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Briefing Paper: The impact of forced evictions on women

“Thirteen bulldozers had turned my world upside down - we lost our employment, we lost our shelter, and we lost our self-confidence. For a good fifteen days, I thought to myself, ‘I will never get back my life again. I will have to keep living like this forever.’”

– Testimony given to COHRE by a woman forcibly evicted in Bhabhrekhar Nagar, India

I. Introduction

Today, forced evictions represent a human rights violation of endemic proportion. While a State’s duty to abstain from, and to shield its citizens against, the practice of forced eviction is an obligation clearly articulated within numerous international human rights standards, forced evictions continue to devastate the lives of millions of women, men and children around the world. Yet, forced evictions are not a gender-neutral phenomenon, and for women in particular, it is important to underscore the unique ways in which forced evictions combine with gender inequality to produce specific crises for women. As one woman forced from her home in Lagos, Nigeria aptly told COHRE: *“My sister, you know that in every aspect of life, whenever there is a problem the women suffer more, if marriage breaks, the woman suffers the cultural stigma that accompanies divorces and separation as well as economic hardship. So the same thing goes for forced eviction.”*

Forced evictions disproportionately affect women for a number of reasons, many of which have been well documented by COHRE and others. The former United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Adequate Housing, and on Violence against Women, respectively, have both addressed the impact of forced evictions on women within the context of their mandates. To continue to shed light on the connections, COHRE has also carried out extensive original research on the impact of forced evictions on women globally.¹ This Briefing Paper on the Impact of Forced Evictions on Women incorporates the testimonies of some of the women COHRE has interviewed over the years, with an overview of some of the key issues which women face within the context of forced evictions. This Briefing Paper also examines the relevant provisions of international human rights law and what they

¹ COHRE has carried out in-depth fact-finding on violations of women’s rights within the context of forced evictions in Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

mean for women, and sets forth recommendations to improve the current situation for women.

II. Forced evictions as a gross violation of women's human rights under international human rights standards

The right to not be forcibly evicted from one's home is a fundamental human right, which has been addressed in detail by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment No. 7. Here, the Committee defined forced evictions as *"the permanent or temporary removal against their will, of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection."*

Forced evictions can be seen as a particular type of displacement which are most often characterised or accompanied by: (1) a relation to specific decisions, legislation or policies of States or the failure of States to intervene to halt evictions by non-state actors; (2) an element of force or coercion; and (3) are often planned, formulated and announced prior to being carried out. In its General Comment No. 7, the Committee further stated that *"forced evictions are prima facie incompatible with the requirements of the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights] and can only be justified in the most exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with the relevant principles of international law"* (emphasis added).² In a strongly worded resolution on the practice of forced eviction, the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights affirmed *"that the practice of forced eviction constitutes a gross violation of human rights, in particular the right to adequate housing"* (emphasis added).³

In particular, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has also recognised that women deserve special consideration and assistance in cases of evictions: *"Women ...,"* the Committee acknowledged, *"suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced evictions."*

² Commission on Human Rights (10 March 1993), "Forced evictions," Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/77, UN Doc. E/CN.4/RES/1993/77.

³ Ibid.

International standards

In its resolution 2004/28 on forced evictions, the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights reiterated that *"every woman, man and child has the right to a secure place to live in peace and dignity, which includes the right not to be evicted unlawfully, arbitrarily or on a discriminatory basis from their home, land or community."* The Committee also recalled that while certain groups were more vulnerable to forced eviction because of social exclusion and discrimination, the fact remains that *"women in all groups are disproportionately affected, given the extent of statutory and other forms of discrimination which often apply in relation to the property rights of women, including homeownership and rights of access to property of accommodation, and given the particular vulnerability of women to acts of gender-based violence and sexual abuse when they are rendered homeless"* (emphasis added).

Most often, mass forced evictions occur due to development projects, racial/ethnic discrimination, urban redevelopment schemes, gentrification, urban beautification, land alienation in both rural and urban areas and in situations of armed conflict and ethnic cleansing, or their aftermath. Here, it is certainly true that women are disproportionately affected. Yet, not all forced evictions take place on a mass scale, and no where is this more the case than it is for women. In fact, as COHRE has observed, the forced eviction of individual women from their homes and lands – one woman at a time, relentless, and often invisible – receives far too little attention. Indeed, the arbitrary deprivation of women’s housing, land and property, while it often happens to individual women, amounts to much more than an isolated problem. Rather, it is a problem of endemic proportions, with systemic causes. Indeed, the arbitrary deprivation of women’s housing, land and property – when it is a result of gender-based violence, ‘disinheritance,’ or the application of gender-biased norms, policies and practices which negatively affect women – must also be considered to be within the scope of a State’s obligations to provide protection to all from forced eviction.

The right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex/gender is germane to this discussion on international standards, as it has been articulated consistently and clearly within international human rights law. For example, Article 2(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that, *“The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”*⁴ Women in particular experience gender-based discrimination in housing with respect to ability to hold legal title, as well as discrimination with regard to issues of housing and property inheritance. Such discrimination places women in a vulnerable position economically and socially, exposing them to situations of violence and forced eviction.

In addition, Article 3 of the Covenant specifically obliges States Parties to ensure the right to equality between women and men, stating, *“The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant.”*⁵ The Montreal Principles on Women’s Economic, Social and Cultural Rights underscore:

“Substantive gender equality entails that rights must be interpreted and implemented in a manner that ensures to women equal exercise and enjoyment of their rights. Substantively equal enjoyment of rights cannot be achieved through the mere passage of laws or promulgation of policies that are gender-neutral on their face. Gender neutral laws and policies can

⁴ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), entry into force 3 January 1976.

⁵ Ibid.

*perpetuate gender inequality because they do not take into account the economic and social disadvantage of women; they may therefore simply maintain the status quo. De jure equality (i.e. in law) does not, by itself, provide de facto equality. De facto equality (i.e. in fact or in practice), or substantive equality, requires that rights be interpreted, and that policies and programs - through which rights are implemented - be designed in ways that take women's socially constructed disadvantage into account, that secure for women the equal benefit, in real terms, of laws and measures, and that provide equality for women in their material conditions. The adequacy of conduct undertaken to implement rights must always be assessed against the background of women's actual conditions and evaluated in the light of the effects of policies, laws and practices on those conditions."*⁶

III. Gender-based violence within the context of forced evictions, including domestic violence

Exposure to gender-based violence, as COHRE has documented, is a common occurrence for women within the context of forced eviction. Over the years, the United Nations' Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women and on the Right to Adequate Housing have also addressed women's experiences violence within the context of forced eviction. In 2000, the then Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (Radhika Coomaraswamy) observed:

*"Violence occurring in relation to forced eviction starts before the eviction process. Psychological stress on learning about the eviction can destabilise the family atmosphere and cause emotional trauma. Sometimes, rape is used by the evictors to break resistance. During the eviction, verbal abuse and beatings, rape and even killing are common. The destruction of the home and the destruction of property are further traumatic experiences. The destruction of the home is often equivalent to the destruction of life; everything that was accomplished so far is destroyed. Coping with injuries, the death of family members, inadequate housing or even homelessness, poverty, lack of community support when relocated away from the home town are all possible burdens that have to be taken on by women after eviction."*⁷

Later, in 2009, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women at the time (Yakin Ertürk) reported that, *"The impact of these forced evictions, often by militia or armed forces, is profoundly devastating for women and is correlated with heightened rates of physical, psychological and economic violence against women before during and after the evictions. This is true both in terms of violence against women at the hands of state authorities, non-state actors, community members, as*

⁶ Montreal Principles on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Human Rights Quarterly*, Volume 26, Number 3, August 2004, pp. 760-780.

⁷ Radhika Coomaraswamy, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Addendum: Economic and social policy and its impact on violence against women," UN DocE/CN.4/2000/68/Add.5, 24 February 2000.

*well as violence against women by their partners or relatives within the home.*⁸ Similar concerns have been voiced by the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing (Miloon Kothari), whose global consultations revealed that within the context of forced evictions women were often beaten by the authorities, arrested, morally abused, inhumanly transported, and even put in arbitrary detention.. In one case documented by the Special Rapporteur, a pregnant woman was beaten so severely as to miscarry.⁹

COHRE's own research has revealed similar patterns of abuse. Forced evictions most often take place during the day, when women (often perceived to be less likely to resist) are most likely to be at home. Because of this fact, sometimes women are referred to as the 'soft targets' for forced eviction.¹⁰ In the midst of the violence and chaos which often accompanies forced evictions, private actors and State security forces, including the police, often perpetrate acts of physical and sexual abuse and harassment against women and girls. Even when acts of physical violence do not take place, women are often harassed and threatened, and the trauma of the experience marks them deeply. One woman forcibly evicted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia told COHRE:

"It was early morning when the trucks came to destroy the houses. ... Around 4 am in the morning, they were all geared up to throw us out of our houses. It was raining and we pleaded them 'how can we move in such rains?' They did not listen to us one bit. They issued a warning to us: 'leave now or we will destroy your houses.' They said if you try to speak to us, we will beat you. I did not know what to do, where to go. Everybody was scared and quiet. ... Within moments, my whole house was destroyed. My house was my life. When they destroyed my house, they destroyed my life. I still feel the pain I had undergone that day."

At no point shall government authorities or private actors resort to intimidation tactics or violence, including by harassing or threatening women with violence to coerce them to abandon their homes and/or property. All acts of violence and harassment against women during eviction must be met with a zero-tolerance approach, with perpetrators prosecuted and punished.

Sadly, not only do women suffer violence at the hands of authorities during eviction, they also often suffer additional violence at home, as forced evictions further increase already strained living conditions and increase women's social isolation. While forced eviction cannot be said to cause domestic violence, it is clear that forced eviction is an aggravating factor which contributes to situations of violence

⁸ Yakin Ertürk, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Addendum: Political economy and violence against women," UN Doc. A/HRC/11/6/Add.6, 23 June 2009.

⁹ Women's Right to Adequate Housing and Land: Middle East/North Africa Proceedings of the Alexandria Consultation, Miloon Kothari (UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing) with collaboration and support from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 23–26 July 2004.

¹⁰ Ibid.

within the home. Forced evictions are a traumatic experience for all who experience them, regardless of gender. Yet, some of the effects are notably different for women and men in both the short and long term. For men, forced evictions often signify a loss of power and control, and a diminished sense of social position as men. The loss of one's home, for example, and the inability to change one's life circumstances - compounded by the added losses of employment and other status - can be very psychologically distressful for men. It is particularly frustrating for those men whose sense of gender identity and self-worth is wrapped up in the fulfilment of a more traditional male gender role; i.e. a gender role which too often implies a sense of male privilege and a need to maintain a clear hierarchy over the women in one's life. For men already socially and psychologically predisposed to violence, the added strain and instability of forced eviction can act as a trigger, causing some men to violently act out their frustration thereby trying to regain their sense of power and control over their lives.

For women, forced evictions compound their already low social status as women. Forced evictions cut women off from whatever sources of personal autonomy they might have once had – whether it be a measure of economic independence, or a social support network in her community – and make her much more vulnerable and isolated. When her personal autonomy is eroded in this way, a woman will find it much more difficult to evade and escape situations of violence. As a young Bedouin woman forcibly evicted in the Negev (Israel/Palestine) told COHRE:

"I am not used to talking about what happened in my house. In our culture we do not talk about these kinds of things, especially not with strangers. While we were in Tal El Meleh I collected the children's national allowance. I used to spend it all for the benefit of my family or me. These days he [her husband] is unemployed so he takes it and gives me only 100 Shekel .It's not enough at all. I can't buy anything with this money. If I dare to say anything or ask for more he will start shouting at me and hit me."

Another woman in Phnom Penh Cambodia shared a similar story:

"My husband has started beating me a lot. He takes out all his frustration on me. Before in Sambok Chap, we both use to earn money. We both had jobs at factory nearby. Through we were living at rented place; we were able to make our ends meet. Here I cannot go for work as we are very far away from the city. My husband goes to work but he cannot earn sufficient money for my family. He has become very violent towards me. I did not just lose my house in the eviction but I have lost my life, my peace and everything."

States should provide awareness raising programming within affected communities aimed at reducing domestic violence and providing information to women prior to and after eviction on domestic violence, including information on legal and other resources available to women experiencing domestic violence.

IV. Women's exclusion from decision-making and lack of awareness of rights

Women are regularly excluded from decision making processes within the context of forced evictions due to cultural barriers or gender-specific roles which make it difficult for women to participate in these processes on equal footing with men. Sometimes they simply overlooked or deliberately excluded. As one woman forcibly evicted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia told COHRE:

"We have right over this land. We are living here from so many years. Why we are not included in the development of this land... Women are participating and organising community people and in this struggle. We take care of home and we can take care of our land. The authorities have not us given any chance to voice our opinion so how they will know that we are capable?"

When evictions are planned or proposed, many times consultations are held only with male leaders, who may intentionally or unintentionally neglect consideration of women's rights and needs. Even when women are ostensibly invited to participate in such meetings, many times consultations with communities are scheduled at inopportune times and in inappropriate locations to ensure women are able and available to attend meetings.

Consultative meetings should be scheduled at a time and place which enables women's participation. Women should also be consulted separately from men. Using female facilitators during such meetings can help ensure that women feel more secure expressing their views.

Women are also very often unaware of their rights and of the obligations of States to protect them from forced evictions. Lack of knowledge of rights has dire consequences for women because it decreases their ability to fight against forced evictions and claim their rights effectively. Even in cases where eviction cannot be avoided, adequate information would enable women to suggest plans for alternative housing and negotiate common solutions. Time and time again, women approached by COHRE wanted more information about their housing rights within the context of forced evictions, and information about where to seek justice. One woman forcibly evicted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia who never received compensation for her lost property, although others in her community did receive compensation told COHRE *"I wish I could be little more aware of my rights. At least I would have been able to get my compensation... ."*

States must ensure that women have access to adequate information to support their active and informed involvement in the decision-making processes related to eviction. This information should be provided in the local language and in a form and manner that is accessible to all affected women including those belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities.

V. Social isolation and poverty

As one woman in Colombo, Sri Lanka who survived forced eviction told COHRE: *“After the demolitions, life has been worsened.”* It is the sad refrain we hear from women everywhere who have experienced forced eviction. Part of the reason that life worsens for women is because forced evictions too often lead to a loss of women’s livelihood and social support networks, leading to a corresponding decrease in women’s autonomy post-eviction. We discussed above the ramifications this has in terms of exposure to violence, but there are other consequences as well. Forced evictions almost invariably reinforce existing social inequities by affecting those already living in extreme poverty, as well as marginalised or vulnerable groups including women, children and minorities. They the poor even poorer still, and they deepen gender inequality by further entrenching women’s social isolation and economic marginalisation. Among some of the worst impacted are domestic workers, commercial sex workers and migrant workers; women living with HIV/AIDS; widows; victims of domestic violence; divorced women; single women and households headed by single women or girls; women with disabilities; elderly women; as well as women with small children and expectant mothers.

A woman’s position within and outside of her family often becomes more precarious within the context of forced eviction, as forced evictions entail the loss of personal support systems which help to sustain women in their day to day life. This increased social isolation can have dire consequences with respect to a woman’s economic security, as well as her ability to flee situations of gender-based violence, abuse or exploitation. This social isolation can compound the already heavy domestic responsibilities which many women shoulder. In almost all cases, it is women who are most often charged with taking care of the children and family before, during and after an eviction, and for providing a sense of stability at home. Because women bear primary responsibility for caring for their families, the loss of material resources and social networks that accompanies forced evictions increase demands on women’s time, and also limits their future options. Forced evictions, however, make women’s burdens untenable and impact women’s ability to care for children and other dependent family members, a situation which in turn also affects their ability to secure a livelihood and attend to daily chores. This means that not only are there more demands for a woman’s time and attention post-eviction, but that even those tasks which were once routine – such as collecting water for the family or taking a sick child to the doctor – can become an ordeal. In cases where a woman is the sole economic provider for her household, forced eviction can plunge her so deeply into poverty so as to result in utter destitution for herself and her children.

States should specifically ensure that, in cases where evictions have been otherwise deemed lawful and in compliance with international law that evicted communities are relocated to sites which enable women to access their places of employment, schools, health care centres (including sexual and reproductive care), community centres, and other resources necessary to ensure the realisation of their human rights. Given the centrality of social networks to women’s lives, affected

communities should not be dispersed if they do not want to be, but rather relocated as a single unit.

VI. Negative impacts on girls' education

Evictions carried out during the academic year have the potential of disrupting school attendance and the academic performance of girls. Particularly in cases where alternative housing is not located in close proximity to schools, girls may encounter threats to their security while travelling long distances to and from a new school. This can have profound consequences for girls. As one mother in Mumbai, India told COHRE about her daughter:

"After our houses were demolished, I feared for my teenage daughter a lot. We had no place to live and to sleep and we had everything in open. She got constantly harassed from boys from the other side of locality. She was too young to understand the names they called her. I had to be with her all the time, even when she go to toilet (the common toilets build by Municipality were destroyed in the demolitions and as result locals were forced to go far away to relieve themselves in the open. Situation of women was worse as they had to hold themselves in the night for security reasons). Finally, I have sent my daughter to my mother's / brother's house at Khar Danda. She does not go to school anymore. We stopped her from going to school as it was important in these circumstances. I want her to be safe first and rest things can come later. Anyway she is a girl, so studies are not important to her."

In addition, due to the relocation, a woman's work may cause her to be absent from the home for an extended period of time consequently causing parents to require girl children to sacrifice their education to take care of the home and younger siblings. Consequently, States should provide appropriate support so as to ensure that all children, including girl children, do not sacrifice their education.

VII. Women's lack of security of tenure and lack of avenues for legal redress

Security of tenure encompasses the right to own, inherit, rent, lease and remain on one's land or in one's house and protection from arbitrary or involuntary removal, i.e. forced evictions. Discriminatory norms, customary laws, and cultural practices; domestic violence; and economic obstacles all contribute to women's susceptibility to lack of security of tenure. In practical terms, for women tenure insecurity means exclusion from ownership, access and control over housing and land, as well as exclusion from the processes by which rights to housing and land are allocated, secured and enforced/protected. For instance, within the context of HIV/AIDS, women are susceptible to forced eviction due to real or perceived positive status, or upon the death of a spouse. Women who reside with their in-laws may also face forced eviction once they divorce their spouse, when their spouse dies, or because of domestic violence. For women, security of tenure is often especially precarious because women may not be able to *independently access* their homes and the land on which they live (i.e. it is accessed via a woman's relationship with a male). Tenure

is considered secure only if it protected in law (including constitutional guarantees), as opposed to reliance on mere custom, tradition, or the whims of governmental authorities.

It is inevitably the most disadvantaged and poorest in society whose security of tenure is most commonly threatened, and women as a group are no exception. Particularly for poor women, housing and land are essential to everyday survival and economic security, which means that survival is linked to security of tenure; without it, a woman can easily be rendered homeless, landless and destitute, lacking shelter from the elements, without a place to grow food, generate an income or care for her family. For these reasons security of tenure is considered one of the cornerstones of the right to adequate housing. Various forms of tenure either explicitly exclude women or discriminate against them directly or indirectly. These include customary forms of tenure; communal tenure that supports community ownership but may nevertheless marginalise women; privatisation schemes that favour men or 'male headed' households; and certain combinations, such as private ownership limited by lack of access to resources as well as customary norms that disfavour women's ownership and control. As UN-Habitat has recognised, "*Securing tenure for the household does not necessarily secure tenure for women and children. The extension of secure tenure must benefit women and men equally ...*"¹¹

Not only does tenure insecurity make women more vulnerable to forced eviction in the first place, but subsequent resettlement and relocations schemes may also discriminate against women, again violating their right to security of tenure. Most often, resettlement schemes simply exclude women in the provision of tenure. One case document in Gamaliyya, Egypt, for example, highlighted the plight of a woman with her children was abandoned by her husband some 17 years prior to her being evicted from her home. Nonetheless, authorities asked her to present his identification documents, because only he - as a 'male head of household' - would be entitled to replacement housing.¹² Similar situations have also been documented elsewhere, as was the case in India where cash compensation for the land and property lost during the construction of the Narmada dam was offered to men only by the authorities.¹³ Similarly, in the wake of the Asian Tsunami of 2004, women in Sri Lanka have been overlooked as male 'heads of households' have received titles to property, even in instances where the property was owned by women members of the family prior to the Tsunami.¹⁴ Compounding this, women also experience a lack of legal remedies and aid available to them before, during and after eviction, so that when their right to security of tenure is violated, they cannot seek means of legal redress.

¹¹ UN Habitat, *Why Focus on Women?*

¹² Women's Right to Adequate Housing and Land: Middle East/North Africa Proceedings of the Alexandria Consultation, Miloon Kothari (UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing) with collaboration and support from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 23–26 July 2004.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ COHRE, *Post-Tsunami: Women and Their Right to Own Property: Report of 100 Case Studies from the Southern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka.*

In addition to this kind of gender discrimination, poverty is also both a contributing factor and determinant of women's access to housing, land and property and ultimately women's tenure security. Even where there are no statutory or customary barriers permitting women to own land or housing, the lack of economic resources necessary to secure access to land and property, particularly where money is the chief determinant of access, remains an obstacle. Women remain concentrated in the informal labour sector, and engage in work which is on the whole less secure and less lucrative. The implications of poverty are not, however, purely monetary. Women often lack the means, access and resources to seek judicial or other redress to secure their rights to housing and land. A common example is formal registration of land that may be ultimately too expensive, time consuming and inaccessible for poor and often illiterate women. It is absolutely crucial for women to obtain legal security of tenure. As the former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing (Miloon Kothari) has noted, without security of tenure women *"are disproportionately affected by forced evictions ... domestic violence... discriminatory inheritance laws, development projects and globalisation policies that circumscribe access to productive land and natural resources."*¹⁵

States should replace ostensibly 'gender-neutral' housing, land and property policies and practices with gender-sensitive policies and *positive measures* aimed at ensuring women's housing rights and substantive gender equality. In particular, States must abolish the notion of 'head-of-household' as a legal and administrative concept, as its gender-biased application may deny women security of tenure and lead to the dispossession of their property.

States must also ensure that evicted women and women facing eviction are able to effectively and independently access: (a) a fair hearing before a competent, impartial and independent court or tribunal; (b) legal counsel, and where necessary, sufficient legal aid; and (c) effective remedies.

VIII. Conclusions

It is urgent that women around the world be protected against forced evictions. Even in those exceptional cases when evictions are found to be justifiable under international human rights law, evictions must be carried out in a gender-sensitive manner which respects women and allows them the opportunity to participate effectively in the design of alternative solutions. The basis for this in international human rights law is clear. Standards and principles enshrined in international human rights instruments dealing with forced eviction and displacement include the Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement; General Comment No. 4 on the Right to Adequate Housing and General Comment No 7. on the Prohibition of Forced Evictions adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the UN Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons. Still, there is a need to articulate gender-

¹⁵ Miloon Kothari, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing: Women and the right to adequate housing," UN Doc. E/CN.4/2003/55, 26 March 2003.

sensitive interpretations of these standards which speak to the needs of women, and address their specific experiences within the context of forced evictions.