



PRESS RELEASE

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Handbook on forced evictions launched in New Delhi

Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), Delhi, has published a handbook in Hindi that provides information on the human right to adequate housing and explains what could be done in the event of a forced eviction. The handbook was released by women and men who have faced forced evictions as well as those living in slums and threatened with forced evictions.

Shivani Chaudhry, Associate Director, HLRN, while explaining the rationale behind this publication stressed that even though forced evictions have been recognized internationally as a gross violation of human rights, the Delhi government continues to systematically evict the urban poor in violation of national and international law, with complete impunity.

Prabhu Dayal from Baljeet Nagar who was forcefully evicted in 2011 said that after being evicted he did not know what the next step was or what his rights were. He said that the publication would greatly benefit his community to be better prepared when faced with the threat of eviction and also after such incidents.

The HLRN handbook provides information on:

- Local, national and international laws that protect the human right to adequate housing.
- National and local laws and policies that pertain to rehabilitation, resettlement and rights of evicted persons, including the *National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007*; the *National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, 2007*; the *Draft Slum Policy, 2001*; the *Master Plan of Delhi 2021*, and the *Delhi Development Authority Act, 1957*).
- Relevant judgments from the Supreme Court of India and the High Court of Delhi related to the right to housing and evictions.
- International standards, including the *UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development based Evictions and Displacement*, which permit evictions only in ‘exceptional circumstances’ and explain operational procedures to be followed before, during and after evictions.
- Options available for communities to prevent evictions and to seek justice, restitution and state accountability in the event of a forced eviction.

Abdul Shakeel, who helped with compiling this handbook, believes that this is a step towards educating the homeless and those living in slums who often seek help when it is too late. He added that the information on laws as well as the contacts of relevant government officials will help empower communities until the process of evictions is stalled.

Miloon Kothari, former UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, called for the investigation and prosecution of officials responsible for carrying out forced evictions in Delhi. He stressed that evictions carried out without due process and in violation of the law amount to criminal acts and should be treated accordingly.

For more information contact:

Abdul Shakeel - +91 9871550857; Shivani Chaudhry - +91 9818205234

HOUSING AND LAND RIGHTS NETWORK

G- 18/1, Nizamuddin West

New Delhi – 110013

+91-11-2435-8492 / www.hic-sarp.org