

UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Official Visit to Los Angeles

Los Angeles is facing a significant crisis in homelessness, Section 8 and public housing, and foreclosures resulting from predatory lending. Additionally, Los Angeles has the distinction of being the nation's homelessness capital. The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing will investigate the following issues:

Foreclosure and predatory lending

- According to a report from Tenants Together, more than a third of those impacted by foreclosure in California are tenants.

Homelessness

- 74,000 people are homeless in Los Angeles County and approximately 40,000 of them live in the City of Los Angeles.
- Los Angeles County shelters provide services to only approximately 10,000 of the homeless.
- Out of the 40,000 homeless in the city of L.A., there exist only an estimated 8,600 emergency and transitional housing beds.
- In 2004, there were 34,000 homeless family members in the county—more than the entire population of Beverly Hills.
- Between 20 and 43 percent of the homeless in L.A. are families headed by a single mother, and in LA, there are two children per average homeless family.
- 50% of children in foster care become homeless at age 18 in Los Angeles (LACEH&H).
- Los Angeles was found to be the “#1 Meanest City” in a 2007-2008 report by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty on the criminalization of the homeless.

Public Housing and Section 8

- In 2008, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) transferred 655 units of public housing to Project-based Section 8 apartments.
- The Jordan Downs Housing Community public housing development is scheduled for an overhaul and the 700 families in residence there are fearful for the stability of their housing and changes in eligibility requirements. New punitive policies have been put in place to restrict access and/or remove people once eligible to receive public housing and Section 8.
- Despite the City of Los Angeles Housing Element calling for the construction of 8,000 public housing units annually—about half of those affordable to low-income people—the city falls well short of this goal every year.

Policing the Homeless in Skid Row

- Skid Row is home to between 13,000 and 15,000 residents; about 75% of them are African American, 95% are extremely low-income, and about one-third are currently homeless. (LA CAN)
- At the launch of Safer Cities Initiative (SCI), 50 additional uniformed officers were deployed to a 50-square block area (0.85 square miles) in Skid Row. (LA CAN)
- In the first year of SCI, LAPD issued about 12,000 citations, primarily for pedestrian violations—48 to 69 times the rate of citations issued City-wide. Citations given to homeless and other low-income people carry fines they cannot pay, and inevitably lead to arrest. (LA CAN)