



Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing

I. Questionnaire

For her next report to the Human Rights Council, 31st session- March 2016-, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living and on the right to non-discrimination in this regard, Ms Leilani Farha, intends to focus on the intimate link between homelessness and the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing, as well as virtually all other human rights, including the right to life and non-discrimination.

Homelessness has emerged as a global human rights crisis even in States where there are adequate resources to address it. It has, however, been largely insulated from human rights accountability and rarely addressed as a human rights violation requiring positive measures to eliminate and to prevent its recurrence. While strategies to address homelessness have become more prevalent in recent years, most have failed to address homelessness as a human rights violation and few have provided for effective monitoring, enforcement or remedies.

The report will explore how homelessness is understood and manifests in diverse social, cultural, economic and even linguistic contexts. It will consider homelessness both as serious deprivation of access to housing and as an extreme form of social exclusion, discrimination and loss of dignity. It will seek to identify and understand less visible experiences of homelessness, particularly among women.

In this context, the Special Rapporteur would like to receive contributions and views from national level governments and, where possible, from local governments. Answers to the following questions would greatly assist the Special Rapporteur in developing her thematic report and fashioning follow up strategies to address and ultimately eliminate homelessness:

1. Please explain how your government defines homelessness in various contexts, for example, when measuring the extent of homelessness or determining eligibility for programmes and services. Please explain why the definition was chosen, and whether it is formally referred to in laws, policies or programmes.
2. How is homelessness measured in your country? What criteria and indicators are used and how is data collected and systematically updated for this purpose? Please provide available data over a period of time on the extent of homelessness in general and among particular groups (for example: children and youth, women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and others).
3. What population groups are most affected by homelessness in your country? How have their experiences been documented and by whom (whether officially by national or subnational governments, National Human Rights Institutions, or

by non-governmental or other organisations, charities, etc)? If studies exist, please indicate or share a link, a reference or a copy.

4. Please provide information and details on the primary systemic and structural causes of homelessness in your country and explain how these are being addressed.
5. Please provide any information available about discrimination and stigmatization of people who are homeless, including laws or policies that may be used to remove homeless persons from public spaces or to prohibit activities in public spaces such as sleeping, camping, eating, sitting, or asking for money. Please explain whether such discrimination is prohibited by law at national and/or local levels.
6. Has homelessness been recognized as a human rights violation by courts or by national human rights institutions in your country, and if so, on the basis of which human rights (for example: right to adequate housing, right to life, etc)?
7. What legal or administrative procedures are available to challenge actions or inaction by governments or private actors on the grounds that they lead to or fail to address homelessness?
8. Please provide information about any strategies or legislation in place at the national, sub-national or local levels to reduce or eliminate homelessness, explain any goals or timelines that have been adopted for this purpose, describe how progress is monitored and provide information on results to date.

II. Submission of Responses

Kindly, please identify links or provide copies of any law, regulation, policy or other document related to your answers. Due to limited capacity for translation, we kindly request that you submit your answers, if possible, **in English, Spanish or French and, no later than 28 October, 2015. All responses will be posted in the web page of the Rapporteur unless you indicate otherwise.** Please keep your responses to a maximum of 6 pages (or 3,000 words). Kindly send your responses preferably via email to: srhousing@ohchr.org, copying_registry@ohchr.org; or to:

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For any question, please contact the Special Rapporteur through her assistant, Ms. Juana Sotomayor, Special Procedures Branch- OHCHR: email: jsotomayor@ohchr.org; phone: +41 22 917 94 45.