



**HOUSING AND LAND RIGHTS NETWORK (INDIA)**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **HLRN Releases Guidelines on Protecting Human Rights in Disaster Response**

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Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), India, released a publication titled ‘**Protecting Human Rights in Disaster Response: Guidelines for State and Non-state Actors.**’ This concise and easy-reference manual lists international standards and prescribes guidelines aimed at protecting human rights of disaster-affected individuals, groups, and communities. This publication is intended for use by both government and non-government actors engaged in various stages of disaster management.

Disasters, including those resulting from natural hazards, have severe and long-lasting consequences for the affected persons. Certain individuals and communities—on account of their existing marginalisation and vulnerability—disproportionately suffer the impacts of disasters, both in the immediate aftermath and in the long-term recovery process. These include people living in high risk areas; those residing in inadequate housing conditions; homeless, landless, and internally displaced persons; minorities; historically discriminated communities, such as Dalits/members of Scheduled Castes; indigenous and tribal peoples/*adivasis*; women; children; persons with disabilities, and older persons.

Experience has demonstrated, that as bad, if not worse than the disaster, is the prolonged suffering of survivors that results from inadequate protection, response, and rehabilitation. This is a consequence of acts of omission and commission on the part of both state and non-state actors. Human rights violations are exacerbated when relief and rehabilitation measures are not planned and executed from a human rights perspective; are not timely, adequate, and appropriate; and do not take into account the specific needs and concerns of women, children, and other marginalized and vulnerable groups within affected communities.

The recent devastating earthquake in Nepal has further highlighted the vulnerability of South Asia, including India, to natural disasters and the need for better response mechanisms. HLRN believes it is important to adopt the human rights approach in all stages of disaster management, and to uphold the rights to disaster preparedness and rehabilitation as human rights.

According to Shivani Chaudhry, Executive Director, HLRN India, “It is the responsibility of governments and humanitarian organizations to ensure human rights-based disaster risk reduction, relief, and recovery. In the aftermath of a disaster, comprehensive efforts are required to safeguard the human rights of the affected population; and, to ensure that relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts are carried out in a gender-sensitive, culturally appropriate, non-discriminatory, participatory, and inclusive manner. States also need to take special precautions to prevent discrimination, opportunism, and profiteering during post-disaster situations.”

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