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My name is Sam Jackson and I'm a resident of public housing in New Orleans. I've been living in New Orleans for 30 years. My wife and I raised our five children in public housing. For those who don't know, public housing is housing that the U.S. government provides to families that cannot afford housing in the private market.

Hurricane Katrina destroyed the city of New Orleans. My family and I were able to get out of the city before the flooding, but unfortunately many of our neighbors and friends were left behind. And, our government continues to leave them behind.

After the storm, the government decided to demolish most of the public housing in New Orleans. These were communities of families and friends who supported each other. The only thing we did wrong was being poor. We protested the destruction of our communities. Because we knew that if the city destroyed the public housing many of our family members, friends and neighbors wouldn't be able to return to New Orleans.

The funny thing is that the public housing buildings weren't badly damaged during the hurricane. In fact, they were some of the most solid structures in all of New Orleans. Yet, despite all of our protests, demonstrations, and pleas, in April of 2008 the city of New Orleans began bulldozing over 4,800 units of public housing.

Since Katrina, the homeless population in New Orleans has doubled. The rent has increased by at least 40%. And, the new plans for the city do NOT include one for one replacement of the public housing units they have destroyed. We asked our city officials, “Where are the poor people going to live?” And, honestly, they just don't care.

This is not just happening in New Orleans. This is happening to poor communities ALL across the United States. Under federal programs,

government officials in Chicago, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Las Vegas and San Diego, are demolishing public housing communities.

Since the beginning of the national H.O.P.E. VI program, over 63,000 units of public housing have been demolished all across the United States. This has increased homeless populations in these cities. Families including women and children are left to fend for themselves after the destruction of their public housing.

Although the United States is one of the richest countries in the world, our housing policy treats poor Americans as if they don't matter. By and large, U.S. housing policy is geared towards the private market and advancing corporate profits. With this current housing crisis, we see that this model does not work.

So I am working with public housing residents and groups across the United States to ensure that the voices of Hurricane Katrina survivors and the voices of poor people and communities across the United States are heard. I hope that through the work of my organization, May Day New Orleans, not just the city of New Orleans but the entire United States will recognize the need for housing policies that address the needs of poor people and guarantee the human right to housing for all.