



KENYA

NO SECURITY OF TENURE IN KENYA'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND SLUMS

Millions of Kenya's urban poor live with no guarantee of security of tenure. This is the result of the systematic failure of Kenyan officials over the years to recognize the proliferation and reality of informal settlements and slums and to plan accordingly.

Millions of people therefore face the daily risk of forced evictions from their homes and informal business, with catastrophic consequences for individuals and families.

Since the establishment of the very first informal settlements in Kenya, there have been large-scale forced evictions carried out in a manner that contravenes international human rights standards. Mass forced evictions have usually involved government projects or private developers claiming ownership of land on which some of the settlements stand.

The estimated 7,000 residents of Deep Sea settlement live under the constant threat of forced eviction. In February 2004, an estimated 2,000 residents of Raila village, Kibera, had their homes demolished in a mass forced eviction to provide space for a road bypass. On 23 September 2005, the homes of about 850 families were demolished. In both cases, government bulldozers were used to evict residents, adequate notices were not served, and the government made no effort to resettle or compensate the victims. Hundreds of families became homeless as a result and many lost their livelihoods. A number of schools, kiosks and private health clinics were also destroyed.

The government pledged to develop guidelines on evictions and formed a task force to do this in 2006. There has, however, been no discernible progress in the task force's work over the past three years. On the contrary, forced evictions in Nairobi are ongoing.

