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STOP UNFAIR EVICTIONS! STOP INHUMAN REMOVALS!

Imagine being around 75 years old, having lived in your flat for maybe 40 years and having experienced communism, Stalinism, Nazism and now capitalism at its most extreme form. You have a small state pension that just covers the rent and the most necessary expenses to keep you afloat. The old run-down house you live in has been restituted and the new owner wants to raise the rents by 200 %. "To market rents" she says. And there is nothing available on the market for the cost that you could absolutely afford. The new landlord sends you notices and threatening letters, thugs come by and threaten you, electricity wires get cut off, and heating is kept at a minimum in the wintertime. Town Hall Officials shrug their shoulders and just look at you.

How would you feel?

Imagine being the father of a family with five children and at 2 pm you are woken up by loud strange voices over a loud speaker demanding that you leave your home now. Military and police officers or local thugs pound at your door. You race to get your children and grab a few possessions. Your evictors enter your home. Any resistance is met by beatings with wooden bats. You stand outside in the darkness with your few belongings watching your house being bulldozed.

How would you feel?

- 800,000 people may have been rendered homeless in Nigeria through evictions in 49 settlements from 2003-2006
- In England 26,000 tenants were evicted by local authorities and housing associations in 2002/03, and 93 % of evictions resulted from rent arrears
- In New York, the marshals complete about 25,000 evictions each year, about one for every five eviction warrants.
- 700,000 Zimbabweans from last years' evictions are still struggling to find shelter.
- In Italy more than 200,000 families have been threatened with eviction, 80 % for rent arrears.
15,000 families were evicted the first six months in 2005.
- In Prague, tenants who have been told, by the landlord, to evict their flats must themselves show proof to the Court that the order is without a valid reason – the landlord does not need to show proof in the first instance.
- In Poland, effective ways of getting rid of "troublesome" tenants are: dismantling of railings, disconnecting electricity and cutting of the water supply and heating.
- In Pakistan, the construction of the Lyari Expressway in Karachi, will have rendered over 250,000 people homeless.
- In Osaka, Japan, an estimated 10,000 homeless people who find shelters in streets, parks and on riversides are threatened to be evicted.
- Australia: Approx. 12,000 police assisted evictions, and 100,000 evictions take place annually.

Do we need more examples, fact and figures? No, not really!

(...more examples? Ok, please go to www.iut.nu and www.habitants.org)

Of course, the circumstances under which these evictions occur are not comparable, but behind the figures, behind every one and each of them, lay a personal tragedy, irrespective of country and political doctrine.

Also, all available figures give evidence that evictions are increasing worldwide, which completely contradicts the UN Millennium Development Goal, Target 11:

Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Despotic laws, not recognising international treaties and which make inhuman evictions possible should be abolished.

Such evictions violate human and housing rights and should be executed only in rare circumstances, and should not be executed at all before alternative and acceptable accommodation has been found.

The Members of the International Union of Tenants together with the International Alliance of Inhabitants call for the ending of unfair removals and of despotic evictions!

International legal treaties which speak against evictions and embody the right to housing

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25 (1): Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well being, including.....and **housing**...
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 11 recognises the right to adequate housing, and the right to be **free from arbitrary forced evictions**.
- General Comments IV and VII, adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, paragraph 18 of General Comment IV states: "Instances of **forced eviction are incompatible** with the requirements of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and can only be justified in the most exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with the relevant principles of international law." Paragraph 16 of General Comment VII reads: "**Evictions should not result in individuals being rendered homeless** or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights.
- The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 17.1 complements the right **not to be forcefully evicted without adequate protection**.
- African Charter on Human and People's Rights (African Charter), The American Convention on Human rights (American Convention) and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention), all **protects persons from forced evictions**.
- European Social Charter, article 31 : **Right to Housing**
- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, article 8: **Right to respect for private and family life**.

Several more international treaties which include the right to housing are found on www.iut.nu and www.habitants.org