



PRESS RELEASE

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Release of Human Rights-based Guidelines for Post-disaster Response in Odisha

Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), Delhi, has issued *Guidelines for Protecting Human Rights in Post-disaster Relief and Rehabilitation* for the Government of Odisha to follow in the aftermath of Cyclone Phailin and the resulting floods, which have rendered millions of people homeless and resulted in extensive loss of property, infrastructure, crops, livestock and livelihoods.

While commending the efforts of the Government of Odisha at evacuating people from the worst affected villages and minimising the loss of life, HLRN believes that the challenge before the government is to ensure that the human rights of the affected population are upheld.

According to *Shivani Chaudhry, Executive Director, HLRN*, “It is critical that rehabilitation is carried out in a gender-sensitive, appropriate, and participatory manner to ensure the protection of the dignity and human rights of the survivors, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable groups who disproportionately suffer the impacts of a natural disaster.”

The guidelines issued are based on HLRN’s extensive work carried out in the post-tsunami rehabilitation process. They are derived from international human rights law and standards from the United Nations, and also include specific provisions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s (IASC) *Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters*, 2011.

The HLRN guidelines include recommendations for the emergency relief phase as well as for long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation in the aftermath of a natural disaster. They are divided into sections based on recommendations for protecting the human rights to food, water and sanitation, health, work/livelihood, education, adequate housing, information and participation, freedom of movement, and remedy. Recognising that women, children and marginalised groups such as dalits and adivasis, suffer the worst impacts of disasters, HLRN makes specific recommendations aimed at protecting their human rights during post-disaster relief and rehabilitation efforts.

While the primary responsibility of disaster management lies with the state, the guidelines apply to all actors, including non-government organizations and humanitarian agencies, involved in relief and rehabilitation efforts. They call for all agencies to coordinate their actions, to work together with transparency, and to ensure accountability to the people they are working for.

The guidelines are relevant for all post-disaster situations and also could be used in rehabilitation efforts underway in Uttarakhand.

HLRN strongly believes that a human rights-based approach must underlie all relief and rehabilitation work, and that the human rights principles of non-discrimination, gender equality, meaningful participation and non-retrogression should be upheld. Rehabilitation must be upheld as a human right and must aim to address the long-term needs and rights of individuals and communities.

Guidelines for Protecting Human Rights in Post-disaster Relief and Rehabilitation, available at: www.hic-sarp.org

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