

PRESS RELEASE:

PAPERING OVER THE CRACKS: *Reform of the forced eviction regime in China*

-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

Land rights and Property rights abuses Continue Unabated as China's breakneck Development leaves no place for Residents to Find Justice

PAPERING OVER THE CRACKS:

Reform of the forced eviction regime in China

A REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON ADEQUATE HOUSING

A REPORT BY:

CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP
人权卫士紧急救援协会

RELEASED MARCH 29, 2010

CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP / 人权卫士紧急救援协会 --

Beijing, China, March, 29, 2009 -- A report has been released to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing surveying forced eviction and demolition in China. "PAPERING OVER THE CRACKS: Reform of the Forced Eviction Regime in China" covers an overview of the rights abuses related to the loss of adequate housing and presents a detailed legal analysis of the current regulations and offers a critical analysis of the proposed new regulation.

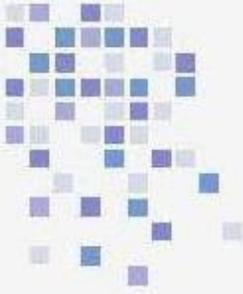
China's breakneck development and the decentralization of government accountability over the last decade has produced a pandemic of illegal demolition and forced displacement of urban and rural citizens alike at the hands of corrupt government officials and developers. This increase in property rights violations, predominantly related to forced evictions and demolitions, is one of the leading causes of instability in China today.

Despite the drastic increase in property related petitioning and protests over the last decade, it appears to be only as a result of two recent, highly reported, tragic cases of self-immolation in protest of forced eviction that the Chinese government appears to have woken up to the seriousness of the problem.

In fact it will be only by establishing an independent tribunal to hear cases of abuse that the collusion between local governments and developers will be stopped.

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Furthermore, all demolitions must cease while negotiations between residents and developers take place; compensation must be based on fair market prices and there must be an immediate halt to the drastic disparity between prices offered to residents and the inflation of prices gained by local officials. The central government must take a greater role in oversight and regulation and local and regional governments must not be measured on the rate of development above all other factors. There must be an increase of the legal channels available for aggrieved residents and the judiciary must remain impartial.

Until these issues, and others, are addressed and resolved the level of instability will increase. Until residents are able to fairly negotiate with developers and local officials, find adequate legal representation, and be treated equally by local judicial bodies the situation will not improve.

About The Chinese Urgent Action Working Group

The Chinese Urgent Action Working Group (人权卫士紧急救援协会) undertakes direct interventions on behalf of Human Rights defenders in distress, through investigations, public advocacy, communication with international institutions and organizations, and through providing legal aid. The group is located inside mainland China, and was formed as a response to increased persecution of Human Rights defenders in the run up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

The report can be found online at <http://China-Action.org> | or contact us at "China.Action@hushmail.com"

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