

# EGYPT KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Your home is dear to you and your family. It is your shelter whether you rent, own, occupy or lease the home or the land on which it is built.

The Egyptian government – like many others around the world – committed itself to protect your right to adequate housing and your right to privacy. It is therefore obliged not to forcibly evict you from your home.

This means the government should not evict you before it has completed a number of actions, including:

- giving you prior adequate notice in writing of the date of eviction;
- offering you a chance to appeal against the eviction order;
- ensuring that you are not left homeless if you cannot afford another place to live.

You may only be evicted as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives have been explored and genuine consultation has taken place with you and your community.



## EVICTIION AND EVACUATION

If your home is an imminent threat to your life and health, for example because it might collapse or is in a disaster-prone zone, then the authorities must protect you, according to Egyptian and human rights law. The Law on Building of 2008 says that your local authorities must send expert engineering committees to assess the danger of collapse and recommend repairs or demolition and eviction. The authorities must give you priority in the allocation of alternative housing. In these circumstances, your eviction can be justified and considered as an emergency evacuation, so that tragedies like that of Al-Duwayqa rockslide of 2008 are averted. But the authorities must consult you on the resettlement options, especially in terms of location, availability of infrastructure, and security of tenure; provide compensation for all losses; and ensure access to legal remedies.

## SEVEN GUARANTEES BEFORE EVICTION

According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, to which Egypt is a state party, the Egyptian authorities cannot carry out evictions before appropriate procedural protections are in place, even if you live on state-owned land. This means that before eviction, the authorities must give you:

1. An opportunity for genuine consultation.
2. Adequate and reasonable notice in writing of the eviction order.
3. Full information about your right to appeal against the eviction order.
4. Information on the proposed evictions and the alternative purpose for which the land or housing is to be used.
5. Reasonable time to remove your possessions.
6. Legal remedies.
7. Legal aid if you need it to seek redress from the courts.

## SEVEN GUARANTEES DURING EVICTION

If the eviction does go ahead:

1. Government officials or their representatives must be present during the eviction.
2. Everyone involved in carrying out the eviction must be properly identified.
3. Your eviction must not take place in particularly bad weather or at night unless the affected people consent.



4. Your eviction must not leave you homeless or vulnerable to other human rights violations.
5. The demolition of your home should not happen before you are relocated in adequate alternative housing.
6. The demolition of your home should not be a precondition for relocation.
7. Excessive force should not be used against you during the eviction.

## SEVEN CRITERIA FOR ALTERNATIVE HOUSING

The state has a duty to ensure that no one is left homeless because of an eviction. Should you be unable to secure alternative housing for yourself, the authorities must provide you with compensation for your losses and adequate alternative housing whether you are a man or a woman head of household. According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adequate housing means a home where you have:

1. Legal security of tenure, with legal documentation and guarantees of protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats. Among the various forms of tenure are rental (public and private) accommodation, co-operative housing, lease, owner-occupation, emergency housing and informal settlements.
2. Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, which are essential for health, security, comfort and nutrition. These include access to natural and common resources, safe drinking water, energy for cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, means of food storage, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services.
3. Affordability of housing, so that the attainment and satisfaction of other basic needs are not threatened or compromised.
4. Habitability, in terms of provision of adequate space and protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, or other threats to health, structural hazards and disease vectors.
5. Accessibility for disadvantaged groups, including older people and children, people living with physical and mental disabilities or illnesses, the terminally ill, people living with HIV/AIDS or persistent medical problems, victims of natural disasters and people living in disaster-prone areas.
6. Location that allows access to employment, health care services, school and other social facilities. Housing should not be built on polluted sites or near pollution sources.
7. Cultural adequacy. The way housing is constructed, the building materials used and the policies supporting these must appropriately enable the expression of cultural identity.

## STAND UP AGAINST FORCED EVICTIONS

Forced eviction is the removal of people against their will from the homes or land they occupy without legal protections and other safeguards.

Forced eviction is a violation of human rights and often results in people losing their possessions, social networks, and access to work and services.

Forced eviction without the mentioned procedural safeguards should be stopped immediately.

If you witness a forced eviction, if you are being forcibly evicted, if you fear it could happen to you and want to resist, speak out. This could be the first step to save your home. Contact human rights organizations in Egypt or a lawyer you can trust.

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