

# Human Rights of Hurricane Survivors

## The Human Right to Housing: Access for Survivors in the Gulf

*All internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living. At the minimum, regardless of the circumstances, and without discrimination, competent authorities shall provide internally displaced persons with and ensure safe access to . . . basic shelter and housing.*  
— United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principle 18

*I think we need to be made whole... They should make us whole again in terms of being able to reestablish themselves... It's not really a handout, it's people are owed and the government needs to do something for them.*  
— 51 year-old grandmother from Louisiana<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Human rights standards define the basic obligations of a responsible government. These obligations include using available resources to provide access to the services and support necessary for people to live with dignity and freedom, which includes guaranteeing adequate housing, health, food, water and education.

Before the U.S. Gulf Coast was devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the region already had some of the highest indicators of poverty and human rights violations. In addition, despite consistently dire predictions of such a disaster, there was an extreme lack of preparedness for protecting the safety of residents. Long-term infrastructural neglect exacerbated the effects of an already catastrophic natural event. For instance, it has been known for decades that the levee flood protection system in New Orleans would not withstand a Category 4 or 5 hurricane.<sup>2</sup> The system suffered from inadequacies in concept, design, construction, operation and maintenance, and was run by local entities without direction from any national government body responsible for setting and ensuring compliance with appropriate safety standards. Neglect at every stage of developing the flood protection system resulted in massive failure and damage from hurricane Katrina.<sup>3</sup>

The level of responsibility shown by the government has not substantially changed. To date, neither national nor state government has demonstrated a commitment to respect and protect the human rights of people displaced by the hurricanes, in particular, the right to stable, secure and accessible housing. Consequently, survivors are still vulnerable and unable to recover. Many thousands are living without secure housing or support from the government. Low-income residents who wish to return are finding it extremely difficult to get help or access to necessary information. Authorities are rebuilding without the presence or participation of the most devastated communities. This reflects a blatant disregard of human rights that sends a message to families with few resources that their return is deemed undesirable, and that purging the region of the poor is by design.

### Where do Housing Rights Come From?

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for an Economic Bill of Rights that included recognition of the “right of every family to a decent home.”<sup>4</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also includes a human right to housing. It was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, through a unanimous vote by all member countries, including the U.S. Over time the rights contained in the Universal Declaration have been enshrined in the constitutions and legislation of most countries.<sup>5</sup> The right to housing has also been reaffirmed by several international treaties and declarations.<sup>6</sup>

*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care.*  
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 25(1)

## ***Are Housing Rights Protected in U.S. Domestic Laws?***

The U.S. passed the Housing Act of 1949, in which the government pledged to realize:

as soon as feasible . . . the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the nation.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to international law and federal law, at least twenty-five state constitutions provide the basis for a right to housing.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, despite these protections, millions of low-income Americans continue to spend more than half of their incomes on rent, live in severely substandard conditions, or have no home at all. Housing markets continue to be characterized by racial segregation and discrimination. Federal housing programs for the poor have been cut since the 1970s, and many who are eligible for housing assistance never receive this support.

Between 2.3 and 3.5 million Americans face homelessness every year, including 1.35 million children.<sup>9</sup> Given the rate of inflation, the actual income of many renter households is on the decline. However, rental prices have been rising in states across the country. Even prior to the hurricanes, the situation was particularly bleak in Mississippi and Louisiana: both states fared among the worst in the nation for affordability of rent relative to household incomes and among the highest percentage of renter households living in severely unaffordable conditions.<sup>10</sup>

## ***What are the Human Rights of U.S. Hurricane Survivors with Regard to Housing?***

The UN's Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons outline the fundamental human rights of survivors of natural disasters who are displaced within their own country. The U.S., through its foreign aid program, has called for "wider international recognition" of these principles as a "useful framework for dealing with internal displacement."<sup>11</sup>

These principles affirm:

- The right to basic shelter and housing
- The right to compensation and restitution, and
- The right to return or voluntary resettlement.

The principles also require that these rights be ensured:

- [W]ithout discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, language, legal or social status, property or any other relevant criteria.
- That the provision of shelter or housing to displaced populations preserve health, privacy and dignity.

Furthermore, these guidelines call upon the government to provide an opportunity for displaced survivors to ***participate in the relief and reconstruction efforts in their communities.***

As the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes, these obligations are relevant at ***all phases of displacement.*** Therefore, governments should provide displaced persons with housing until they can exercise their right to return to the place they are displaced from or resettle voluntarily in another location. This is the policy position the U.S. government has taken with regard to internally displaced persons outside the U.S.<sup>12</sup>

Respecting these basic human rights standards for internally displaced people is crucial to enable those displaced to reestablish their lives and minimize the threats to health, both physical and mental, following the disaster. Immediately after an event of enormous magnitude, it may not be possible to ensure all aspects of the right to housing. However, a wealthy country, like the U.S., which has both resources and the available administrative infrastructure (for example, existing housing voucher programs), should be able to ensure that those displaced obtain housing adequate to satisfy their needs within a short period of time and for as long as reasonably necessary.

### ***What Does Ensuring the Human Right to Housing Mean for Hurricane Survivors?***

At minimum, no hurricane survivor should be without a home and must be assisted to return or resettle elsewhere. During this process, the government has the obligation to ensure that transitional and long-term housing arrangements incorporate the key components of the right to housing, which include:

- **Security of tenure:** Displaced persons in any form of shelter, including rental and emergency housing, should be secure and protected from forced or arbitrary evictions, harassment and other threats.
- **Availability of services and facilities:** These must ensure health, security, comfort and nutrition. This includes sanitation facilities, access to energy for cooking, heating and lighting.
- **Affordability:** Transitional and long-term housing arrangements should be affordable and not threaten the satisfaction of other basic needs. Renters should be protected against unreasonable rental rates or increases.
- **Habitability:** This includes adequate space, physical and environmental safety, as well as protection from disease and from the elements. Residents should be able to pursue essential household activities, including care of children, the sick and the elderly, as well as cooking, eating and common gathering of the household.
- **Accessibility:** Emergency, transitional and long-term housing arrangements should be accessible to all those who are entitled to receive assistance. Special efforts should be made to ensure that persons who are elderly, disabled, physically or mentally ill, or otherwise vulnerable, receive support and assistance to access housing that meets their needs.
- **Location:** Housing should be located in a place with access to employment, health services, schools, and social facilities. Housing should also be located in an area where the health of the residents will not be at risk.
- **Cultural adequacy:** The housing arrangements should enable those displaced to reconnect with communities and cultural ties, so as to support communal coping strategies.<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to these standards, many displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have either been forced into homelessness, located far away from other family members and sources of income, or faced housing insecurity because of arbitrary cutoffs for emergency shelter and insufficient support for transitional assistance. The needs of low-income individuals and families, particularly those who were renters or did not have insurance for their homes, continue to go unaddressed. Moreover, local and national governments have not provided an adequate process for including the valuable perspective of those whose lives are intimately impacted by the hurricanes and the reconstruction process.

### ***How did the Hurricanes Impact Access to Affordable Housing in the Gulf?***

The hurricanes decimated affordable housing in the Gulf. They destroyed or damaged 302,000 housing units.<sup>14</sup> Seven out of ten of these units, or 216,000 units, were affordable to low-income households — three of which, representing 92,000 units, were affordable to very low-income households.<sup>15</sup> These disasters exacerbated the pre-existing affordable housing crisis in New Orleans. Before the hurricane, over 19,000 families were on the waiting list for Section 8 and public housing assistance in the city. Over 62,700 households in the New Orleans metropolitan area paid over 30 percent of their income on housing.<sup>16</sup> Katrina displaced up to 15,000 families living in public housing and 18,000 receiving housing choice voucher assistance in the Gulf Region.<sup>17</sup>

The hurricanes had a major impact on renters, particularly those who were low-income. Rental units constituted 47 percent of the housing units in the entire area affected by Hurricane Katrina and 55 percent of those in New Orleans. Katrina most likely destroyed approximately three-quarters of all affordable rental units for extremely low-income households in the affected areas of New Orleans.<sup>18</sup>

### ***What About the Hurricanes' Impact on Access to Health and Education?***

Human rights are indivisible, and all rights must be guaranteed in order for any one right to have meaning. For example, a home is only adequate if it allows for access to education for school age children, health care, transportation,

employment opportunities and a safe environment. In the areas of health care and education, there are glaring deficiencies in the services needed to guarantee a human right to housing for hurricane survivors. Using the example of New Orleans, despite predictably high need, there is still an incredible scarcity of functioning schools, health and counseling services, in addition to a lack of information and support to protect residents from environmental hazards.

### Education

As of February 2006, Acting New Orleans Superintendent, Ora Lee Watson, estimated that 2,000 school-age children were out of school in New Orleans for lack of available public school space. Furthermore, education, after-school and counseling services in most trailer camps range from nonexistent to abysmally inadequate.<sup>19</sup> Nearly one in four school-age children is either not enrolled in school or misses 10 days of class every month.<sup>20</sup>

### Health

In the Gulf Coast region, child health indicators like infant mortality and poverty rates were already among the highest in the country before the storms. According to a recent study by the Children's Health Fund, one in three children in shelters subsidized by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has at least one chronic illness requiring medical care. Half of the children with access to medical care before the storm no longer have it. Although nearly half the parents in shelters report that their children exhibit symptoms of emotional or behavioral disorders, the needed evaluation and treatment is almost impossible to secure. According to the same study, 44 percent of the adults have no health insurance, many because they lost their jobs after the storm, and nearly half were managing at least one chronic condition like diabetes, high blood pressure or cancer. Thirty-seven percent described their health as "fair" or "poor," compared with 10 percent before the hurricane.<sup>22</sup>

Yet as of February 2006, of the 160 clinics operating before Katrina, only 19 remain open and are operating below 50 percent capacity. There was a net loss of more than 6,000 health professionals,<sup>21</sup> and Charity Hospital, the 270-year-old institution which was the city's main source for health care for the poor, was closed due to hurricane damage and may not reopen. Prominent local physicians question whether the structural damage is the only motive for keeping Charity closed. They argue that the hospital could be up and running in very little time with repairs. The physicians charge that interests in privatizing Charity and limiting access for uninsured patients have blocked Charity from reopening its doors.

## ***What is the National and Local Government Done to Address the Housing Rights Crisis?***

### *Wasting Money and Refusing Cost-Effective Solutions*

According to an audit by the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general, in the first weeks after Katrina, FEMA spent \$900 million to buy 25,000 manufactured homes and 1,300 modular homes, most of which may not be usable because they do not meet size and safety requirements for flood zones. The agency also spent \$632 million on hotel vouchers for displaced families at an average cost of \$2,400 a month, ***three times what it later paid families to rent two-bedroom apartments***. In addition, the agency spent \$249 million to secure 8,136 cruise ship cabins for six months, at a cost that Inspector General Richard L. Skinner estimated at ***\$5,100 a month per passenger, which is six times the cost of renting two-bedroom apartments***.<sup>23</sup>

On the whole, ***Gulf Coast hurricane relief housing resources have been directed towards costly short-term solutions that do not meet the needs of internally displaced persons at the expense of more sustainable and permanent housing options that would meet people's needs***. The government has simply refused to adequately use the existing administrative and housing infrastructure, such as providing cost-efficient housing vouchers through the section 8 program<sup>24</sup> and relying on the existing housing market nationally. Instead the government has made indefensible decisions to waste funds through FEMA-administered temporary housing, like shelters, hotels, and cruise ships.

### *Threatening Public Housing*

Similarly indefensible decisions have been made with regard to housing in the affected areas. The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) administered housing for approximately 49,000 people through its public housing and voucher

programs before the hurricanes.<sup>25</sup> While public housing residents have repeatedly expressed their desire to return home and client assessments by the HANO indicate that 60 percent of families in public housing plan to return,<sup>26</sup> **most of the public housing complexes remain closed, and recently decisions were made to bulldoze 5,000 public housing units.**<sup>27</sup>

Less than 1,000 of New Orleans public housing residents have been able to return to their units. According to local housing advocates and former residents, as many as half of all public housing units could be rehabilitated in very little time.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, vacant apartments that suffered no water damage are being secured with steel locks, ensuring that residents cannot return. The HANO hired a Las Vegas company called Access Denied to seal the windows and doors of housing units for \$110 per door and \$55 per window.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, actions taken in the re-building process have also been equally counter-productive. Despite the severe lack of affordable housing, public housing is being exchanged for more upscale developments. For example, local authorities have announced that they are tearing down C.J. Peete Housing Complex and replacing it with “mixed income” homes. The model used for the development is the River Garden Community, a partially federally-financed mixed income development that replaced a public housing development several years prior to the storm. The new development featured luxury condominiums and a Wal-mart and was able to house only a small percentage of the prior residents.<sup>30</sup> Community activists also charge HANO with demonstrating callous disregard for people’s needs by leasing several acres of vacant land belonging to the public housing complex to Home Depot in a city where land is desperately needed for trailers and temporary housing.<sup>31</sup>

### ***How has Lack of Affordable Housing in the Gulf Impacted Survivors?***

Many low-income residents are now living stranded far away from their homes, families, and friends. Ms. Stephanie Mingo, a former resident of the St. Bernard Housing Project in New Orleans, who has been living in Houston with her five kids, describes her exasperation at the situation:

Why pay for a trailer for me when you could pay someone to clean up my unit, so I can come home? Just give me my home back! I have such a big hole in my heart, sometimes I just feel like dying so I won’t have any more problems. They don’t realize how much people are suffering.<sup>32</sup>

Ms. Mary Matthews, a 51-year old former resident of the B.W. Cooper Housing Development, who is on federal disability support, had to travel back and forth to New Orleans from Houston for two months until she was able to find an apartment that would accept her Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing voucher. She settled in Algiers outside of New Orleans and is awaiting word of when she might be able to move into her old home. She described the plight of her friends who had not yet been able to move back:

They need somebody to come down here and see what we need. There’s a lot of people who just cry all the time because they don’t want to be in the place they are. They miss their family, their children, their friends. I think they need to try to help us out more. I don’t think they’re doing enough. They’re worried about Mardi Gras, some event in May at the fair grounds, parties and stuff. . . They need to rebuild this place and get people back here and be around family. A lot of families can’t get together because they have no transportation and no information about where each other is at.<sup>33</sup>

As rental prices in the Gulf Region spiraled after the hurricanes, many tenants residing in low-income housing faced eviction months after the storm.<sup>34</sup> In Gretna, Louisiana, tenants of the Lewisberg Square Apartments were told they had to leave due to the hurricanes, even though the area received little storm damage. Tenants struggled to find alternative housing arrangements on very short notice. One tenant, Bertha Dugas, described the situation as follows:

We went to look for apartments, they want \$800, \$900, \$1,000 for one bedroom apartments. Where we going to live at? . . . Somebody—the mayor or President—has got to do something: what these people are doing to us is not right. We were born and raised here and it’s not our fault that the hurricane came here. . . . We can pay our rent, but not a lot of money. . . . We’re poor, we work, but we’re poor. . . . We will fight for our rights for our place. We don’t want to live on the street, we want to work. How am I going to work? I’m scared I’ll come home and my stuff be on the street.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of precarious living situations, many low-income residents have been organizing, with support from local activist groups, to demand their rights. Following a series of rallies that garnered media coverage, residents of the Iberville Housing Project, home to 200 families prior to the hurricanes, were allowed to move back to their homes.<sup>36</sup>

Residents of the Forest Park Apartments, an affordable housing development, collectively organized after receiving notices to vacate their apartments until repair work could be done. Fearing that the notices were a pretext for displacing low-income residents in order to raise rents, residents demanded—and received—written agreements that they would be guaranteed the right to move back to their former apartments after the renovations were completed at the same rent.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Protecting the Right to Affordable Housing in the Gulf for the Future***

*Population displacement can endure for a few days, several years, or even decades, creating a wide range of needs. Basic protection for at-risk populations requires attention during the immediate humanitarian response to population displacement as well as during the longer-term transition toward development and stability.*

—“Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Policy,” U.S. Aid for International Development

In its short-term and long-term policies and programs, government response to displacement must take into account the significant blow to the already limited affordable housing stock in the Gulf Region, as well as the limited resources and underlying vulnerabilities of the displaced population. At this point in time, this requires a reconstruction process that builds up affordable housing stock.

Unless a serious commitment is made to ensure the housing rights of low-income residents, many of them will never be able to afford to return. Federal agencies such as FEMA and HUD must take measures to guarantee stable, secure and adequate long-term housing without abrupt or arbitrary suspensions that may leave hurricane survivors at risk for homelessness. The human rights and well-being of survivors should not be sacrificed because of planning failures or the expense of costly temporary programs initiated without adequate provision for transition into long-term accommodations. If resources were either strategically appropriated with coordination between FEMA, HUD, and local authorities for long-term solutions, or targeted to rehabilitating existing housing stock, families would likely be facing fewer risks, hardships and grave violations of their human rights.

Finally, this brief has not addressed environmental concerns in the Gulf Coast, nor the deeply troubling question of whether the infrastructure, such as the levees in New Orleans, is strong enough to withstand future hurricanes like Katrina. These are serious considerations that also significantly impact the human right to housing.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> NESRI interview with former Gretna, LA resident. (April 17, 2006).
- <sup>2</sup> Fischetti, M. "Protecting New Orleans." *Scientific American*. (February 2006).
- <sup>3</sup> Seed, R.B., et al., "Preliminary Report on the Performance of the New Orleans Levee Systems in Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005", Report No. UCB/CITRIS-05/01, (November 17, 2005).
- <sup>4</sup> Roosevelt, Franklin D. State of the Union Address, available at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16518>. (January 11, 1944).
- <sup>5</sup> Sunstein, Cass and Randy Barnett. "Constitutive Commitments and Roosevelt's Second Bill of Rights," 53 *Drake Law Review* 205, 208-10, (Winter 2005). The UDHR is considered to be an "authoritative interpretation of the Charter of the United Nations" and "the common standard to which the legislation of all the Member States of the United Nations should aspire." Louis B. Sohn, *The New International Law: Protection of the Rights of Individuals Rather than States*, 32 AM. U.L. REV. 1, 15 (1982).
- <sup>6</sup> For example, see the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 11(1) "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing and to the continuous improvement of living conditions." The U.S. has signed but not ratified this Covenant. As a signatory, the U.S. is obligated not to defeat the object and purpose of the Covenant. Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, Art. 18.
- <sup>7</sup> The Housing Act of 1949, 42 U.S.C.A. § 1441.
- <sup>8</sup> For more information on the right to housing in U.S. domestic laws and state constitutions, see National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, "Homelessness in the United States and the Human Right to Housing", p. 45-56, available at <http://www.nlchp.org/Pubs/index.cfm?FA=7&TAB=0>. (January 14, 2004).
- <sup>9</sup> Foscarnis, Maria. "Provide More Housing Assistance," *The Press Enterprise*. (October 15, 2005).
- <sup>10</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. "Up Against A Wall: Housing Affordability for Renters", available at: <http://www.nlihc.org/pubs/index.htm#uaw>. (November 2004).
- <sup>11</sup> US AID Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Policy, U.S. Agency for International Development, (October 2004).
- <sup>12</sup> The U.S. government, while promoting the Guiding Principles as good policy, has to date, failed to recognize that they also reflect the fundamental human rights of those who are internally displaced.
- <sup>13</sup> The list of criteria was issued by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 4, para. 8. Our interpretation of their meaning in the post-disaster context draws upon the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Voluntary Standards for Disaster Response, which provides a set of core requirements suggested by international humanitarian relief organizations with extensive experience in post-disaster situations. Sphere Project, Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, p. 227-229, available at <http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/index.htm>.
- <sup>14</sup> Associated Press, "Shelters Mostly Empty but Housing Troubles Continue," *St Petersburg Times*, (October 16, 2005).
- <sup>15</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. "Hurricane Katrina's Impact on Low Income Housing Units", Research Note #05-02 p 1. (September 2005).
- <sup>16</sup> National Policy and Advocacy Committee on Homelessness, "Reconstruction After Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma – Housing Needs and Policy Recommendations," p. 1.
- <sup>17</sup> Paul, Brad. National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness, "Reconstruction After Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma – Housing Needs and Policy Recommendations".
- <sup>18</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, p. 1.
- <sup>19</sup> "Katrina's Children: A Call to Conscience and Action," Children's Defense Fund report, (April 4, 2006).
- <sup>20</sup> "Orphans of the Storm," *New York Times*, editorial by Irwin Redlener, (May 9, 2006).
- <sup>21</sup> "Responding to an Emerging Humanitarian Crisis in Louisiana and Mississippi: Urgent Need for a Health Care 'Marshall Plan,'" The Children's Health Fund and Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, (April 17, 2006). See also "After the Storm — Health Care Infrastructure in Post-Katrina New Orleans" Ruth E. Berggren, M.D., and Tyler J. Curiel, M.D., M.P.H., *Journal of American Medical Association*, Volume 354:1549-1552, (April 13, 2006).
- <sup>22</sup> "Responding to an Emerging Humanitarian Crisis in Louisiana and Mississippi: Urgent Need for a Health Care 'Marshall Plan,'" The Children's Health Fund and Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health (April 17, 2006). See also "Evacuee Study Finds Declining Health," *New York Times*, (April 18, 2006).
- <sup>23</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, "A Performance Review of FEMA's Disaster Management Activities in Response to Hurricane Katrina," available at [http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/OIG\\_06-32\\_Mar06.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/OIG_06-32_Mar06.pdf), (March 2006). "Waste in Katrina Response Is Cited," *Washington Post*, (April 14, 2006).
- <sup>24</sup> Section 8 Housing is a certificate and housing voucher program. While housing policy experts recommended the expansion of the Section 8 housing program to hurricane Katrina victims, FEMA instead opted to use its Individual's and Households Program (IHP) to provide an immediate payment of \$2,358 to cover three months rent for victims. This money is intended to secure permanent housing and FEMA has not clearly outlined the eligibility requirements that will need to be met in order to obtain further rental assistance. Another FEMA sponsored program, called the Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program (KDHP), is aimed at those families residing in Section 8 sponsored housing or those without housing before Katrina. The program shares the features of Section 8, yet provides lower monthly benefits.
- <sup>25</sup> From HANO's website, Frequently Asked Questions, <http://www.hano.org/FAQ.pdf>.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Walsh, Bill. "New Orleans Public Housing Still in Limbo," *Times-Picayune*, (March 28, 2006).
- <sup>28</sup> Based on NESRI interviews with housing advocates, see also Anya Kamenetz, "Black Out," *Village Voice* (December 1, 2005).
- <sup>29</sup> Filosa, Gwen. "Housing Holdout Faces Lockout: HANO to Seal Off Closed Complexes," *Times-Picayune* (November 15, 2005).
- <sup>30</sup> Lydersen, Kari. "New Orleans Public Housing Residents Set to Fight Off Developers," *The New Standard* (February 27, 2006).
- <sup>31</sup> NO-HEAT, "Home Depot Takes Over Land Used for Public Housing: Call to Action," available at <http://www.infoshop.org/inews/article.php?story=20060124131234664>. (January 24, 2006).
- <sup>32</sup> Lydersen, Kari. "New Orleans Public Housing Residents Set to Fight Off Developers," *The New Standard* (February 27, 2006).
- <sup>33</sup> NESRI interview with Ms. Mary Matthews, Member of Friends and Families of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC). (October 23, 2005).
- <sup>34</sup> "Stop the Illegal Removal of Public Housing Residents from New Orleans," posted on [NewOrleans.indymedia.org](http://NewOrleans.indymedia.org) (October 18, 2005), <http://www.neworleans.indymedia.org/news/2005/10/6004.php>, Associated Press, "Low-income Katrina Victims Face Eviction," available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12375321/>. (April 18, 2006).
- <sup>35</sup> NESRI interview with Ms. Bertha Dugas, tenant at Lewisberg Square apartments, available at <http://www.noheat.org>. (October 23, 2005).
- <sup>36</sup> Lydersen, Kari. "New Orleans Public Housing Residents Set to Fight Off Developers," *The New Standard*, (February 27, 2006).
- <sup>37</sup> Howells, Mike. Forest Park Apartment Residents Pressure Complex's Management into Concessions," (October 21, 2005), available at <http://www.neworleans.indymedia.org/news/2005/10/6054.php>; Michelle Chen, New Orleans' Displaced Struggle for Housing, Jobs, Neighborhoods, available at <http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/2514>. (October 21, 2005).

## **Additional resources on the Human Right to Housing:**

### **International Resources on the Right to Housing and Rights of Internally Displaced Persons**

Representative of the Secretary General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons  
[www.ohchr.org/english/issues/idp](http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/idp)

Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing  
[www.ohchr.org/english/housing/](http://www.ohchr.org/english/housing/)

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights  
[www.achr.net/](http://www.achr.net/)

Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (Geneva)  
[www.cohre.org/](http://www.cohre.org/)

Habitat International Coalition (India)  
[www.hic-net.org/](http://www.hic-net.org/)

### **Resources on the Right to Housing in the United States**

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty  
[www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)  
[www.nesri.org](http://www.nesri.org)

U.S. Human Rights Network  
[www.ushrnetwork.org](http://www.ushrnetwork.org)

National Fair Housing Alliance  
[www.nationalfairhousing.org](http://www.nationalfairhousing.org)

National Low Income Housing Coalition  
[www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

National Policy & Advocacy Committee on Homelessness  
[www.npach.org](http://www.npach.org)

Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Network  
[www.gnofairhousing.org/index.html](http://www.gnofairhousing.org/index.html)

### **Information, Research and Policy Resources on Hurricane Katrina**

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities  
[www.cbpp.org/pubs/katrina.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/pubs/katrina.htm)

Brookings Institution, Metropolitan Policy Program  
[www.brookings.edu/metro/katrina.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/metro/katrina.htm)

Children's Defense Fund  
[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

CommonHealth Action  
[www.commonhealthaction.org](http://www.commonhealthaction.org)

Katrina Information Network  
[www.katrinaaction.org](http://www.katrinaaction.org)

Katrina Legislative Tracking  
[www.katrinalegislation.blogspot.com](http://www.katrinalegislation.blogspot.com)

### **Service and Advocacy Organizations**

Common Ground Collective  
[www.commongroundrelief.org](http://www.commongroundrelief.org)

Mississippi Center for Justice  
[www.mscenterforjustice.org](http://www.mscenterforjustice.org), Phone: 601-352-2269

Oxfam America  
[www.oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/emergencies/hurricane\\_katrina](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/emergencies/hurricane_katrina)

Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights  
[www.msworkerscenter.org](http://www.msworkerscenter.org), Phone: 662-334-1122

New Orleans-Housing Emergency Action Team  
 Phone: 504-883-8225 or 504-717-7324

People's Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition  
[www.communitylaborunited.net](http://www.communitylaborunited.net), Phone: 504-301-0125