court of India [W.P. (C) 13029/1985] ordered the eviction of 48,000 dwellings along railway tracks in Delhi within a timeframe of three months. The Court also restricted any other judicial relief for the affected persons in this matter. After much outrage and public concern regarding the impact of the demolition on thousands of people from lower-income communities, the Government of India informed the

Court that it would not demolish the settlements without rehabilitation.²¹⁴ The Supreme Court [S.L.P (C). 1663-1664/2021] also stayed the implementation of the order of the High Court of Karnataka [W.P. 7737/2020] which had upheld the right to housing of migrant labourers after the demolition of their homes in Bengaluru and directed their rehabilitation.

During 2020, several High Courts also pronounced significant orders for the protection of persons affected by evictions. After the brutal destruction of homes of migrant labourers in Bengaluru during the lockdown, the High Court of Karnataka [W.P. 7737/2020] took *suo moto* cognizance of the matter. The Court held that the demolitions directly violated ‘the right to shelter’ of affected persons, guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution of India. It held that, “the State Government was duty

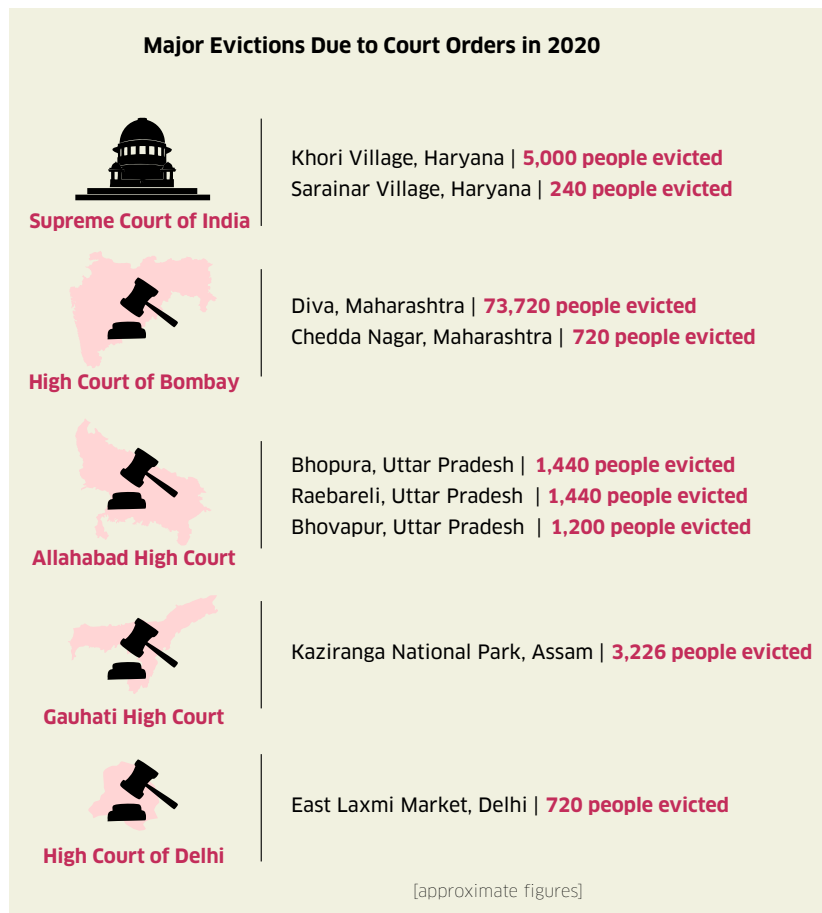
bound to protect the right to shelter available to the affected families which was guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.” In a welcome precedent, the Court awarded compensation to the affected families and directed the state authorities to construct the demolished houses at the same site.

In October 2020, the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad took strong exception to the demolition of 250 houses in Bhovapur during the pandemic and prohibited the Ghaziabad Development Authority from carrying out further demolitions. The Court directed the state to provide temporary shelter, essential amenities, medical facilities, and alternative housing, possibly under PMAY, to the affected persons. Similarly, the High Court of Delhi [W.P. (C) 5999/2020] directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to exercise prudence and not demolish houses in Pant Nagar, Delhi without providing alternative accommodation to the affected persons. The Court remarked that “it would be unthinkable that the jhuggi dwellers be removed from their present tenements, especially with the onset of winter without being provided an alternate accommodation.”

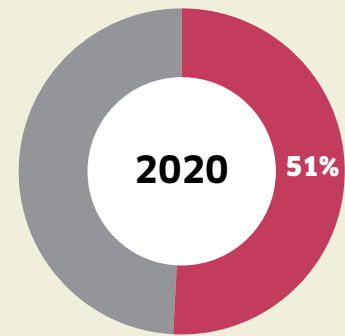
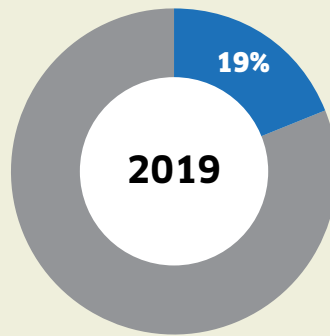
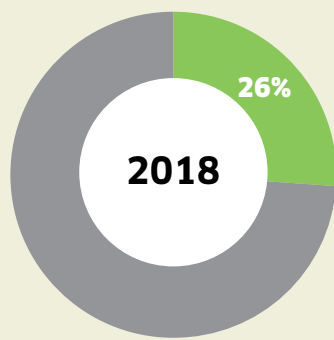
“In view of the Proviso aforesaid, prima-facie we are satisfied that the Ghaziabad Development Authority should have offered a place to rehabilitate the residents of Bhovapur Basti before their eviction and the demolition of their houses. **It would also be appropriate to state that when the entire globe is facing a pandemic, it is the responsibility of the State to protect everyone, more specifically the population of weaker sections from any hardship that may aggravate their plight adversely** [emphasis added].”

Dev Pal v. Ghaziabad Development Authority, High Court of Judicature at Allahabad [PIL 1185/2020]

The High Court of Rajasthan [Writ 233/2020] passed an interim order directing the state government not to dispossess landless persons without providing alternative accommodation. It held that when landless persons encroach public lands, “such persons may be allotted land and a building that may be available. But till such time that alternative is not made available, they shall not be dispossessed.”



Graph 4: People in India Evicted by Court Orders in 2018, 2019, and 2020



HLRN

9. Extensive Threat of Eviction and Displacement

In addition to the documented dispossession caused by acts of forced eviction across India in 2020, HLRN has also recorded information on a large number of threats (at least 235) of impending eviction and displacement across the country. **Nearly 16 million (1.55 crore) people in India currently live under the threat of eviction and displacement** (see Annexure II and Annexure VI for details). This estimate is based on primary and secondary research by HLRN. The actual number could be much higher, as there is no official data on people facing eviction threats in the country. Reasons for potential displacement include infrastructure projects, forest protection, restoration of water bodies, 'slum' clearance, removal of 'encroachments', and clearance of government land; implementation of court orders; and, tourism development. Several of the incidents reported in our 2019 report are still a cause of fear and uncertainty as eviction is imminent in many of the areas.

Infrastructure Projects

The construction of the Navi Mumbai International Airport in Maharashtra would displace at least 17,500 families across 10 villages in the state. As of October 2020, the nodal authority for the construction of the airport, City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) claimed that more than 90 per cent of the land had been acquired for the project. In addition to causing large-scale displacement and loss of livelihoods, the new airport has also been deemed an "environmentally disastrous" project by local environment activists and organizations.²¹⁵ Local villagers designated as 'Project-affected Persons' have raised concerns regarding the inadequacy of the rehabilitation and resettlement packages offered.²¹⁶ In November 2020, the Maharashtra government had directed CIDCO and the Mumbai International Airport Limited to complete the Rs 16,256-crore airport by May 2021. In order to attract more investment in the state, the agencies were also directed to improve rehabilitation measures for affected villagers.²¹⁷ The diversion of the Ulwe River for the project has resulted in families living in Dungi Village, near the upcoming airport, facing excessive flooding during the monsoons.²¹⁸ As they have not been declared 'project-affected,' they are not considered 'eligible' for any rehabilitation.²¹⁹

The Chutka Nuclear Power plant in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh received administrative approval and financial sanction in March 2021.²²⁰ At least 600 families are likely to be displaced for the construction of this plant. Affected persons include communities previously displaced for the construction of the Bargi Dam in Madhya Pradesh.²²¹ Mandla District is covered under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India, which means that no land acquisition can take place without the prior consent of the *gram sabha* (village council).²²²

The Indira Sagar Polavaram Irrigation Project on the Godavari River is estimated to displace thousands of families across several villages in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Telangana. Just in Andhra Pradesh, 98,818 families (188,012 people) are likely to be affected. In March 2021, on the basis of a Public Interest Litigation [W.P. (PIL) 56/2021] filed by local organizations working with affected persons, the High Court of Andhra Pradesh issued a notice to the state government regarding the quality of rehabilitation and resettlement facilities being provided.²²³ Project-affected persons, reportedly, have raised concerns regarding infrastructure facilities at the resettlement sites, including problems related to drainage facilities, water, and the lack of burial grounds and schools.²²⁴ Activists working in the area report that since 2016, houses in at least 15 villages in the submergence zone in east and west Godavari districts have been demolished.²²⁵ In June 2021, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes issued notices to the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh and other authorities regarding the lack of rehabilitation and resettlement facilities.²²⁶ In July 2021, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh directed the relevant authorities to identify alternative lands for oustees who have 'Recognition of Forest Rights' *pattas* (titles) and ensure that there was no compromise on the quality of the resettlement colonies being constructed.²²⁷

The Poola Subbiah Veligonda Project—a large irrigation and water supply project in Andhra Pradesh—will displace 7,555 families in Prakasam District.²²⁸ On 8 June 2021, the Government of Andhra Pradesh sanctioned Rs 1,365.39 crore for land acquisition and for the rehabilitation and resettlement of 4,617 families of the total families to be displaced.²²⁹

Also in Andhra Pradesh, the construction of the Gandikota Reservoir is estimated to displace 9,000 families in villages across Kadapa District.²³⁰ Though land acquisition for the project has been completed, people are still in possession of their land. Allegedly, as of June 2021, of the families identified as project-affected, only 3,300 families had availed the rehabilitation package; 5,700 families were still awaiting compensation and resettlement.²³¹ Of the families awaiting rehabilitation, 1,300 families were forcefully evicted in September 2020; currently 4,400 families are threatened with displacement for the project.²³²

The Bunder Diamond mining project in the Buxwaha forest region of Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh would gravely impact at least 8,000 Adivasis who depend heavily on the forests for their livelihoods.²³³ In addition to causing severe distress to the local inhabitants, the project would also result in the felling of over 200,000 trees and cause ecological damage by depleting groundwater levels.²³⁴

In Manipur, at least 5,256 people in Yaithibi Loukon, Thoubal District live under the threat of being evicted from their ancestral lands for the construction of a proposed National Sports University, a mega food park, and a medical college. Local communities have been resisting the acquisition of their lands without their free, prior, and informed consent. On 10 June 2021, in the presence of a large police force, the site for the proposed food park was demarcated.²³⁵



Langthabal Village in Yaithibi Loukon, Manipur

Themson Jajo

About 20,000 families will be displaced for the construction of the ‘Thiruvananthapuram–Kasaragod Semi High-Speed Rail’ or ‘Silver Line’ project in Kerala. The project will also lead to the demolition of at least 9,314 buildings and cause severe hydrological and ecological damage to the already fragile ecosystem of the flood-prone state.²³⁶ Local activists and environmentalists have questioned the economic, environment, and social feasibility of the project, while emphasizing its adverse impacts on the lives and livelihoods of thousands of people in the state.²³⁷

Across the state of Odisha, several infrastructure projects threaten to evict and displace people from their homes and lands. For example, in Puri District, projects including the beautification of Chandrabhaga Beach and the construction of a four-lane highway project in Konark could evict 1,000 families. The district revenue department commenced with a survey in 2020 to identify residential houses and shops to be demolished for these projects. This has created fear among residents of affected areas, as most of them do not have valid land ownership certificates.²³⁸ In Bolangir District of Odisha, over 14,000 people—mostly belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities—face the risk of displacement from the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project over the Suktel River. The project, which includes construction of an earthen dam and a spillway to provide irrigation in the districts of Bolangir and Sonepur, will result in the submergence of 30 villages, including 583 hectares of forestland. The foundation stone for the project was laid in 2001 but project work was halted as a result of sustained protests by affected persons. In July 2021, in Bolangir District of Odisha, the administration demolished 60 houses in Pardhiapalli Village.²³⁹ In Salia Sahi, Bhubaneswar, about 10,000 families are likely to be displaced for a road-widening project.²⁴⁰

The construction of a railway track—to facilitate transportation of coal from Adani Group’s Dharma Port to the company’s coal plant in Godda District, Jharkhand—could result in the displacement of 700 Scheduled Tribe families in Barhabans Village of Odisha’s Sundergarh District.²⁴¹ Similarly, construction of the Jharsuguda–Rourkela third railway line on the Mumbai–Howrah route could destroy 760 houses (displacing 4,000 people) in Malgodam and Panposh in Rourkela.²⁴²

In Uttarakhand's Haldwani area, the Indian Railways has served eviction notices to 1,581 people living in Dholak Basti, Ghafoor Basti, Kidwai Nagar, and in wards 15, 22, and 24 – as per an order of the High Court of Uttarakhand to remove 'encroachments' on railway land.²⁴³

The construction of the Noida International Greenfield Airport in Gautam Buddha Nagar District, reportedly, would affect a total of 57,000 people in 20 villages.²⁴⁴ Of them, already 43,000 people (8,971 families) have been affected, either through acquisition of their land or displacement. Reports indicate that as of July 2021, 2,850 families in five villages were displaced for the first phase of airport construction.²⁴⁵ As per the Draft Scheme of Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Affected families of Jewar Bangar, of the 8,971 families affected by phase-I construction, only about 3,000 families were to be displaced.²⁴⁶ Currently, the threat of displacement looms over about 14,000 people in the remaining villages.

In Delhi, at least 5,000 houses in China Colony, Mallah Gaon, Moolchand Basti, and other sites along the banks of the Yamuna River are under threat of demolition for the Yamuna Riverfront Development Project. The 22-kilometre-long riverfront project envisions the creation of cycling tracks, walkways, eco-trails, and recreational zones.²⁴⁷ 'Encroachments' in the area have been cited as one of the biggest challenges in restoring the riverfront. As of March 2021, 1,000 acres of land, for the project had been cleared of 'encroachments.'²⁴⁸ Communities living on the river banks have faced the brunt of multiple evictions over the years.



Families living near the Yamuna River in Delhi face the threat of eviction

HLRN

Tourism Projects

In Gujarat, hundreds of families have already been displaced by the construction of the 'Statue of Unity' – claimed to be the world's tallest statue. Over 5,000 more houses of Adivasis are set to be demolished for developing tourism facilities in the area. Families living in Navagam Village, close to the statue, lost 30–40 acres of their land after it was submerged as a result of the Garudeshwar Weir, which is a source of power for the statue.²⁴⁹ Information provided by local communities indicates that land in the area had previously been acquired for the Sardar Sarovar Dam. But after the Dam was constructed a few kilometres upstream due to a technical issue, the villagers continued to live and practice agriculture on these lands. To enhance tourism in the area, authorities from the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited have now fenced the land, without due process or prior notice.²⁵⁰

'Slum-clearance' and 'Beautification' Projects

On 31 August 2020, the Supreme Court of India in *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 13029/1985], a case originally related to environmental pollution and waste management, ordered the demolition of 48,000 houses (affected over 250,000 people) from along railway tracks in Delhi within three weeks. The apex court also restrained any other court from issuing a stay order or any political interference against the eviction. The ruling by the Court was made without making residents a party to the case or the opportunity to be heard.²⁵¹ After widespread protests by affected persons, housing rights activists, and civil society groups against the eviction order during the Covid-19 pandemic and without any rehabilitation plan for the affected people, the Indian Railways said that removal of 'encroachments' along railway tracks would be carried out only after consulting with the central and Delhi governments.²⁵² As of 31 July 2021, no eviction under this order had been undertaken but affected people continue to live in fear and uncertainty.

In Delhi, low-income communities in several other sites also face threats from different land-owning agencies related to removal of 'encroachments.' These include notices from the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation to 200

families living near Kashmere Gate Metro Station to vacate its land; a warning from the Public Works Department regarding demolition of 200 houses in Sultanpuri; and, a threat from the North Delhi Municipal Corporation to evict 22 families and 25 families of the Gadia Lohar community in Khayala and Azadpur, respectively.

Plans to remove ‘encroachments’ along canal bunds, in the central and eastern deltas of Andhra Pradesh, could result in the demolition of 9,500 houses. About 4,800 houses along the Ramachandrapuram and Amalapuram canal bunds in the central delta and, 4,700 houses along the canal between Dowleswaram and Kakinada in the eastern delta could be demolished.²⁵³

In Haryana, the State Irrigation Department’s proposal to remove ‘encroachments’ from its land will affect 2,500 households in Faridabad.²⁵⁴

Ostensible Environmental Projects

At least 100,000 people in Assam’s Bodoland Territorial Region could be displaced for the implementation of a 2019 Gauhati High Court order [PIL 78/2–12] to remove ‘encroachers’ from tribal belts in the Region. Various organizations, including the Bodoland Minority Students’ Union, have appealed to the Court to stay the order of eviction.²⁵⁵

Over 600 families living near the Kaziranga National Park in Assam have been facing eviction threats for expansion of the Park. On 30 September 2020, the Government of Assam approved adding another 30 square kilometres to the park area. People evicted in the past for the Park’s expansion have still not received adequate rehabilitation. As per a local official, the Gauhati High Court ordered eviction [PIL 67/2012] but did not talk about relocation of families. In 2016, a brutal eviction drive was carried out in the Kaziranga National Park at Banderdubi, Deusurchang, and Palkhuwa villages following the Court’s order. During the drive, two people lost their lives. In the absence of any rehabilitation, affected families moved to neighbouring areas.²⁵⁶

The proposed development of the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve could displace about 50,000 tribal people from 108 villages in Kaimur District of Bihar. These people have been living in the forest areas for generations.²⁵⁷

Similarly, 4,000 people are likely to be displaced as a result of the creation of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu. Over 100,000 hectares of the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel Sanctuary and the Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary will be combined to create the new tiger reserve. Reportedly, the reserve will result in forest protection and rejuvenation of the Vaigai River and its tributaries after the removal of ‘encroachments’ in the area.²⁵⁸

In Gujarat, 2,500 families belonging to the pastoral Maldhari community living around the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary could be displaced for Project Lion, which was launched on 15 August 2020. The proposal of the Wildlife Institute of India and the Gujarat Forest Department calls for the creation of an ‘involute space’ of 1,000 square kilometres within the sanctuary, where extraction of resources like minor forest produce, wood, and fodder, and human habitation will not be permitted. The Project would result in relocation of the Maldharis who have lived in the forest area for generations. Each affected ‘eligible’ family, reportedly, will be given Rs 20 lakh as compensation towards their relocation in 10 years.²⁵⁹

In Odisha, 700 people, mostly comprising Scheduled Tribes, in the Ramgarh settlement located within the Budharaja Reserve Forest in Sambalpur District, face the impending threat of eviction by the state forest department. The department has been awaiting a decision from the court of the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Sambalpur to initiate the action.²⁶⁰

In Delhi, a National Green Tribunal (NGT) direction to remove ‘illegal constructions’ for forest conservation could result in the displacement of 8,000 people living in the forest areas of Dera Mandi and Jaunapur.²⁶¹ Under the NGT order, 1,000 houses are also to set be demolished in Kalka Stone Basti in Delhi.²⁶²

For translocation of the endangered Sangai deer to Pumlun Pat in the Loktak Lake area of Manipur, 45,000 people (15,000 households) living on the wetland are likely to be evicted. On 23 March 2021, the Kakching district administration issued an eviction notice for “unauthorized occupation and activity within the wetlands” and ‘encroachers’ were given 30 days to vacate the area.²⁶³ Residents of the wetland have been resisting displacement from their ancestral land. With the construction of the Ithai Barrage increasing the dependence of indigenous peoples on the floating fish ponds, thereby affecting the ecosystem and their livelihoods, the issuance of the eviction order amidst the pandemic has further compounded their vulnerabilities.²⁶⁴

‘Disaster Management’

Across Tamil Nadu, several families residing near water bodies have been facing eviction and displacement threats. For example, 200 families—belonging to the indigenous Narikuravar community—in Devarayaneri Village, Tiruchi, are likely to be evicted as per the direction of the Madras High Court to remove ‘encroachments’ from the Devarayaneri irrigation tank²⁶⁵ while 250 families living along the Ramapuram Lake in Chennai could be evicted under an NGT order to remove ‘encroachments’ along the lake.²⁶⁶ Similarly, the Public Works Department in Chennai has informed NGT that 430 houses near the Tambaram Lake have been identified to be demolished.²⁶⁷ The state government has served eviction notices to 374 households residing near Chitlapakkam Lake, Chennai, under the Tamil Nadu Protection of Tank and Eviction of Encroachments Rules 2017, to implement an order of the Madras High Court to remove ‘encroachments’ along water bodies.²⁶⁸

10. Loss of Housing from Fire and Arson

In addition to the loss of homes through direct demolitions and forced evictions, HLRN has also been documenting the annual loss of housing resulting from incidents of fire in low-income settlements in India. With the exception of a few major cases, such incidents of fire and the resultant loss of housing, personal property, and displacement of families, mostly go unnoticed. The victim-survivors of such fire incidents seldom receive adequate resettlement and compensation from authorities, placing them at risk of homelessness and further displacement. At HLRN, since 2018, therefore, we have attempted to compile information on fire incidents that result in homelessness and displacement. The aim is to bring this issue to the government's notice and to ensure proper rehabilitation of affected families. We also hope to raise the critical question, which needs further investigation, of whether all such fire incidents are accidents or acts of arson as well. Often, fire is used as an insidious means of evicting people and clearing the land for other purposes, including for private profit.

According to data from the National Crime Records Bureau, 10,915 lives were lost in fire incidents in India in 2019, implying that fires claimed 30 lives a day.²⁶⁹ Of the lives lost in 2019, 58 per cent of the total deaths (6,329 incidents out of 10,915) were reported from 'residential/dwelling buildings.'

Multiple cases of fire in low-income settlements were reported from different parts of India in 2020. These fires resulted in widespread destruction of houses, completely gutting down some settlements, as well as the deaths of several people. As in the preceding years, in most of the cases in 2020, the reasons attributed to fire and resulting housing loss include short circuiting of wiring and gas cylinder blasts. In the majority of reported incidents, however, the exact cause of fire could not be ascertained. In the absence of comprehensive investigation, conclusive evidence is lacking. Information is also not always available on whether rehabilitation is provided to affected families. In some instances, local government authorities offer some monetary compensation and temporary relief to affected persons but not permanent housing.

In the year 2020, HLRN recorded the loss of **over 5,200 houses of low-income families to fire, which affected at least 25,090 people** in settlements across the country (*see Annexure III for a list of reported incidents of fire in 2020*). This data only reflects incidents known to HLRN. The actual number could be much higher as many incidents of fire are not reported.

In the last three years—2018, 2019, and 2020—at least 52,400 people lost their homes on account of fires in their settlements.

In Delhi, several incidents of fire and resultant housing loss were reported in 2020. In Tughlakabad, about 1,200 houses were gutted in May²⁷⁰ and another 200 houses in June.²⁷¹ Kirti Nagar also witnessed two fires in 2020: 200 houses burnt to the ground in Chuna Bhatti in May 2020,²⁷² while another fire destroyed 50 homes in November.²⁷³ Residents of Bengali Colony in Rohini, Sector 16 suffered heavy damage when a massive fire destroyed 150 homes, rendering 1,000 people homeless in February 2020.²⁷⁴ A fire in Shahabad Dairy gutted 70 homes in July.²⁷⁵ Demands of the affected families resulted in each family receiving compensation of Rs 25,000.



Gutted homes, Shahabad Dairy, Delhi

Fires also resulted from deliberate acts of arson. For instance, in Kacharakanahalli, Bengaluru, 55 houses of migrant workers were burnt in March 2020. It has been alleged that miscreants set the houses on fire in order to clear the land for their personal business gains. The incident occurred during the nationwide lockdown while workers were in their villages. When they returned to the city, they found their homes destroyed. The High Court of Karnataka [W.P. 7737/2020] ordered the state government to pay compensation of Rs 14,100 to each affected family and reconstruct the houses. The Supreme Court of India [Special Leave to Appeal (C) Nos. 1663–1664/2021], however, stayed the High Court of Karnataka order to reconstruct migrant workers' houses until further notice.²⁷⁶

In Saketri Village, Panchkula, a fire reportedly burnt down 80 houses in November 2020. Over 200 families lost their belongings and were rendered homeless.²⁷⁷ A major fire outbreak in Bhimwadi, Nashik destroyed 200 houses in April 2020. Affected families were provided temporary shelter in a nearby government school.²⁷⁸ In Ghaziabad's Bhopura area, about 200 houses were gutted by a fire in November 2020.²⁷⁹

In Dhobi Ghat, Lucknow, a fire outbreak completely destroyed 1,500 houses of labourers in October 2020. Affected persons alleged foul play behind the incident.²⁸⁰ In Sihani Village, along the Delhi–Meerut Road in Ghaziabad, 70 houses of ragpickers were burnt down in October 2020. Apart from destroying homes and property, the fire claimed the life of a three-year-old girl.²⁸¹

Between January and December 2020, several fire incidents were reported in low-income settlements across West Bengal. In a settlement in Gulmohar Colony, Kolkata, fire destroyed 35 houses in December.²⁸² About 110 families were rendered homeless when a fire destroyed 37 houses in Gouranganagar of New Town, Kolkata in November 2020;²⁸³ in the same month, 60 houses were reduced to ashes in Topsia, Kolkata, rendering 250 people homeless.²⁸⁴ Another fire burnt 67 houses in New Town, Kolkata in June 2020.²⁸⁵

In July 2020, fire engulfed over 500 houses in Dudu Colony in Bokajan, along the Assam–Nagaland border. The incident claimed the life of a four-year-old girl and rendered families homeless. The affected families were mostly migrant workers. The district administration set up relief camps for sheltering the families. The police suspected arson and are investigating the case.²⁸⁶

Fires also resulted from industrial accidents, including from neglect and inadequate safety measures. For instance, in Tinsukia District of Assam, a fire explosion in an oil well operated by Oil India Limited gutted 11 homes and damaged 20 homes in Baghjan Village in June 2020. The fire in the oil field continued for 90 days before it was contained. The explosion and the resultant oil condensate, gas smell, and sound pollution affected people in six adjoining villages. Reportedly, an estimated 2,756 families (13,299 people) including 2,275 people of Natun Rangagora Village were affected. They have been living in relief camps and are awaiting adequate rehabilitation and compensation. Oil India Limited, reportedly, paid compensation of Rs 25,000 to only a few of the affected families. A National Green Tribunal-appointed expert committee suggested three categories to disburse compensation: families with complete destruction of their homes would receive Rs 25 lakh; those with severe damage, Rs 10 lakh; and, those with moderate damage to their homes would be given Rs 2.5 lakh. Reportedly, only a few families have received the said compensation.²⁸⁷

In almost all cases of fire reported in 2020, affected families lost their homes and personal belongings, including study material of children. Reports indicate that adequate resettlement or alternative housing was not provided in the vast majority of incidents. Housing and Land Rights Network, however, has not been able to verify if all affected families received adequate rehabilitation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the loss of housing and widespread destruction has resulted in acute distress for affected persons who have been forced to live in the open and deal with extreme weather conditions. The severe economic crisis and loss of livelihoods has impeded people's ability to reconstruct their homes or shift to alternative rental housing.

11. Displacement from Disasters and Conflict

Though this report focuses on forced evictions and displacement by state authorities for various reasons, we also believe it is important to mention the extensive displacement that low-income and marginalized communities across India face from disasters. Very often, communities displaced from disasters are forced to migrate and live in inadequate conditions without security of tenure, which in turn heightens their risk of forced eviction and subsequent displacement.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), an estimated 40.5 million people were displaced worldwide as a result of natural disasters and conflict in 2020. As of December 2020, about 55 million people were living as internally displaced people around the world. The economic cost of internal displacement in 2020 has been estimated around USD 20.5 billion. Since 2008, an average 24.5 million new annual displacement cases—or 67,000 new displacements per day—have been recorded.²⁸⁸

India is among the ten worst affected countries in the world with new cases of displacement due to extreme weather events in 2020.

It is estimated that 3.9 million people (3,856,000) were displaced on account of natural disasters, including tropical cyclones, floods, and monsoon rains in India in 2020. Many of the displacements were pre-emptive evacuations. However, as per IDMC, the extent of housing damage from disasters suggests that affected people could face the prospect of protracted displacement.²⁸⁹

In May 2020, Cyclone Amphan triggered the evacuation of 2.4 million people in eastern India, mostly in the states of Odisha and West Bengal. In West Bengal, over 2.8 million homes were damaged by the cyclone. In June 2020, Cyclone Nisarga forced the evacuation of 170,000 people living along the coast in the western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Between June and October 2020, India's south-west monsoon affected 22 states and union territories, causing the displacement of 763,000 people.

In Uttarakhand, erratic rainfall events, resulting from climate change, have disrupted agriculture-based livelihoods of villagers living in the hilly areas of the state. Extreme weather in the state has resulted in the forced migration of people, who have had to abandon their homes and villages and migrate to the plains.²⁹⁰

In 2019, Cyclone Fani caused immense destruction and loss of homes and livelihoods of thousands of people living in coastal areas of Odisha. After two years of the disaster, people who were rendered homeless are still living in makeshift houses, as they have not received the promised compensation and housing by the state government. Reportedly, in parts of Brahmagiri and Puri, thousands of people have been living in polythene sheds or in the open. They are struggling to get the promised housing under a government scheme.²⁹¹

As of December 2020, India was estimated to have 929,000 people internally displaced due to natural disasters.²⁹² Given the pandemic-induced crisis, it seems unlikely that they will be provided adequate rehabilitation any time soon.

Conflict-induced Displacement

Incidents of conflict and violence resulted in the displacement of 3,900 people in India in 2020. As of December 2020, India was estimated to have 473,000 people internally displaced as a result of conflict and violence.²⁹³

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS



IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing and Land Rights Network has consistently stood against the practice of forced evictions, as they constitute a gross violation of human rights. It is a matter of great consternation and alarm that forced evictions continue across India, largely without due process, in contravention of national and international human rights laws, policies, and standards. The scale of the crisis has assumed even greater proportions during this time of a global pandemic, when despite the public health and economic crisis, the Indian government continues to demolish homes of the urban and rural poor, thereby directly increasing the risk to people's health and lives.

Given the grave human rights and humanitarian emergency resulting from the unabated occurrence of forced evictions across India without any accountability, **Housing and Land Rights Network would like to propose the following recommendations**—which are based on and in compliance with human rights standards and norms—for immediate implementation, **to the Indian government – at the central, state, and local levels.**

Recommendations Related to Remedial Action

1. Take immediate measures towards **restitution of human rights of all affected persons** by providing adequate compensation, resettlement, and rehabilitation; restoring homes, livelihoods, basic services, and education; ensuring access to places of work, education, and healthcare; and, enabling return to original sites of residence, where possible and desired by displaced persons. Provide compensation to all affected persons, based on human rights assessments and comprehensive criteria, for all losses—material and non-material—and damage incurred during the eviction/relocation/demolition process. Support evicted families to rebuild their homes at the same site if the land is vacant, or provide them with adequate alternative housing within a vicinity of three kilometres of their original sites of residence.
2. Ensure that evicted, displaced, and homeless/landless families are considered for **priority allotment of housing and land** under all state and central government housing and land schemes.
3. **Investigate all incidents of forced eviction**, according to due process of the law, and take punitive action against those found guilty of violating human rights of affected persons, laws, court orders, and health directives during the pandemic.
4. Conduct detailed **investigations of all incidents of fire** in 'informal settlements' to ascertain the actual reasons. If arson is the cause, prosecute those responsible. Develop a comprehensive rehabilitation policy for those who lose their homes to fires and ensure that just compensation is paid in time and that they also receive priority in state housing schemes.

Recommendations Related to Positive Action and Prevention of Evictions and Human Rights Violations

1. Impose an **immediate national moratorium on forced evictions and home demolitions**. Housing and Land Rights Network has been calling for a moratorium on evictions in India for several years. This has been a repeated recommendation of UN agencies and experts during the pandemic.²⁹⁴ This was also proposed by the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, in her 2017 report on her mission to India.²⁹⁵ In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgency to order a national ban on evictions is even greater. **India should issue a strict national moratorium on home demolitions/forced evictions, for any reason, including ostensible 'public purpose' projects.**

“Enforce a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures and on eviction proceedings against everyone, including non-nationals resident in a country. In particular during the pandemic, **there must be a zero-eviction commitment from Governments to avoid forced evictions**. This should also include a moratorium on sweeping encampments or tents of homeless persons [emphasis added].”

Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, A/75/148, July 2020²⁹⁶

2. Ensure that the **national moratorium on evictions also covers rental evictions**.²⁹⁷ Low-income communities that have suffered from economic hardship during the lockdown should not be evicted for their inability to pay rent. Several countries have cancelled rent and imposed moratoriums on evictions, including rental evictions, during the pandemic.²⁹⁸ In order to address livelihood concerns and the economic marginalization of small, low-income renters, the government should consider a scheme of providing rental vouchers to low-income families to enable them to pay rent arrears since the onset of the pandemic.
3. Take specific preventive measures to **remove underlying causes of forced evictions**, such as speculation in land and real estate and other market-based reasons, which have increased as a result of the pandemic-induced economic crisis. The government should review the operation and regulation of the housing and tenancy markets, and when necessary, intervene to ensure that market forces do not increase the vulnerability of low-income and other marginalized groups to forced eviction.
4. Ensure the proper implementation of **The Model Tenancy Act 2021** to protect the rights of tenants and prevent illegal evictions. Expand the ambit of the law to recognize housing as a human right; prevent rental discrimination against marginalized groups; include a human-rights-based definition of affordability; and, include coverage of the informal rental market, particularly for low-income groups.
5. Recognize and **uphold the human right to adequate housing**,²⁹⁹ as guaranteed in international law³⁰⁰ and affirmed by orders of the Supreme Court of India and state High Courts. **Develop a comprehensive housing policy aimed at providing durable solutions for adequate housing for all**. This should include the adoption of a ‘Housing First’ approach to prioritize adequate housing for homeless persons and the provision of low-cost housing options along a ‘housing continuum,’ including hostels for migrant workers and single homeless persons, collective housing arrangements, and social rental housing. In order to develop adequate policy response, states must conduct accurate surveys and collect disaggregated data on the number of migrant workers, homeless people, and others living without adequate housing. The ‘Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing’³⁰¹ developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing should be incorporated into state housing policies and implemented.
6. **Invest adequately in low-cost housing for low-income groups, with a focus on social housing**. Define ‘affordable housing’—in all policies—on the basis of income to prevent any misuse. Ensure that people’s self-built housing is protected, improved, and regularized, through adequate budgetary investments, supportive policy frameworks, and technical assistance. Prioritize participatory and human rights-based *in situ* (on site) upgrading of housing that respects peoples’ livelihoods and cultural needs. In areas where *in situ* upgrading is not possible, ensure that alternative housing/land is provided within three kilometres of people’s original places of habitation, after consultation with, and the prior and informed consent of, affected communities.
7. **Incorporate UN standards of ‘adequate housing’** in all housing-related state interventions such as schemes, programmes, policies, and COVID-19 recovery plans. Adequate housing must include: legal security of tenure; provision of basic services; habitability; affordability; accessibility (for all); adequate location; cultural adequacy; physical security; participation and information; access to land, water, and other natural resources; freedom from dispossession, damage and destruction; resettlement, restitution and compensation; access to remedies; education and empowerment; and, freedom from violence against women.³⁰² Given the increased threats from climate change, housing for low-income communities must be disaster-resistant, and situated in appropriate locations to minimize risk to inhabitants.

8. Implement the national **Affordable Rental Housing Complexes** scheme in all states to provide adequate rental housing options to the urban poor, including migrant workers, homeless people, transgender communities, single women, and persons with disabilities. Ensure equitable and full access to information related to the scheme. Ensure that vacant government-supported houses that have already been earmarked for rehabilitation of people affected by forced evictions are not utilized for this scheme.
9. Recognize that the right to housing is integrally linked with several other human rights, including the rights to work/livelihood, education, and health. Incorporate a **human rights and social justice approach** for implementation of all central and state schemes related to housing.
10. 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, including General Comment 4 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Guiding Principles on Security of Tenure for the Urban Poor,³⁰³ and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.³⁰⁴ Tenure options should be flexible, provided along a spectrum – including rental housing, collective tenure options, and ownership; and, should be discussed with people to ensure the best solutions for them. Many families have been living in settlements for decades and have legal rights to the land based on the doctrine of ‘adverse possession.’ However, the state continues to view them as ‘encroachers’ and evicts them from their homes and land. This mindset needs to change and also needs to be reflected in state policy.

UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement

25. In order to secure a maximum degree of effective legal protection against the practice of forced evictions for all persons under their jurisdiction, States should take immediate measures aimed at conferring legal security of tenure upon those persons, households and communities currently lacking such protection, including all those who do not have formal titles to home and land.

11. 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.
12. Carry out human rights-based **‘eviction impact assessments,’**³⁰⁵ consistent with national and international guidelines, prior to the implementation of any project. Ensure that the differential impacts of evictions and displacement on women, children, and marginalized groups are taken into account, including through the collection of disaggregated data. All social, eviction, and environmental impact assessment documents should be made public, and must be shared with the affected persons.
13. **Define ‘public purpose’** adequately, consistent with human rights standards, to ensure that marginalized individuals, groups, and communities are not routinely displaced for projects that do not benefit them but instead result in their chronic impoverishment and increased marginalization. Adopt a **protocol** based on the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement,³⁰⁶ to ensure that **relocation/eviction only takes place for ‘exceptional circumstances’** and complies with due process requirements and protects human rights of affected persons.
14. **Halt the creation of resettlement sites in remote areas and on peripheries of cities.** The state must stop forcefully relocating low-income communities to these sites under the garb of providing permanent housing and ‘resettlement.’ Where resettlement is absolutely essential for the health and well-being of affected persons, the sites must be: completed well before any relocation is undertaken; located close to people’s sources of work, school, and healthcare; provide adequate housing with tenure security and access to essential services and infrastructure; comply with human rights standards;³⁰⁷ and be developed with the consent and active participation of affected persons.
15. Compile **disaggregated data on evictions**, home demolitions, displacement and resettlement across India. This information should be published and regularly made available to the people.

16. Ensure **coordination between different land-owning authorities**, including between those of the centre and states, and delineate responsibilities and accountability of agencies to guarantee that those responsible for relocation/eviction provide adequate resettlement and rehabilitation.
17. Carry out **comprehensive reviews of multiple laws, policies, and schemes**; ensure harmonization and consistency with human rights standards. Remove provisions that exacerbate existing inequalities and make women vulnerable to being evicted from their homes and lands.
18. **Implement progressive court judgments upholding the human right to adequate housing.** It is important to note that all state governments immediately implement court orders calling for evictions but do not implement orders aimed at providing relief and rehabilitation. This has been a consistent finding in HLRN's research on forced evictions since 2015.
19. **Review** the nation's **economic policy**, and its unsustainable reliance on projects that sanction evictions, displacement, and land-grabbing. The notion that the urban and rural poor must continue to pay for India's economic growth needs to not only be challenged but also eliminated from policy frameworks and their implementation.
20. Incorporate a strong **human rights approach, with a focus on housing, in India's COVID-19 recovery** and ensure that it does not sanction or permit evictions, including for the creation of land banks or under the guise of infrastructure development.
21. **Implement recommendations made to India by all UN human rights bodies** and Special Procedures, including those of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing.³⁰⁸
22. **Implement recommendations made to India by the UN Human Rights Council during its third Universal Periodic Review,**³⁰⁹ especially the three recommendations related to providing adequate housing for all:
 - 161.155:** Implement a human-rights based, holistic approach to ensure access to adequate housing as well as to adequate water and sanitation, also for marginalized groups, including Dalits/scheduled castes, homeless, landless, scheduled tribes, religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and women.
 - 161.156:** Expand the "Housing for all" scheme to realise the right to adequate housing for vulnerable people and eliminate homelessness by 2030.
 - 161.157:** Continue the Housing for All policy led by the Government to eradicate by 2030 the problem of homelessness, in conformity with Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda.
23. Ensure a **comprehensive monitoring system** in the country that integrates the national and international reporting framework. A large number of evictions violate not just human rights of affected persons but also harm the environment, and are carried out for projects that exacerbate climate change and compromise India's international legal and moral commitments, including to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and international human rights law.
24. Incorporate a **human rights and climate justice approach** to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), several of which relate to the need to improve housing and living conditions of the urban and rural poor. The indicators to monitor the Goals should be human rights-based and developed in consultation with independent experts and local communities.

Specific Recommendations for State Governments

1. Develop and **promulgate laws on the human rights to adequate housing and land**, on the lines of the Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act 2017³¹⁰ and the Punjab Slum Dwellers (Proprietary Rights) Act 2020.³¹¹ Such laws should be based on human rights and should not discriminate people on the basis of tenure status or geographical location. They should also move away from referring to the urban poor as 'slum-dwellers.'
2. Develop and promulgate **right to homestead legislation**, which provides secure land for housing and

subsistence livelihoods for the urban and rural landless and homeless population, similar to the Madhya Pradesh Housing Guarantee (for Lower Income Groups and Economically Weaker Sections) Act 2017.³¹² Given the large-scale ‘reverse migration’ from urban to rural areas, as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns across India, there is an urgent need to ensure security of land, housing, and food in rural areas. In 2013, the Government of India’s Task Force on Land Reforms had drafted a National Right to Homestead Bill, which was never taken up for discussion in Parliament. It is time for state governments to prioritize the development of homestead legislation and improve living conditions in rural and urban areas.

Specific Recommendations for National and State Human Rights Institutions

1. **Investigate complaints of forced eviction** and demolition of homes across India and play a more proactive role in preventing evictions and assisting affected communities with remedies, relief, and restitution for the violation of their human rights.
2. Develop **human rights-based guidelines to prevent evictions** and **promote adequate rehabilitation and resettlement**, on the basis of international human rights norms and standards and progressive court judgments.
3. Given the serious scale of India’s evictions crisis, the **National Human Rights Commission should appoint a Special Rapporteur on evictions** and also establish a national observatory on evictions.

V. CONCLUSION



V. CONCLUSION

As emphasized by the findings of this report, the unrelenting crisis of forced evictions in India is not only a crisis of housing loss but is also a grave human rights and humanitarian crisis, one that is directly contributing to the loss of health and well-being of affected persons as well as to increased impoverishment, deprivation, exclusion, and marginalization.

According to research by HLRN, during the pandemic—from March 2020 to July 2021—**government authorities forcibly evicted at least 257,700 people** (conservative estimate) **across India**, rendering the vast majority of people homeless. It is extremely disconcerting that throughout this ravaging pandemic, state authorities in India have relentlessly destroyed homes of the urban and rural poor. Low-income individuals, groups, and communities face high vulnerability to contracting the virus on account of their inadequate living conditions, low levels of nutrition, and lack of access to adequate healthcare, water, and sanitation. To demolish their homes and evict them during this health emergency greatly amplifies their exposure to the coronavirus while threatening their lives. It also impedes recovery of those who had Covid.

Directives from the World Health Organization and India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to 'stay at home' and guidance from UN agencies and experts as well as orders from Indian courts not to carry out evictions during the pandemic have been blatantly disregarded by the Indian government. Home demolitions and forced evictions continued, with full impunity, even during strict lockdowns when no movement or activities were permitted. While fines were imposed on people for violating lockdown rules, state authorities got away with bulldozing thousands of homes and rendering lakhs of people homeless during this unprecedented public health emergency. No investigation or inquiry has been conducted into this rampant violation of laws and policy directives; neither is there any accountability of officials responsible for these acts of forced eviction that are often accompanied by violence, force, and arson.

The pandemic-induced financial crisis has forced millions into situations of severe hunger and destitution. As of 16 August 2021, at least 431,642 Indians had lost their lives to the novel coronavirus,³¹³ though official figures are alleged to greatly underestimate the real scale of loss. Millions are also suffering from the impacts of Covid on their health and lives. Given this harsh reality, it is the moral imperative of the state to take care of its people, improve their living conditions, and protect their health and lives. State authorities, instead, have persisted with the clearly anti-poor agenda of eviction of low-income communities—which in the guise of 'beautification' and economic growth—is leading to alarming levels of dispossession and displacement of people who were already struggling to survive.

While exposing glaring gaps in social protection systems around the world, the pandemic has also highlighted the critical importance of adequate housing in safeguarding the human rights to health, life, work, and education. Instead of increasing public investment in adequate housing for all and working on durable solutions to end homelessness, the Government of India—even after a year-and-a-half of the pandemic—has not taken appropriate measures to protect the most marginalized and vulnerable.

As has been well-documented by HLRN, including in this report, forced evictions violate multiple human rights and have severe impacts on affected populations, both in the short-term and long-term, as well as on social justice and the nation's development and prosperity. They result in an increase in poverty, destitution, homelessness, landlessness, and unemployment; loss of education, health, security and sometimes, lives too; hunger and malnutrition; and, mental, physical, and psychological distress. Women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other marginalized groups are among those most adversely affected. Despite the alarming gravity of this nationwide crisis, the issue not only continues to be ignored and unaddressed by both state and non-state actors, but is being exacerbated by multiple acts of commission and omission by the government at various levels. Furthermore, there is still no official data on evictions and home demolitions

in India and no official studies to assess the disaggregated impact of evictions, displacement, and failed resettlement on different groups and communities.



The continued sanction of forced evictions by the state (and courts) also reflects a shortcoming in understanding India's housing crisis, which is not merely about the shortage of housing units but about the failure to recognize and implement the right to adequate housing as a human right. This would require ensuring social and economic justice, which includes protecting and improving housing built by people; facilitating access to affordable housing with finance; guaranteeing legal security of tenure, including through secure land rights; and, providing access to work/livelihoods, education, healthcare, water, food, sanitation, electricity, transport, and other services and social infrastructure required to maintain an adequate standard of living. It is only through the respect, protection, and fulfilment of the human rights of the urban and rural poor to their lands and homes, that India's housing crisis can be resolved.

As highlighted in this report, in the majority of cases, resettlement is not provided to affected persons. This has been an observation of HLRN in all its research on evictions in India. The cumulative impact of persistent evictions without resettlement, year after year, has created a major crisis of internal displacement in the country. Unfortunately, this issue is neither acknowledged nor addressed. Even worse, affected persons—in both rural and urban areas—are not recognized as Internally Displaced Persons; India has no policy on internal displacement. Several thousands of families displaced, even decades ago, continue to await resettlement or have been left to fend for themselves. Such an internal displacement crisis has wide-ranging impacts on affected people's standard of living, livelihoods, education, social and kinship ties, culture, and health. The long-term human rights violations are continuously ignored, with most people having no access to remedy or justice. Women are disproportionately affected.³¹⁴

Nearly 16 million people across the country currently live under the threat of eviction from their homes and habitats. Timely action by the state, in collaboration with affected communities, could prevent this looming disaster from unfolding.

The government needs to take stock of the gravity of this crisis and issue an immediate moratorium on evictions across the country. At any time, forced evictions violate human rights and should be prohibited. During this pandemic, it is even more exigent for the state to ban the demolition of homes and ensure that everyone has a safe place to live in peace, security, and dignity to safeguard their health and lives.

Housing and Land Rights Network hopes that this report will help draw attention to the unabating but silent national crisis of forced evictions and displacement, and that the recommendations presented will be implemented, in order to address this human rights and humanitarian emergency and bring about justice and restoration of the human rights of millions of affected persons.

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE I

**TABLE ONE:
FORCED EVICTIONS IN INDIA IN 2020¹**

I. EVICTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR 'SLUM' CLEARANCE/ REMOVAL OF 'ENCROACHMENTS'/ 'BEAUTIFICATION' PROJECTS

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	Tolkatta Village, Moinabad	April	Removal of 'encroachments'	At least 6	Not known
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Jully, Fourth India Reserve Battalion headquarters campus	September	Clearance of land of the India Reserve Battalion	200	Not known
3.	Assam	Guwahati	Near Raj Bhavan	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	15	No
4.	Bihar	Patna	Gardanibagh	May	Removal of 'encroachments'	100	No
5.	Bihar	Patna	Bahadurpur Housing Colony and Jogipur Nala, Kankarbagh Circle	March	Removal of 'encroachments'	73	No
6.	Bihar	Patna	Different locations	February	Removal of 'encroachments' along drains	240	No
7.	Bihar	Patna	Kamla Nehru Nagar	February	Removal of 'encroachments' along the Serpentine drain	150	No
8.	Bihar	Patna	Patna City Circle	February	Removal of 'encroachments' along the Mot Nallah (drain)	15	No
9.	Chhattisgarh	Korba District	Rainpur Village	October	Rejection of residents' applications for land claims and construction of a cow shelter	50	No
10.	Chhattisgarh	Bilaspur	Imlibhata and Bahtarai	June	Removal of 'illegal occupation' - to accommodate people evicted for the 'beautification' of the Arpa River	400	Not known
11.	Delhi	Delhi	Shradhanand Colony, Bhalaswa	October	Removal of 'encroachments'	15	No
12.	Delhi	Delhi	Rainiwell 4, behind Akshardham Temple	October	Removal of 'encroachments'	150	No
13.	Delhi	Delhi	Israeli Camp, Rangpuri Pahadi, Mahipalpur	October	Removal of 'encroachments'	150	No
14.	Delhi	Delhi	Sangam Vihar, Bandh Road	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	30	No

¹ This table is arranged alphabetically according to the name of the state/Union Territory of India. Within each state, evictions have been listed in reverse chronological order, according to the month in which they occurred, with the most recent eviction listed first.

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
15.	Delhi	Delhi	Keshavpuram and Nangloi	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	10	No
16.	Delhi	Delhi	Mansarovar Park, near the railway track	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	6	No
17.	Delhi	Delhi	Dhobi Ghat, Jamia Nagar	September	Removal of 'encroachments' from the Yamuna floodplains, following an order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012, Principal Bench]	35	No
18.	Delhi	Delhi	Bhatt Camp, Badarpur	August	Removal of 'encroachments'	40	No
19.	Delhi	Delhi	East Laxmi Market	July	Removal of 'encroachments' on a service road, following an order of the High Court of Delhi	150	No
20.	Delhi	Delhi	Shakur Basti	June	Removal of 'encroachments' on land of the Indian Railways	13	No
21.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	Sarkhej Circle, Vishala Ring Road, Gandhinagar	October	Removal of 'encroachments'	55	No
22.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	Near Sardar Patel Stadium (renamed as Narendra Modi Stadium)	January and February	City 'beautification' ahead of the visit of former US President, Mr Donald Trump to Ahmedabad	69	No
23.	Haryana	Gurugram	Behrampur Village	November	Removal of 'illegal' hutments from village panchayat land	1,500 (4,000 people)	Not known
24.	Haryana	Gurugram	Saraswati Kunj Golf Course Road	November	Removal of 'illegal' construction and 'slums'	650	No
25.	Haryana	Gurugram	Sector 57	October	Clearance of land of the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran, following the dismissal of a petition by the High Court of Punjab and Haryana	72	Not known
26.	Haryana	Gurugram	Between Sector 62 and Sector 65, along the Golf Course Road Extension	July	Removal of 'encroachments' from the green belt	35	No
27.	Haryana	Yamunanagar District	Todarpur Village and Mandauli Village	June	Removal of 'unauthorized' colonies	16 (just in Mandauli)	No
28.	Haryana	Gurugram	Sector 53	January	Removal of 'encroachments'	100	No
29.	Jharkhand	Ranchi	Malar Kocha Basti	April	Land clearance	12	No
30.	Karnataka	Hubballi	Amminbhavi - Amargol Main Road	June	Removal of 'encroachments'	94	Not known
31.	Karnataka	Mysore	Giriyabovipalya	January	Removal of 'illegal' constructions	1	No

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
32.	Karnataka	Bengaluru	Devarabeesanahalli	January	Removal of 'illegal' settlements	500	No
33.	Karnataka	Bengaluru	Bellandur and Kariyammana Agrahara	January	Removal of 'illegal' settlements allegedly occupied by 'Bangladeshi nationals'	150-200	No
34.	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Piplani	July	Removal of 'encroachments' from land of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited	40	No
35.	Madhya Pradesh	Guna District	Jaganpur Chak	July	Removal of 'encroachments'	1	No
36.	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Siwal Village, Burhanpur	June	Land clearance drive	1	No
37.	Madhya Pradesh	Rewa	Banks of Ratahara Pond	May	'Beautification' of the Ratahara Pond	103	Only 17 of the 103 affected families allotted alternative flats under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, for which they had applied much earlier.
38.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Indira Nagar and Shivaji Nagar	November	Removal of 'encroachments'	50	No
39.	Maharashtra	Nagpur	Adarsh Nagar	August	Removal of 'unauthorized' constructions along drains	12	No
40.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Near Ruia College	July	Removal of 'encroachments'	7	No
41.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Ambika Sagar Building, Ulhasnagar, Thane	May-June	Demolition of a dilapidated building	25	Not known
42.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Near Saibangoda tribal hamlet	June	Removal of 'illegal' encroachments	60	No
43.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Outside Bahar Cinema, Vile Parle	March	To make streets 'clean'	20	No
44.	Maharashtra	Nashik	Pimpalgaon Bahula Village, Satpur	February	Removal of 'illegal' structures from land reserved for the construction of a school	19	No
45.	Maharashtra	Pune	Congress Bhavan Road	January	City 'beautification'	100 people	Not known
46.	Manipur	Imphal	Lamphei Sanakeithel (near Shankar Talkies)	September	Removal of 'illegal' structures	200 (600 people)	No
47.	Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Mahima Nagar Slum, Gadakana	November	Removal of 'encroachments'	6	No
48.	Odisha	Bhubaneswar	In front of Jaydev Shiksha Kendra, Patia	October	Removal of 'encroachments'	16	No
49.	Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Laxmi Nagar Basti, Kalinga Vihar	June	Removal of 'encroachments'	25	No
50.	Punjab	Ludhiana	Prem Nagar, near Rose Garden	December	Removal of 'illegal' structures and 'encroachments'	80	No

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
51.	Punjab	Ludhiana	Model Town Extension, Part 1	November	Removal of 'encroachments'	50	No
52.	Punjab	Ludhiana	Vishwakarma Colony, Moti Nagar	September	Removal of 'illegal' structures	15	No
53.	Punjab	Amritsar	Kabir Park	August	Removal of 'encroachments'	Not known	Officials claim that alternative flats were provided in New Amritsar area; families say they have been forced to move
54.	Punjab	Ludhiana	Model Town Extension, Part 1	July	Removal of 'encroachments'	60	No
55.	Punjab	Bathinda	Preet Nagar and Dhobiana Basti	February	Removal of 'illegal' structures	35	No
56.	Punjab	Patiala	Mall Road	January	City 'beautification'	100 people	Not known
57.	Rajasthan	Kota	Kalmandi Village, Haripura Manji Village, and Rathkankara Village	July	'Atikraman Mukht Gram Abhiyan' ('encroachment'-free village drive)	Not known	Not known
58.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Tulasingapuram, near Nandambakkam	June	Removal of 'encroachments' on land of the Officers' Training Academy	1	No
59.	Tamil Nadu	Madurai	Chokkalingam Nagar	February	Clearance of land of the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple	10	No
60.	Telangana	Khammam	Venugopal Nagar	November	City development	Not known	Not known
61.	Telangana	Siddipet	Mamidyala Village	April	Clearance of land in the submergence zone of the Kondapochamma Sagar Reservoir, Kaleshwaram Project - following an order of the High Court of Telangana [W.P. 35059/2017]	40	Not known
62.	Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Nanda Ki Chowki, Premnagar	November	Removal of 'encroachments'	47	No
63.	Uttar Pradesh	Raebareli	Civil line intersection, along National Highway 30	December	Removal of 'illegal property', following an order of the Allahabad High Court [Misc. Bench 13415/2019]	300	Not known
64.	Uttar Pradesh	Budaun	Saheswan	November	Clearance of Waqf Board land, following an order of the Allahabad High Court	2	No
65.	Uttar Pradesh	Maharajganj		November	Removal of 'encroachments' - following an order of the Allahabad High Court	25	No

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
66.	Uttar Pradesh	Varanasi	Suzabad	November	City 'beautification' ahead of the Prime Minister's visit for the inauguration of the Varanasi-Prayagraj Road and the Deepotsav event	50 (250 people)	No
67.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Bhovapur	September-October	Removal of 'encroachments' -following an order of the Allahabad High Court [PIL 2014/2015]	250	No
68.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Defence Colony	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	300	No
69.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Sahabajpur	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	150	No
70.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Bhopura	September	Removal of 'encroachments' -following an order of the Allahabad High Court [PIL 2014/2015]	300	No
71.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Sihani	September	Removal of 'encroachments'	110	No
72.	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Gomti Nagar Extension, Sector 1 and Sector 5	August	Removal of 'encroachments'	Over 50	No
73.	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Faizabad Road, Purani Chungi, Sachivalaya Colony	April	Removal of 'encroachments'	35	No
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED/FAMILIES EVICTED						7,689	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVICTED (Using the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of people is known)						33,358	

II. EVICTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER PROJECTS

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
74.	Andhra Pradesh	Anantapur	Marrimakulapalli Village, Tadimarri Mandal	October	Chitravathi River Project/Chitravathi Balancing Reservoir	450	Rs 10 lakh compensation given to each affected family
75.	Andhra Pradesh	Kadapa	Thallaprodatur Village	September	Gandikota Reservoir Project	1,300 (7,000 people)	No
76.	Chhattisgarh	Bhilai	Hathkhoj Basti	July	Establishment of industrial units	2	No

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
77.	Chhattisgarh	Bilaspur	Tilak Nagar, along the Arpa River	June	Arpa River 'beautification' project, and a proposed 1.8 kilometre road under a Smart Cities Mission project	160	Yes. Affected families received alternative housing in Imlibhata and Bahtarai.
78.	Chhattisgarh	Raigarh District	Banjikhol Village	June	Coal mining (by Hindalco Industries Limited)	1	No
79.	Goa	Saligao	Guirim	January	Expansion of National Highway 66	12	Not known
80.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	Shankar Bhuvan, Shahpur	November-December	Metro Rail Project	200	No
81.	Gujarat	Surat	Umra Village	November	Construction of an approach road to the Paal-Umra Bridge on the Tapi River	20	Affected families have accepted the proposal of alternative land
82.	Gujarat	Rajkot	University Road	October	Road clearance	70	No
83.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	Different locations in Juhapura	September-October	Metro Rail Project and Town Planning	150	No
84.	Gujarat	Rajkot	Laxmi Nagar Nala	March	Construction of a road overbridge	100	No
85.	Haryana	Gurugram	Sikanderpur area - several parts near the Aravallis, including near Bristol Chowk and Shyam Jha Colony	July-August	Removal of 'encroachments' from government land and construction of a 'biodiversity park'	3,500	No
86.	Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hatia	November	Expansion of a railway track	27 (out of 95)	No
87.	Jharkhand	Chatra	Raham Village, Tandwa	October	Construction of a thermal power plant (by National Thermal Power Corporation)	10	No
88.	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Kilol Park	December	Construction of an approach road, under a Smart Cities Mission project - following an order of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh	4	Not yet. Bhopal Municipal Corporation to allot houses to affected families.
89.	Madhya Pradesh	Ujjain	Mahakal Temple area	October	Construction of a 'smart' parking area	6	No
90.	Madhya Pradesh	Ujjain	Moti Nagar	January	Construction of a river overbridge	Over 100	Not known
91.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Amar Mahal Junction, Chembur	October	Road widening	59	Not known
92.	Manipur	Tengnoupal District	M Chahnou Village and LS Lhangnom Village	November	Construction of the Moreh-ICP Road	18	No
93.	Odisha	Khordha	Tamando Mouza	September-October	Construction of a Physical Education College	70-80	No

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
94.	Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Mainshakhal Basti	June	Construction of a new road	60	No
95.	Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Nilamadhab Basti, Chandrasekharpur	May	Construction work	105	60 families have received flats in a high-rise apartment; others are staying either in transit housing or with relatives.
96.	Punjab	Ludhiana	Gopal Nagar	December	Construction of a 'leisure valley' and a road	200	Not known
97.	Rajasthan	Jaipur	Fauji Basti	March	Construction of the Jhotwara Elevated Road	291	Yes. Alternative housing provided under the erstwhile Basic Services to Urban Poor scheme.
98.	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Marapalam	December	Removal of 'encroachments' along Perumpallam Canal under a Smart Cities Mission project	5	No
99.	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Thadagam Road, along the Muthannankulam Tank bund	June	Development of the Muthannankulam Tank bund, under a Smart Cities Mission project	Over 1,000	Yes. Alternative housing provided in flats constructed by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. However, 19 families have been excluded for lack of required address proof.
100.	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Kumarasamy Nagar	June	Development of the Muthannankulam Tank bund, under a Smart Cities Mission project	300	Yes. Families received flats in tenements constructed by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board.
101.	Telangana	Siddipet	Kochaguttapalli Village	April	Construction for the Anantagiri Reservoir Project	30	Families forcefully shifted to an inadequate resettlement site. The site lacks access to basic facilities.
102.	Uttarakhand	Mussoorie	Shifan Court	August-September	Construction of the Purkuk-Mussoorie Ropeway Project	85	No
103.	Uttar Pradesh	Varanasi	Khidkiya Ghat	December	Construction of a helipad, jetty, food plaza, and crafts shop	500 People	No
104.	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Bhitauli Crossing, Diguria, Aziz Nagar	November	Construction of a flyover	50	No
105.	Uttar Pradesh	Budaun		September	Road widening	100	Not known
106.	Uttar Pradesh	Varanasi	Ghosiyana	September	Construction of a railway overbridge	59	Yes
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED/FAMILIES EVICTED						8,658	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVICTED (Using the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of affected people is known)						42,320	

III. EVICTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS/ PROJECTS AND FOREST AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
107.	Assam	Kaziranga National Park	Haldhibari Village	November	Removal of 'illegal' occupants of the Park – following an order of the Gauhati High Court [PIL 66/2012]	672	No
108.	Bihar	Kaimur	Sarainar Village	Since March	Clearance of forestland, following a Supreme Court of India order [W.P. (C) 109/2008]	50	No
109.	Chhattisgarh	Dhamtari	Dinkarpur Village and Dugli Village	October	Clearance of forestland	35 (168 people)	No
110.	Chhattisgarh	Korba District	Udta Village	July	Clearance of forestland	5	No
111.	Gujarat	Dang District	Kamat Village	April	Clearance of forestland	6	No
112.	Haryana	Faridabad	Khori Gaon/Village	September	Removal of 'encroachments' from forestland, following an order of the Supreme Court of India [S.L.P. (C) 7220-7221/2017]	1,200 (5,000 people)	No
113.	Jammu and Kashmir	Pahalgam	Lidroo Village	December	Clearance of forestland	1 (8 people)	No
114.	Jammu and Kashmir		Different locations including Kani Dajan Village	December	Clearance of forestland	Not known	Not known
115.	Madhya Pradesh	Rewa District	Hardi Village	July	Clearance of forestland	100	No
116.	Maharashtra	Melghat Tiger Reserve	Pastalai Village	September	Clearance of forestland	1	No
117.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Chedda Nagar	February	Conservation of mangroves, following an order of the High Court of Bombay [PIL 54/2016]	150	No
118.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	Diva, Thane	January	Conservation of mangroves, following an order of the High Court of Bombay [PIL 54/2016]	384 chawls (at least 15,360 families; over 73,720 people)	No
119.	Manipur	Imphal East District	Macheng Village, Mantripukhri	April	Removal of 'illegal' houses from the Langol Reserved Forest	3 (12 people)	No
120.	Odisha	Similipal Tiger Reserve	Khejuri Village, Jashipur Block	January	Conservation of forests and wildlife	100	Yes. Affected families relocated to Saleibeda, Mayurbhanj District.

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
121.	Odisha	Kalahandi	Sagada Village, Khandul Mali forest area	April	Removal of 'encroachments' and forest conservation	32 (90 people)	No
122.	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Sunnambu Kalvai near Kunniyamuthur, along Noyyal River	November	River restoration project	31	Yes. Affected families allotted flats in Kovaipudur.
123.	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Muthannankulam Tank	November	Lake rejuvenation and restoration project	27	Not known
124.	Telangana	Bhadradi Kothagudem District	Satyanarayanam, Ganugapadu	June	Plantation drive under the 'Haritha Haraam' programme	80	No
125.	Telangana	Khammam District	Mulakapalli Village	June	Plantation drive under the 'Haritha Haraam' programme	35	No
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED/FAMILIES EVICTED						17,888	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVICTED (Using the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of affected people is known)						85,033	

IV. EVICTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/ PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
126.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Suthanthira Nagar	December	Chennai Rivers Restoration Project	30	Yes. Affected persons relocated to Perumbakkam.
127.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Thideer Nagar	December	Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project	30	No. Affected persons have refused to relocate to Perumbakkam.
128.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Sathyavani Muthu Nagar	December	Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project	190	Only 160 families relocated to Perumbakkam; others are awaiting resettlement.
129.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Padi Kuppam Rai Nagar	November	Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project	221	Yes. Families relocated to Athipattu.
130.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Alapakkam Lake, Valasaravakkam	August	Restoration of water body	90	No
131.	Telangana	Hyderabad	Near Falaknuma	November	Widening of storm water drains	36	No
132.	Telangana	Hyderabad	Under Shivaji Bridge, Afzal Gunj	September	Removal of 'encroachments' from storm water drains	119	No
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED/FAMILIES EVICTED						716	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVICTED (Using the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of affected people is known)						3,437	

V. EVICTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR OTHER REASONS

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	DISTRICT/ CITY	SITE OF EVICTION	MONTH	PURPORTED REASON FOR THE EVICTION	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED (FAMILIES/ PEOPLE AFFECTED)	RESETTLEMENT PROVIDED
133.	Assam	Sonitpur District	Bharasingri Village	October	Removal of 'illegal settlers'/'doubtful citizens'	64 (546 people)	No
134.	Assam	Cachar District	Lailapur, Assam-Mizoram border	October	Border dispute between Assam and Mizoram	20	No
135.	Assam	Sonitpur District	Mokua and Siruani Chapori	February	Removal of 'illegal settlers'/'doubtful citizens'	426	No
136.	Chhattisgarh	Kondagaon District	Kakadabeda Village	September	Communal/religious issues	15	No
137.	Jammu and Kashmir		Different locations	2020	Military operations	114	No
138.	Karnataka	Bengaluru	Sunday Bazaar 'slum' in Kacharakannahalli, Lingarajapuram	April	Land clearance for private gain (by non-state actors)	170	The High Court of Karnataka ordered the state government to provide compensation of Rs 14,100 to each family and rebuild houses at the same site. The Supreme Court has stayed the reconstruction of houses.
139.	Karnataka	Bengaluru	Munekolalu	February	Allegation of residents being illegal 'Bangladeshis'	35	No
140.	Madhya Pradesh	Indore	Chandan Khedi Village	December	Communal/sectarian issues	13	No
141.	Madhya Pradesh	Ujjain	Begum Bagh	December	Communal/sectarian issues	1 (19 people)	No
142.	Mizoram	Mamit District	Thinghlnun Village	October	Border dispute between Assam and Mizoram	1	No
143.	Odisha	Baleswar	Jaleswar and Bhograib Blocks	November	Border dispute between West Bengal and Odisha	8	No
144.	Odisha	Puri	Karimpur Village	July	Construction of a new house for the Mahila Samiti (eviction by other villagers)	5	Each affected family received Rs 5,000 as compensation from the district administration
145.	Punjab	Ludhiana	Railway Colony 10	January	Allegation of housing being 'unsafe'	108	No
146.	Rajasthan	Jaipur	Different locations including Bheru Circle, B.T. Road, Jawahar Basti, Kumbha Marg, Loha Mandi, Niwaru Road, Peetal Factory, Pratap Dairy, Rawan Gate, and Suti Mill	June-July	Multiple reasons, including removal of 'encroachments' and 'illegal' colonies; prevention of incidents of theft; city expansion; Smart Cities Mission projects; and, forest conservation	850	No
147.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Shanti Nagar Colony	September-October	Clearance of government land for the establishment of an institute for 'political training'	31	No
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED/FAMILIES EVICTED						1,861	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVICTED (Using the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of affected people is known)						9,185	
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DEMOLISHED/FAMILIES EVICTED IN URBAN AND RURAL INDIA IN 2020						36,812	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVICTED IN URBAN AND RURAL INDIA IN 2020 [Using the Census 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of affected people is known. However, many families consist of more than 5 persons and many of the demolished structures housed more than one family. This total, is, thus, a conservative estimate]						173,333	

Source of Data: Primary and Secondary Research by HLRN and Information from Partner Organizations

ANNEXURE II

**TABLE TWO:
THREAT OF EVICTION IN INDIA²**

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Venkateswara Colony, Kakinada	Over 300 people	City 'beautification'
2.	Andhra Pradesh	Central and eastern deltas, Rajamahendravaram	9,500 houses: 4,800 houses along the Ramachandrapuram and Amalapuram canal bunds (central delta); and, 4,700 along the canal between Dowleswaram and Kakinada (eastern delta)	Removal of 'encroachments' along canal bunds
3.	Andhra Pradesh	Tadepalli, Vijayawada	320 houses	Political issue
4.	Andhra Pradesh	Vijaywada: Along the canals of Bandar, Eluru, and Ryves	80,000 people	Removal of 'illegal' constructions
5.	Andhra Pradesh	Areas under the Secunderabad Cantonment Board, Hyderabad	600 families	Clearance of defence land
6.	Andhra Pradesh	Eleven villages in Prakasam District	7,555 families	Poola Subbaiah Veligonda Project
7.	Andhra Pradesh	Several locations in Hyderabad	100 houses	Removal of 'encroachments'
8.	Andhra Pradesh	Seven villages in YSR Kadapa District	4,400 families	Gandikota Reservoir Project
9.	Arunachal Pradesh	Tawang Dam area	10,000 people	Construction of the Tawang Dam
10.	Arunachal Pradesh and Assam	Dibang	Over 800 families	Dibang Multipurpose Project
11.	Arunachal Pradesh	Dibang	2,000 people	Etalin Hydropower Project
12.	Assam	Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Tinsukia District	1,480 families	Resettlement of families from the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park
13.	Assam	Bodoland Territorial Region, Guwahati	110,000 people	Order of the Gauhati High Court [PIL 78/2-12] for removal of 'encroachments' in tribal belts
14.	Assam	Areas near the Kaziranga National Park	Over 600 families	Order of the Gauhati High Court [PIL 67/2012] to clear land within the Kaziranga National Park
15.	Assam	Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary, Guwahati	40 families	Removal of 'encroachments' from the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary
16.	Assam	Districts of Baksa, Bongaigaon, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Goalpara, Kamrup, Kamrup (metro), Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Morigaon, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Tinsukia, and Udalguri	202,786 families	Order of the Gauhati High Court [PIL 78/2012] for the removal of "non-tribals and other persons not eligible to hold possession of land" in tribal belts and blocks
17.	Assam	Betbari, Barpeta	700 families	Removal of 'encroachments' from the protected area of the Manas National Park
18.	Assam	Dimapur	20-22 families	Expansion and development of Dimapur Airport
19.	Assam	Goalpara: Bhalukdubi, Dhuptola, and Moylaputa	Not known	Restoration of green cover of the forest
20.	Assam	Juria, Nagaon	80 families	Prevention of riverbank erosion, Brahmaputra River
21.	Assam	Different locations in Kamrup, Guwahati	30 families	Removal of 'encroachments' along the Narengi-Panikhaiti Road

² As of 31 July 2021.

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
22.	Assam	Kawaimari Reserve, Barpeta	2,000 families	Removal of 'encroachments'
23.	Assam	Lungsung, Kokrajhar	7,013 people	Removal of 'encroachments'
24.	Assam	Mayong Hatimuria, Morigaon	1,440 people	Prevention of riverbank erosion, Brahmaputra River
25.	Assam	Sipajhar Village, Guwahati	70,000 people	Alleged 'encroachment' of grazing land
26.	Assam	Thekeraguri Village, Boginodi, Lakhimpur District, Guwahati	92 indigenous families (already displaced from river erosion)	Government land clearance
27.	Bihar	Sakraicha, Phulwari Sharif, Patna	425 families	Road widening
28.	Bihar	Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaimur District	50,000 people (in 108 villages)	Proposed development of the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary as a tiger reserve
29.	Bihar	Jamui District	Over 100,000 families	Removal of 'encroachments'
30.	Bihar	Bindtoli, Patna	167 families (800 people)	Government land clearance
31.	Chandigarh	Jujhar Nagar, Mohali	60 houses	Removal of 'illegal' colony
32.	Chandigarh	Colony Number 4	5,000 houses	'City beautification' under the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme
33.	Chandigarh	Manimajra	400 houses	Removal of 'illegal' structures located outside 'Lal Dora' land
34.	Chandigarh, Haryana, and Punjab	Sukhna Lake catchment area, including Alisher, Kaimbwala, Kansal, Khuda, and Nayagaon	600 houses (just in Kaimbwala)	Order of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana [C.W.P. 18253/2009] for the removal of 'encroachments' from the Sukhna Lake catchment area
35.	Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha	Several villages in the three states	Over 20,000 families	Coal mining
36.	Chhattisgarh	Lakholi Village, Rajnandgaon	200 families (1,500 people)	State government proposal to move people to a housing colony under Atal Awas Yojana. However, they want to stay in their village with their own zamin patta (land title)
37.	Chhattisgarh	Villages in the districts of Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, and Narayanpur	56 villages (several thousand people, including of Scheduled Tribes)	Bodhghat Dam project
38.	Chhattisgarh	Hathkhoj Basti, Bijli Nagar area, Bhilai	30 houses (100 people, including 50 children)	Establishment of industrial units/ removal of 'illegal' bastis
39.	Delhi	Near Kashmere Gate Metro Station	200 families	Removal of 'encroachments' from land of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation
40.	Delhi	Sultanpuri	200 houses	Removal of 'encroachments'
41.	Delhi	Khayala	22 families (of the Gadia Lohar community)	Removal of 'encroachments'
42.	Delhi	Azadpur	25 families (of the Gadia Lohar community)	Removal of 'encroachments'
43.	Delhi	Shyam Vihar	125 houses	Road construction
44.	Delhi	DND Basti	20 families	Removal of 'encroachments'
45.	Delhi	Kalka Stone Basti, Lal Kuan	1,000 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal
46.	Delhi	Sarojini Nagar	156 families	Redevelopment of the area
47.	Delhi	Jaunapur and Dera Mandi forest areas	8,000 people	Order of the National Green Tribunal
48.	Delhi	Various settlements located along railway tracks	48,000 houses (over 250,000 people)	Order of the Supreme Court of India to remove jhuggies (dwellings) along railway tracks in the case of <i>M.C. Mehta v. Union of India</i> [W.P. (C) 13029/1985]

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
49.	Delhi	China Colony, Mallah Gaon, Moolchand Basti, and other sites along the banks of the Yamuna River	5,000 houses	Yamuna Riverfront Development Project
50.	Delhi	Gyaspur Colony, Nizamuddin	40 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
51.	Delhi	Lalita Park	500 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
52.	Delhi	Machhi Market, behind Akshardham Temple	350 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
53.	Delhi	Majnu ka Tila	120 families	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
54.	Delhi	Nizamuddin Basti, near Sarai Kale Khan Bus Stand	250 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
55.	Delhi	Purana Bus Adda, Gyaspur Colony	200 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
56.	Delhi	Yamuna Khadar	1,430 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 6/2012 and M.A. 967/2013 & 275/2014, Principal Bench] to protect the Yamuna floodplains
57.	Goa	Baina, South Goa	400 families	Disaster management and implementation of coastal zone regulation rules
58.	Gujarat	Around the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary	2,500 families	Project Lion
59.	Gujarat	Gokul Nagar, Gandhinagar	2,000 houses	Development of the area around the Mahatma Mandir Complex, redevelopment of the Gandhinagar Railway Station, and as a part of the Slum Free City Action Plan 2020-2025
60.	Gujarat	Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad	200 families (Scheduled Tribes)	Gandhi Ashram Memorial and Precinct Development Project
61.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	162,749 houses	Slum Free City Action Plan 2020-2025
62.	Gujarat	Umiya Hall, Ahmedabad	50-60 houses	Clearance of land of the Indian Railways
63.	Gujarat	Surat	22 settlements (9,000 families)	Clearance of land of the Indian Railways and for urban development
64.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	331 houses	Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project
65.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	8,000 houses	Failure of land-holders to regularize holdings under the Urban Land Ceiling Act, and requirement of land for 'development' purposes
66.	Gujarat	Chhota Chandola, Ahmedabad	1,200 houses	In-situ 'slum redevelopment' project under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
67.	Gujarat	Settlements around Chandola Lake (Bada Chandola and Chhota Chandola)	13,800 houses	Chandola Lake Development Project
68.	Gujarat	Dang District	226,769 people in 311 villages (comprising Bhil, Konkana (Kunvi), and Varli tribal groups, and the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of Kathodi, Kolcha, and Kotwalia)	Par-Tapi-Narmada River Linking Project and construction of three dams: Gira, Dabdar, and Kelwan
69.	Gujarat	Gulbai Tekra, Ahmedabad	1,550 houses	In-situ 'slum redevelopment' under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
70.	Gujarat	Narmada District, around the Statue of Unity: Villages of Gora, Kevadiya, Kothi, Limbdi, Navagam, and Vadhadiya	5,000 houses (of tribals)	Tourism projects near the Statue of Unity
71.	Gujarat	Villages of Neempada and Nirgundmal in Dang	54 families (26 in Neempada and 28 in Nirgundmal)	Rejection of claims on forestland under the Forest Rights Act leading to eviction notices
72.	Gujarat	Five settlements in Rajkot	1,000 houses	Housing allotment under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
73.	Gujarat	Sayajipura, Vadodara	140 houses	Construction of houses for economically weaker sections
74.	Gujarat	13 settlements in Surat	4,350 houses	In-situ 'slum redevelopment' under the state Regulations for the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment of the Slums, 2010 and Gujarat Slum Rehabilitation Policy 2013
75.	Gujarat	Vadodara River clusters	3,000 houses	Vishwamitri Riverfront Development Project
76.	Gujarat	Villages affected by the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat	200 families	Sardar Sarovar Project on the Narmada River
77.	Haryana	Patel Nagar and Prem Nagar, Sector 4-R, Faridabad	2,500 houses	Removal of 'encroachments' from land of the state Irrigation Department
78.	Haryana	Sectors 14, 52A and 53, Gurugram	2,000 'shanties'	Removal of 'encroachments' for infrastructure projects
79.	Haryana	Jharsa, Sector 37	50 houses	Removal of 'encroachments'/'slum clearance'
80.	Haryana	Sohna Road, Gurugram	350 houses	Construction of a flyover
81.	Himachal Pradesh	Pathankot-Mandi National Highway 154, Nurpur	3,781 people	Land acquisition by the National Highways Authority of India for the Pathankot-Mandi four-lane project
82.	Himachal Pradesh	Kullu	71 houses	Removal of 'encroachments' along the Kullu-Bhuntar Highway
83.	Himachal Pradesh	Stretch of the Manali-Kullu Highway, Manali	24 houses	Road widening
84.	Himachal Pradesh	Villages around the Kangra Airport: Gaggal, Dharamshala (including villages of Ichhi, Gaggal, Matour, and Sohra)	900 families	Expansion of the Kangra Airport
85.	Jammu and Kashmir	Different locations (including Rakh Jurog Village in Srinagar and Bakarwal Mohalla in Jammu)	64,000 people	Removal of 'illegal encroachments' from forestland
86.	Jammu and Kashmir	52 villages in Kathua District	3,700 families	Ujh Multipurpose Project
87.	Jammu and Kashmir	Srinagar	70 structures	Removal of 'illegal' constructions along the Khushalsar and Gilsar lakes

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
88.	Jammu and Kashmir	Along the flood spill channel from Mehjoor Nagar to Gangbugh, Srinagar	236 structures	Removal of 'illegal encroachments' to prevent floods
89.	Jammu and Kashmir	Various locations along the Jhelum River and other water bodies (including Asham, Baramulla, Pampore, Pantha Chowk, Rajbagh, Shadipora, Shivpora, Sopore, Sumbal and Tankipora)	At least 1,000 families	Protection of water bodies from 'encroachments'
90.	Jammu and Kashmir	Srinagar	80 houses	Removal of 'encroachments' along Khushalsar Lake
91.	Jharkhand	Villages near Palamu Tiger Reserve, Garhwa District, Jharkhand	15 villages (5,000 people, including 800 members of Scheduled Tribes)	Construction of the North Koel Dam
92.	Jharkhand	Larbera, Narkera Mouja, and Simabar in Balidih, along National Highway 23, Bokaro Steel City	200 huts	Clearance of land of Bokaro Steel Limited
93.	Jharkhand	Bari Cooperative, Bokaro Steel City	200 houses	Removal of 'encroachments' on the Garga River
94.	Jharkhand	Barigora, Jamshedpur	110 structures (including houses)	Construction of a railway track
95.	Jharkhand	Different parts of Jamshedpur	500 houses	Construction of a railway track between Kharagpur and Chakradharpur
96.	Jharkhand	Jharia, Dhanbad	104,000 families	Coal mining
97.	Jharkhand	Nirmal Nagar, Jamshedpur	150 houses	Government land clearance (Jharkhand State Housing Board)
98.	Jharkhand	Tinplate in Golmuri, Jamshedpur	100 houses	Government land clearance (Indian Railways)
99.	Karnataka	Baithkol Villag, Uttar Kannada district	114 families (547 people)	Expansion of Karwar Port
100.	Karnataka and Tamil Nadu	Masinagudi-Sigur area, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (located close to Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu and Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka)	12,000 people (at least 200 families of farmers and 700 families of Dalit and tribal communities)	Creation of the Sigur Elephant Corridor
101.	Karnataka	Lakkasandra, Bengaluru	120 families	Metro project
102.	Karnataka	Ambedkar Nagar, Bengaluru	300 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 125/2017, Principal Bench] for removal of 'encroachments' from Bellandur Lake's buffer zone
103.	Karnataka	Nagalamadike, Tumkur	30 families (144 people)	Government land clearance
104.	Karnataka	Villages of Permude and Kuthethur, Mangalore	700 families	Notification of the state government to acquire over 800 acres of land as per The Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Act
105.	Karnataka	Yarazarvi, Belagavi	200 families	Government land clearance
106.	Kerala	Along the Parvathy Puthanar canal, Thiruvananthapuram	850 houses	Canal widening
107.	Kerala	Pootheri Sathram Colony, Kozhikode	33 houses	"Illegal residents"
108.	Kerala	Banks of Konthuruthy Canal, Kochi	178 families	Canal restoration project
109.	Kerala	Coastal areas of the state	10,000 people	Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport
110.	Kerala	Areas along canals, Kochi	280 families	Canal development projects
111.	Kerala	Muthanga, Wayanad	295 families	Forestland clearance

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
112.	Kerala	Thuruthi Village, Kannur	29 houses	Construction of a national highway
113.	Kerala	11 districts, including Kasaragod and Thiruvananthapuram	20,000 families	Thiruvananthapuram-Kasargod Semi High-Speed Rail ('Silver Line') Project
114.	Madhya Pradesh	Buxwaha, Chhatarpur District	8,000 people	Bunder Diamond Block (Mine Lease) project by Essel Mining and Industries Limited
115.	Madhya Pradesh	Al-Azhar Building, Khatiwala Tank, Indore	21 families	Removal of 'illegal' portions of Al-Azhar Building
116.	Madhya Pradesh	Villages in Jhabua	People in 21 villages	Construction of the Delhi-Mumbai eight-lane highway
117.	Madhya Pradesh	Ahata Rustam Khan and Pratap Nagar, Bhopal	150 houses	Construction of 'smart roads' under the Smart Cities Mission
118.	Madhya Pradesh	Karahal, Sheopur	500 houses	Removal of Sikh families, claimed to be 'illegal occupants' from tribal, revenue, and forestland
119.	Madhya Pradesh	Karamdi, Ratlam	21 families	Government land clearance
120.	Madhya Pradesh	Machhi Bazaar, Indore	300 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [O.A. 115/2014, Central Zone] for a riverfront development project between Harsiddhi and Machhi Bazaar
121.	Madhya Pradesh	Madan Mahal Hills	300 houses	Order of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh [W.P. 11270/2012] for the removal of 'encroachments'
122.	Madhya Pradesh	Mandla	575 villages (at least 600 families)	Nuclear power project
123.	Madhya Pradesh	Rampura Village, Panna District	150 people	Tiger conservation in Panna Tiger Reserve
124.	Madhya Pradesh	Villages affected by the Sardar Sarovar Dam in the state	35,000 families	Sardar Sarovar Project on the Narmada River
125.	Maharashtra	Kalwa, Mumbai	2,050 houses	Airoli-Kalwa elevated rail line corridor
126.	Maharashtra	Narsi Village, Hingoli	40 families	Forestland clearance
127.	Maharashtra	Floodplains of the Ram Nadi River, Pimpri Chinchwad, Mumbai	Over 100 families	Order of the National Green Tribunal to "remove illegal reclamation and evict encroachments on the floodplains of the Ram Nadi river"
128.	Maharashtra	Airoli, Sector 20, Navi Mumbai	200 houses	Removal of 'illegal' constructions
129.	Maharashtra	Between Borivali and Virar, Mumbai	1,000 structures	Removal of 'encroachments' alongside railway tracks
130.	Maharashtra	Along the Mithi River, Mumbai	53 houses	Santacruz-Chembur Link Road project
131.	Maharashtra	Along the Versova Creek, Mumbai	500 houses	Mangrove protection
132.	Maharashtra	Bezonbagh, Nagpur	379 houses	Order of the Nagpur bench of the High Court of Bombay [W.P. (PIL) 1515/2008] for the removal of 'encroachments' on land of Bezonbagh Society
133.	Maharashtra	Bheemchhaya, Vikhroli, Mumbai	800 houses	Clearance of notified forest area
134.	Maharashtra	Chiradpada Village, Thane District	16 people (Adivasis)	Construction of the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Mahamarg ('Prosperity Highway')
135.	Maharashtra	Core and buffer areas of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve	1,100 people	Removal of 'encroachments' from wildlife habitats
136.	Maharashtra	Eight Adivasi villages in Damanganga and Vaitarna	4,000 people	Damanganga-Vaitarna-Godavari intra-state link project

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
137.	Maharashtra	Friends Colony, Gittikhadan, Hazaripahad, KT Nagar, Narmada Colony, Vayusena Nagar, and Vrindavan Colony – Nagpur	350 houses	Widening of Katol Road
138.	Maharashtra	Mazgaon, Mumbai	40 houses	Construction of Hancock and Carnac Bunder bridges
139.	Maharashtra	Navi Mumbai	17,500 families (1,500–2,000 houses in 10 villages)	Construction of the Navi Mumbai International Airport
140.	Maharashtra	Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai	2,500 people	Forestland clearance
141.	Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli	Several villages	14,884 households	Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project ('bullet train' project)
142.	Maharashtra	Shivpuri Chowk, Nashik	150 houses	Removal of 'unauthorized' constructions
143.	Maharashtra	Sion Koliwada, Mumbai	500 houses	'Slum' rehabilitation programme
144.	Maharashtra	Tawade Hotel area, Kolhapur	19 houses	Removal of 'illegal' structures
145.	Maharashtra	Villages affected by the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project	50,000 people	Dighi Industrial Port, part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project
146.	Maharashtra	Villages affected by the Sardar Sarovar Dam	500 families	Sardar Sarovar Project on the Narmada River
147.	Manipur	Kharung Pat Village, Kakching District	40 houses	Preservation of wetlands
148.	Manipur	Pumlen Pat, Loktak	15,000 households (45,000 people)	Proposed land acquisition for creation of a 'second home' for Sangai deer and preservation of wetlands
149.	Manipur	Villages in Tengnoupal District (inside the Yangoupokpi Lokchao Wildlife Sanctuary)	2,000 households (about 6,500 people)	Conservation of Yangoupokpi Lokchao Wildlife Sanctuary Manipur
150.	Manipur	Mayophung Village, Ukhrul District	11 households (55 people)	Conservation of the Khamenlok Gwaltabi Reserved Forest
151.	Manipur	Langol Foothills, Imphal West	80 households (250 people)	Removal of 'encroachments' from the forest area and from Imphal Ring Road
152.	Manipur	Chadong Village, Ukhrul District	100 families (500 people)	Submergence from the Mapithel Dam
153.	Manipur	Koijam Khunou Village, Thoubal District	22 families (70 people)	Claim of the Forest Department that people are 'encroachers' in the Khunuda Laiching Protected Forest
154.	Manipur	Langol foothills and other areas, Imphal East and Imphal West	500 families (1,500 people)	Asian Development Bank-sponsored Ring Road project
155.	Manipur	Macheng Village, Imphal	1,346 houses	Removal of 'illegal housing' from the Langol Reserved Forest
156.	Manipur	Sendra, Ithing Village, Moirang, Bishnupur District	17 families	Conservation of Loktak Lake
157.	Manipur	Four villages in Tamenglong District	280 families (840 people)	Construction of Pabram Dam
158.	Manipur	Phalong, Part-III Village, Tamenglong	71 families (250 people)	Construction of an Asian Development Bank-sponsored road
159.	Manipur	Sekmai Village	500 families (1,500 people)	Army camp expansion
160.	Manipur	Taobam (Irang) and two other villages, Tamenglong	140 families (420 people)	Construction of Irang Dam
161.	Manipur	Tousang Khunou Village, Tamenglong	705 families	Loktak Downstream Hydroelectric Project over the Leimatak River

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
162.	Manipur	Wakha Village, Imphal East	112 families (595 people)	Proposed establishment of the Cultural University
163.	Manipur	Yaithibi Loukon, Thoubal District	1,752 families (5,256 people)	Construction of the proposed National Sports University, a mega food park, and a medical college
164.	Meghalaya	Punjabi Line Colony, Shillong	300 families	Removal of 'encroachments' and commercial development of the area
165.	Odisha	Bolangir District	14,000 people (in 30 villages)	Lower Suktel Irrigation project
166.	Odisha	Konark, Puri	1,000 families	Various projects, including 'beautification' of Chandrabhaga Beach, and a four-lane highway project
167.	Odisha	Inside the Budharaja Reserved Forest, Sambalpur District	252 houses (700 people)	Removal of 'encroachments' from the forest area
168.	Odisha	Barhabans Village, Sundergarh District	700 families	Construction of a railway line to facilitate transport of coal to Adani Group's under-construction power plant in Godda
169.	Odisha	Maa Tarini Basti, Damana, Bhubaneswar	224 houses	Removal of 'encroachments'
170.	Odisha	Abdalpur, Jajpur	100 families (of a Scheduled Tribe)	Development of a park
171.	Odisha	Between Malgodam and Panposh, Rourkela	760 houses (4,000 people)	Construction of the Jharsuguda-Rourkela third railway line on the Mumbai-Howrah route
172.	Odisha	Salia Sahi, Bhubaneswar	10,000 families	Road widening
173.	Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana	Several villages in the four states	98,818 families (188,012 people) - just in Andhra Pradesh	Polavaram Dam on the Godavari River
174.	Odisha	Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi District	34 families	'City beautification'
175.	Odisha	Raisarapur, Kendrapara District	1 family	Removal of 'encroachments'
176.	Odisha	Sainath Basti, Bhubaneswar	24 families	Removal of 'encroachments'
177.	Odisha	Dhobakuchuda Village, Joda Block, Keonjhar	Over 100 families	Kanupur Irrigation Project in Basudevpur
178.	Punjab	Bhabat Village, Zirkapur, Mohali	154 residential structures	Order of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana [C.W.P. 27436/2015] to remove 'illegal' structures within 100 metres of the Chandigarh International Airport
179.	Punjab	Rajiv Gandhi Colony, Ludhiana	5,000 families	Clearance of land belonging to the Punjab Small Industrial and Export Corporation
180.	Rajasthan	Between Kartarpura Nullah and Tonk Phatak Flyover, along the Jaipur-Delhi railway line, Jaipur	250 houses	Road-widening project; order of the Rajasthan High Court [W.P. 4783/2003], where general directions were issued for removal of 'encroachments' from various roads in Jaipur
181.	Rajasthan	Dungarpur	3,206 families	Removal of 'encroachments'
182.	Rajasthan	Jhalana, Jaipur	59 families	Government land clearance
183.	Rajasthan	Taasar Village, Nagaur	24 houses	Order of the Rajasthan High Court to remove 'encroachments'
184.	Sikkim	Bringbong Village	50 households	Stage IV Teesta Dam
		Gnon Sangdong Village	400 people	
		Phidang Village	200 people	
		Dzongu Village, Hee Gyathang Gram Panchayat Unit Village, and Rong Rong Village	2,000 people	

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
185.	Sikkim	Passingdang Village	70 households	Panang Hydroelectric Project
186.	Tamil Nadu	Devarayaneri Village, Tiruchi	200 families	Order of the Madras High Court to remove 'encroachments' from Devarayaneri irrigation tank
187.	Tamil Nadu	Along Ramapuram Lake, Chennai	250 families	Order of the National Green Tribunal to remove 'encroachments' along Ramapuram Lake
188.	Tamil Nadu	K. Abishekapuram, Tiruchi District	315 people	Order of the Madras High Court to clear defence land
189.	Tamil Nadu	Along Chitlapakkam Lake, Chennai	374 houses	Order of the Madras High Court for the removal of 'encroachments' along water bodies
190.	Tamil Nadu	Viswakarma Colony and MGR Nagar in Tirunelveli	Not known	Order of the Tamil Nadu Housing Board to clear the area to facilitate construction of other houses
191.	Tamil Nadu	Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve; and, Thevar Nagar and Netaji Nagar - along Vaigai bank, Vandiyur, Madurai	4,000 people	Tiger protection and conservation of the Vaigai River
192.	Tamil Nadu	Tambaram Lake area, Chennai	430 families	Removal of 'encroachments' along water bodies
193.	Tamil Nadu	Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiris, Udhagamandalam, Tamil Nadu	Over 300 families	Order of the Madras High Court to remove 'encroachments' along water bodies
194.	Tamil Nadu	Along the banks of Selvampathy Tank, Coimbatore	360 houses	Order of the Madras High Court order to remove 'encroachments' along water bodies for a 'smart city' project
195.	Tamil Nadu	Pallavaram cantonment area	600 families	Defence land clearance
196.	Tamil Nadu	Along Adyar River, Buckingham Canal, and Cooum River, Chennai	55,000 families	Restoration of water bodies
197.	Tamil Nadu	Ambedkar Nagar, Chennai	110 people	Restoration of Pallikaranai marshland
198.	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	11,717 families	Government land clearance
199.	Tamil Nadu	CMC Colony, Ukkadam, Coimbatore	1,565 families	Ukkadam-Athupalam flyover construction
200.	Tamil Nadu	Dhobikana, Coimbatore	80 families	Ukkadam-Athupalam flyover construction
201.	Tamil Nadu	Kamakshi Amman Nagar, Chennai	550 people	Restoration of Pallikaranai marshland
202.	Tamil Nadu	KP Kandhan Nagar, Chennai	230 people	Restoration of Pallikaranai marshland
203.	Tamil Nadu	Kumbakonam, Thanjavur, Chennai	923 houses	Order of the Madras High Court [W.P. 31720/2015] to clear areas along temple tanks and channels
204.	Tamil Nadu	Mahalakshmi Nagar, Chennai	70 people	Restoration of Pallikaranai marshland
205.	Tamil Nadu	Muthannankulam, Thadagam Road, Coimbatore	206 families	'Slum clearance'
206.	Tamil Nadu	Near Adambakkam Lake, Chennai	700 houses	Removal of 'encroachments' on lake banks
207.	Tamil Nadu	Neduvankarai Pillayar Koil Street (known as Moovendar Nagar), Chennai	100 houses	Proposal of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board to cancel earlier allotments made to families as houses fall under the 'Cooum River's right of way'
208.	Tamil Nadu	Quaid-e-Milleth Nagar, Chennai	115 people	Order of the Madras High Court [W.P. 693/2015] to clear government land for water body restoration

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
209.	Tamil Nadu	Sanganoor Channel, Coimbatore	2,500 houses	Removal of 'encroachments' along water bodies
210.	Telangana	Ameenpur, Hyderabad	881 'encroachments'	Removal of 'encroachments' along water bodies
211.	Telangana	Nampally, Nalgonda District	250 families	Kistarampally Reservoir Project (part of the Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme)
212.	Telangana	Along Gurram Cheruvu lake, Hyderabad	800-900 structures (2,000 people)	Flood mitigation measures
213.	Telangana	Banks of Musi River, Hyderabad	10,000 houses	Musi Riverfront Development and Beautification Project
214.	Telangana	Secunderabad Cantonment Board area	35,000 families	Defence land clearance
215.	Uttarakhand	Dholak Basti, Ghafoor Basti, Kidwai Nagar, and Wards 15, 22, and 24 in Haldwani	1,581 people	Order of the High Court of Uttarakhand to remove 'encroachments' from land of the Indian Railways
216.	Uttarakhand	Champawat	118 families (568 people)	Removal of 'encroachments'
217.	Uttarakhand	Champawat	30 families	Forestland clearance
218.	Uttarakhand	Ganganagar in Haldwani, Dehradun	73 families	Removal of 'encroachments' from Chakata Forest
219.	Uttar Pradesh	Surma Village, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve	417 families (2,000 people)	Order of the Allahabad High Court for the removal of people from the core area of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve
220.	Uttar Pradesh	Shiwalik Forest	1,800 families	Proposal to declare Shiwalik Forest a 'tiger reserve'
221.	Uttar Pradesh	Several locations in Prayagraj (including Lohia Road, Mission Road, Pannalal Road, Streachy Road, and Tej Bahadur Sapru Marg)	Over 100 houses	Road-widening projects under the Smart Cities Mission
222.	Uttar Pradesh	Around Arthala Lake, Ghaziabad	500 houses	Order of the National Green Tribunal [Original Application 180/2015, Principal Bench] to clear 'illegal structures' around Arthala Lake
223.	Uttar Pradesh	Bakarganj, Bareilly	25 houses	Construction of a waste treatment plant
224.	Uttar Pradesh	13 villages in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Greater Noida	14,000 people	Construction of the Noida Greenfield International Airport
225.	Uttar Pradesh	Jewar Bangar Village, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Greater Noida	592 families	Land acquisition for the resettlement of 3,600 families to be displaced for the Noida Greenfield International Airport
226.	Uttar Pradesh	Different areas in Ghaziabad, including Akash Nagar, Balaji Enclave, Hindon flood plains, and Loni	644 constructions (954 constructions identified, of which 310 have been demolished already)	Removal of 'illegal constructions'
227.	Uttar Pradesh	Jama Masjid area, Agra	10,000 houses	Metro project
228.	Uttar Pradesh	Kydganj, Allahabad	115 houses	Order of the Allahabad High Court [First Appeal 98/1998] to clear 'illegal occupation' of the land
229.	Uttar Pradesh	Villages of Dohar, Panari, and Piparahwa, Sonabhadra	400 families	Land clearance, after discovery by the Geological Survey of India of 3,000 tonnes of gold deposits
230.	Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh	10 villages in both states	10,000 people	Construction of a dam as a part of the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project
231.	West Bengal	Various areas of Kolkata	5,000 people	Removal of 'encroachments'

	STATE	SITE AND CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE	HOUSES/ FAMILIES/PEOPLE THREATENED	PURPORTED REASON OF EVICTION
232.	West Bengal	Mahishbathan, Kolkata	74 houses	Construction of piers of the New Garia-Airport Metro
233.	West Bengal	Bishnupur	100 houses	Prevention of construction within 100 metres of heritage monuments; to facilitate entry of Bishnupur (temple town of terracotta) in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites
234.	West Bengal	New Garia-Airport Metro alignment, Mahishbathan, Kolkata	1,090 houses	Metro project
235.	Forest areas in 21 states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal)		Over 1.8 million families (if due process is not followed)	Order of the Supreme Court of India [W.P. (C) 109/2008] to evict forest-dwellers whose claims under the Forest Rights Act 2006 were rejected; currently there is a stay order on the eviction by the Supreme Court but the threat persists
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED (Considering the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons - except where the exact number of affected people is known)				Over 15.5 million people

Source of Data: Primary and Secondary Research by HLRN and Information from Partner Organizations

ANNEXURE III

**TABLE THREE:
INCIDENTS OF LOSS OF HOUSING FROM FIRE
IN INDIA IN 2020**

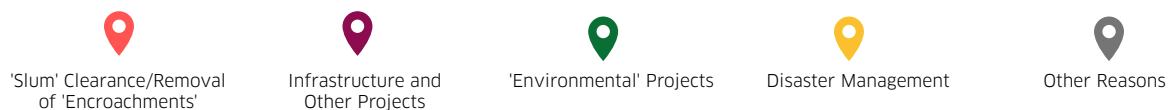
	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	SITE	MONTH	NUMBER OF HOUSES GUTTED
1.	Assam	Lachit Park, Jalukbari, Guwahati	December	66
2.	Assam	Dudu Colony, near the Assam-Nagaland border, Bokajan	July	500
3.	Assam	Baghjan Village, Tinsukia District	June	31
4.	Chandigarh	Colony No. 4, Industrial Area	December	6
5.	Chandigarh	Kharar Village	June	50
6.	Delhi	Kirti Nagar	November	50
7.	Delhi	Shahabad Dairy, Rohini	July	70
8.	Delhi	Kalyanpuri	June	12
9.	Delhi	Valmiki Basti, Tughlakabad	June	200
10.	Delhi	Tughlakabad	May	1,200
11.	Delhi	Chuna Bhatti, Kirti Nagar	May	200
12.	Delhi	Bengali Colony, Sector 16, Rohini	February	150
13.	Delhi	Sarai Rohilla	January	4
14.	Haryana	Saketri Village, Panchkula	November	80
15.	Himachal Pradesh	Bagi Village, Shimla	December	13
16.	Himachal Pradesh	Shishtwari Village, Shimla	April	11
17.	Jammu and Kashmir	Narwal (Rohingya settlement), Jammu	February	5
18.	Karnataka	Kacharakanahalli, Lingarajapuram, Bengaluru	March	55
19.	Maharashtra	Fatima Nagar, Bhiwandi, Thane	December	8
20.	Maharashtra	Padma Nagar, Govandi, Mumbai	June	20
21.	Maharashtra	Shivaji Nagar, Mumbai	June	12
22.	Maharashtra	Bhimwadi, Bhadrakali, Nashik	April	200
23.	Maharashtra	Old Wadarwadi settlement, Pune	March	30
24.	Maharashtra	Adivasi Prakash Nagar, Nagpur	March	10
25.	Nagaland	Purana Bazaar, Dimapur	November	14
26.	Odisha	Baranga Village, Ganjam	December	3
27.	Odisha	Nuwasana Village, Bhadrak District	May	20
28.	Punjab	Hoshiarpur Road, Jalandhar	June	30
29.	Punjab	Rawat Village, Ludhiana	May	50
30.	Punjab	Changadwan Village, Talwara	May	5
31.	Punjab	Chak Narial Village, Mahilpur	May	17
32.	Punjab	Patti Village, Jalandhar	April	10
33.	Tamil Nadu	MGR Nagar, Trichy	October	16

	STATE/ UNION TERRITORY	SITE	MONTH	NUMBER OF HOUSES GUTTED
34.	Uttar Pradesh	Behlolpur, Sector 63, Noida	December	11
35.	Uttar Pradesh	Taarhi Village, Chitrakoot	December	6
36.	Uttar Pradesh	Bhopura, Ghaziabad	November	200
37.	Uttar Pradesh	Dhobi Ghat, Aishbagh, Lucknow	October	1,500
38.	Uttar Pradesh	Sihani Village, Ghaziabad	October	70
39.	West Bengal	Gulmohar Colony, Kolkata	December	35
40.	West Bengal	Nibeditapally, Gouranganagar, New Town, Kolkata	November	37
41.	West Bengal	Kailashpur Village, Kalna, East Burdwan	November	23
42.	West Bengal	Topsia, Kolkata	November	60
43.	West Bengal	Narkeldanga, Kolkata	September	25
44.	West Bengal	Behind City Centre II, New Town, Kolkata	June	67
45.	West Bengal	Narkeldanga, Kolkata	April	3
46.	West Bengal	Salempur, Kolkata	March	Not known
47.	West Bengal	Anandapur, Kolkata	March	Over 20
48.	West Bengal	Kamarhati, Kolkata	March	Over 12
49.	West Bengal	Chaulpatty, Rajabazar, Kolkata	February	Not known
50.	West Bengal	Bede Bustee, Anandpur, Kolkata	January	10
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES DESTROYED BY FIRE				5,227
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED/RENDERED HOMELESS BY FIRE (Using the Census of India 2011 average household size of 4.8 persons)				25,090

Source of Data: Primary and Secondary Research by HLRN and Information from Partner Organizations

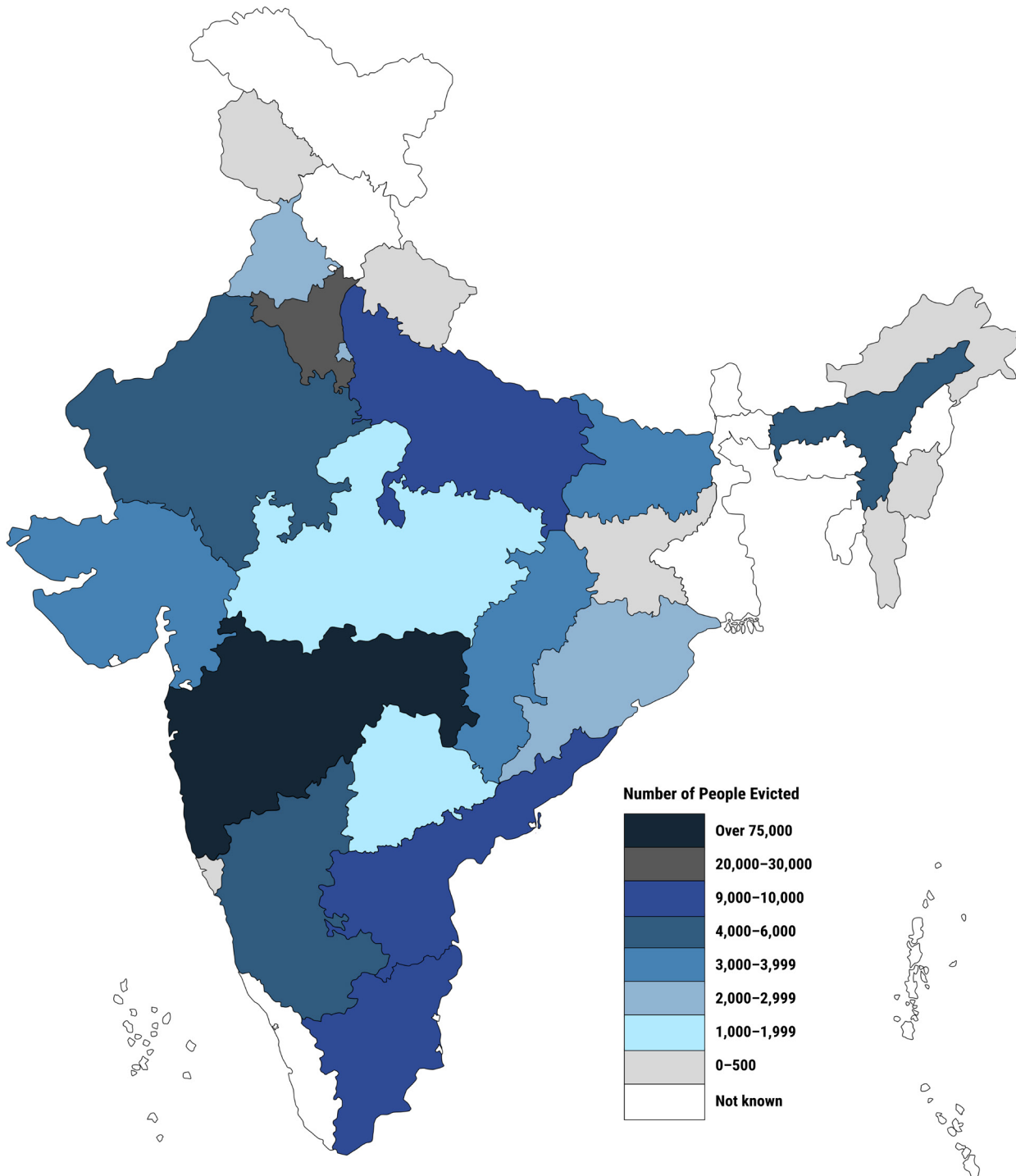
ANNEXURE IV

MAP ONE: FORCED EVICTIONS IN INDIA IN 2020



ANNEXURE V

MAP TWO: STATE-WISE EVICTIONS IN INDIA IN 2020



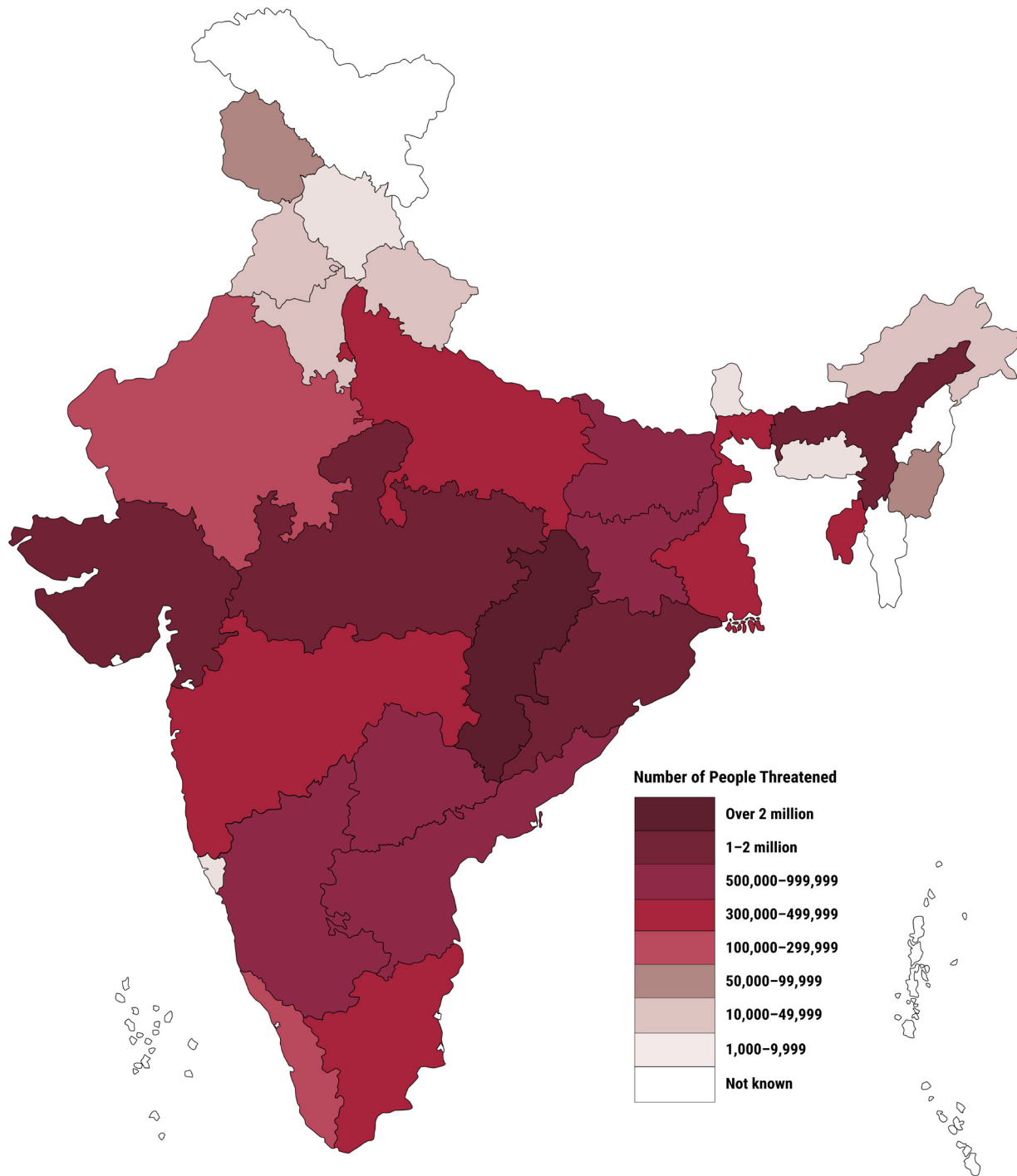
ANNEXURE VI

MAP THREE: THREAT OF EVICTION IN INDIA



ANNEXURE VII

MAP FOUR: STATE-WISE THREAT OF EVICTION IN INDIA



ENDNOTES

- 1 The Supreme Court commissioners appointed to monitor the implementation of orders in the ‘right to food’ case – *PUCL v. Union of India* [W.P. (C) 196/2001] estimated that at least one per cent of India’s urban population is homeless. This amounts to nearly 4 million homeless people living in urban India.
- 2 Estimate by HLRN based on an extrapolation of Census of India 2011 data. Census 2011 recorded that over 17 per cent of the urban population or almost 14 million households live in inadequate settlements without access to basic services. Census 2011 also revealed that 36 per cent of households in such settlements do not have basic facilities of electricity, tap water, and sanitation within house premises.
- 3 ‘COVID-19 Guidance Note: Prohibition of Evictions,’ UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, April 2020. Available at:
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http://hlrn.org.in/documents/CESCR_General_Comment_7.pdf
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 - *Forced Evictions in India in 2019: An Unrelenting National Crisis*, Housing and Land Rights Network, New Delhi, 2020. Available at: https://www.hlrn.org.in/documents/Forced_Evictions_2019.pdf
- 9 This data reflects only preliminary findings by HLRN. A detailed report on Forced Evictions in India in 2021, with verification of data, will be published in 2022.
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- 11 ‘Power, water cut-off, Sec-144 in Khori village ahead of SC-ordered eviction of 30K,’ *Millennium Post*, 16 June 2021. Available at: <http://www.millenniumpost.in/delhi/power-water-cut-off-sec-144-in-khori-village-ahead-of-sc-ordered- eviction-of-30k-443543>
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- 18 Ibid.

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Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN)—based in New Delhi, India—works for the recognition, defence, promotion, and realization of the human rights to adequate housing and land, which involve gaining a safe and secure place for all individuals, groups, and communities—especially the most marginalized—to live in peace and dignity. A particular focus of HLRN’s work is on promoting and protecting the equal rights of women to adequate housing, land, property, and inheritance. Housing and Land Rights Network aims to achieve its goals through advocacy, research, human rights education and monitoring, standard-setting, and network building – at the local, national, and international levels.

In the absence of official data on evictions in India, HLRN established the ‘**National Eviction and Displacement Observatory**’ in 2015. The Observatory compiles data and information on forced evictions and displacement in urban and rural India—through primary and secondary research—and aims to assist affected communities with relief, redress, restitution, and access to justice, where possible.

In this report titled, ‘**Forced Evictions in India in 2020: A Grave Human Rights Crisis During the Pandemic**’—the fourth in this series of annual eviction reports on India—HLRN presents the findings of its research and analysis on the nature, scale, and magnitude of forced evictions and displacement across the country in the year 2020. The report also documents forced evictions from 1 January to 31 July 2021, including during India’s severe second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns. The report draws attention to the egregious national crisis of forced evictions and demolitions of homes of the urban and rural poor across India. The state’s continued destruction of housing of low-income communities during this public health emergency, when everyone is required to stay at home to stay safe, is even more condemnable. Among other recommendations to provide justice and restitution of human rights, HLRN’s report calls for an immediate moratorium on evictions in India in order to protect health and lives.

Housing and Land Rights Network hopes that this report will generate awareness on the grave human rights and humanitarian crisis created by the state during this serious pandemic; move the government to take action to end forced evictions; and, restore dignity and improve housing and living conditions of affected persons.



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