

LmunA 2025

Research report

Forum: United Nations Human Rights Council

Issue: “Promoting access to adequate housing
and combating forced evictions in India”

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Position: Main Chair & Deputy Chair



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LmunA 2025

Introducing your chairs

Hi delegates! My name is Kate and I am seventeen years old. I am thrilled to be your main chair alongside my wonderful friend Lotus Veltman at the upcoming addition of LmunA in UNHRC. I live in Amersfoort and attend Farel College, where I am in my final year of VWO. LmunA 2025 will be my ninth MUN conference and third time as a chair. MUN's have played a great part of my high school career, in which I have had the pleasure to be a delegate, a chair, part of an organising committee and also a Secretary General (FAMUN 2025).

Besides school, I love working out, hanging/ going out with my friends, crocheting and travelling. I can't wait to meet all of you, hear your ideas, and make LmunA '25 a conference we'll all remember!



LmunA 2025

Introduction

Secure, adequate housing underpins health, livelihoods, education, and dignity. In India, where there is rapid urbanisation, infrastructure expansion and climate displacement, forced evictions remain a persistent human rights concern despite constitutional and governmental protections. International standards and Indian courts increasingly frame housing as a basic human right, yet the pressing issue still remains.

LmunA 2025

Definitions of key terms

Adequate housing

Per UN CESCR General Comment No. 4, adequacy includes legal security of tenure; availability of services; affordability; habitability; accessibility; location; and cultural adequacy

Informal housing

Residential areas where residents lack secure tenure and often reside in illegally built structures with inadequate access to basic services

Forced eviction

Permanent or temporary removal of individuals or communities against their will from homes/land without adequate legal protections, consultation, notice, or relocation/compensation

Tenure security

Protection against arbitrary eviction regardless of tenure form

In-situ upgradation

Improving services, tenure, and housing quality without displacing residents; preferred in Indian and international guidance

General overview

Finding a safe, secure, and affordable home, which is labelled as adequate housing by the UN, is still a major challenge for millions of people in India. Adequate housing isn't just four walls and a roof; it also means having clean water, toilets, electricity, enough space, and, most importantly, tenure security. Tenure security is the legal protection so you can't be kicked out without a fair reason and proper process.

Over the past few decades, cities have been growing fast as people move from villages to find jobs, better schools, and healthcare. But the supply of proper, affordable housing hasn't kept up. Many low-income families end up in informal settlements, neighbourhoods built without official permission or legal papers, often on land that is flood-prone, crowded, or far from jobs.



Informal settlements in Mumbai, India

For the people living there, these homes are much more than just structures; they're where life happens. But to city authorities, these settlements are often seen as "illegal" or "encroachments." This is where the problem of forced eviction comes in. People are removed from their homes without proper notice, without a fair hearing, and without being given another place to live. In India, this can happen when land is needed for new roads, railways, or beautification projects. Sometimes, a notice is stuck on a wall; other times, bulldozers simply arrive, and people lose both their homes and their livelihoods in a matter of hours.

It doesn't always have to be this way. Some projects have shown that it's possible to improve living conditions without uprooting communities, an approach called in-situ upgradation. This

LmunA 2025

means upgrading houses and services where they already are, instead of moving people far away. Giving families legal rights to the land and building affordable rental housing for migrant workers are also strategies that have worked in parts of India.

National programs like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) promise “Housing for All,” and state-level efforts like Odisha’s JAGA Mission have shown real success in granting land rights and improving services. Still, challenges remain: land in good locations is expensive, many housing schemes end up serving people just above the poorest, and authorities often choose quick demolitions over slower, fairer solutions. The big task for India is to keep growing and modernizing its cities while making sure the people who keep those cities running are not pushed out in the process.

Major parties involved

India

The national and state governments run housing programs like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) scheme, and set policies on evictions and urban development. Indian courts, including the Supreme Court, play a major role in protecting housing rights.

South Africa

Known for strong anti-eviction laws and court oversight that require humane alternatives for displaced residents.

Brazil

Operates one of the world’s largest social housing programs (Minha Casa, Minha Vida), providing lessons on scale and affordability.

UN-Habitat

Sets global housing standards, shares best practices, and helps countries align with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

International NGOs and networks

Groups like Habitat for Humanity, the Housing and Land Rights Network, and Slum Dwellers International work on the ground to improve housing and prevent forced evictions.

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Timeline of Key Events

1985 - Olga Tellis case: The Supreme Court said pavement dwellers have a right to earn a living and can't just be removed without notice.

1996 - Chameli Singh case: The court confirmed that the right to life includes the right to shelter.

2005–2014 - JNNURM and RAY: Big government programs to improve housing in slums, often without forcing people to move (“in-situ upgradation”).

2014 - Street Vendors Act: Protected street vendors from being evicted without fair process and created local committees to manage vending spots.

2015 - PMAY launched: “Housing for All” program with multiple ways to help — building new homes, upgrading existing ones, and giving subsidies.

2017 - ongoing – Odisha’s JAGA Mission: Gave land rights and upgraded services in hundreds of slums.

2020 - ARHC started: Built affordable rental housing for migrant workers using empty buildings and new construction.

2019 & 2023–25 - Ajay Maken cases (Delhi): Courts ruled that slum demolitions in Delhi must include surveys, consultation, and rehabilitation before eviction.

2024 - Supreme Court guidelines: Set rules for all of India to prevent sudden demolitions — notice must be given, hearings held, and laws followed

Previous attempts to solve the issue

- **Building more houses** – PMAY (Urban and Rural) has provided subsidies for millions of homes, but challenges remain with land prices, finding eligible families, and keeping costs low. ARHC has created thousands of rental units, but demand is much higher than supply.
- **Court protections** – Important rulings (like *Olga Tellis*, *Chameli Singh*, *Sudama Singh*, *Ajay Maken*) have established that evictions need notice, surveys, and alternative housing.

LmunA 2025

- **Secure land rights** – Programs like RAY and Odisha’s JAGA Mission have shown that giving people legal rights to the land they live on can greatly improve their lives and reduce fear of eviction.
- **Rental market reforms** – The Model Tenancy Act (2021) aims to make renting safer for both landlords and tenants, but not all states have adopted it yet.
- **Protecting livelihoods** – The Street Vendors Act (2014) ensures vendors have legal vending spots and can’t be evicted without due process.

Possible solutions

- **Fair eviction rules** – Make sure no one is removed from their home without proper notice, a chance to be heard, and a safe place to go.
- **Improve homes where people live** – Upgrade housing and basic services in existing neighbourhoods instead of moving people far away.
- **More affordable options** – Build and rent homes that people on low incomes can actually afford, close to jobs and transport.
- **Learn and work together** – Share ideas with countries like South Africa and Brazil, and partner with global groups such as the World Bank, ADB, and UN-Habitat for support.
- **Protect incomes** – Make sure housing plans also help people keep their jobs or businesses.
- **Check the follow-through** – Have independent groups or courts make sure the rules are being followed.

LmunA 2025

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