

## The Right to Adequate Housing in International Human Rights Law - Selected Bibliography

Terminski, Bogumil

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# **The Right to Adequate Housing in International Human Rights Law - Selected Bibliography**

prepared by Bogumil Terminski

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	3
BOOKS.....	4
CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES .....	4
ARTICLES IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS.....	7
WORKING PAPERS/ CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/ REPORTS... ..	10

## FOREWORD

In the past few years housing rights have become a major locus of activity in the field of economic and social human rights. The growing importance of this particular area of human rights is reflected not only in a rapidly increasing number of professional publications, studies, and reports dealing with this subject, but primarily in significantly more distinct actions undertaken by international organizations and humanitarian institutions. Decisions made under the aegis of the United Nations system play a leading role in the protection of housing rights, especially in the form of discussions at the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Economic and Social Council, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP), and the United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-HABITAT), operating since 1976. In April 2000, the UN Commission on Human Rights established the mandate of a Special Rapporteur on adequate housing. Activities conducted for the purpose of strengthening housing rights are also related to regional intergovernmental organisations (e.g. Council of Europe, the African Union, and the Organisation of American States) and numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including humanitarian profiles (such as the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions-COHRE, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, and others).

Why have housing rights become in recent years such an important area under the rubric of the international protection of human rights? The answer to this question appears simple, but only at a superficial level. Without going into details, it is necessary to take into account several issues.

The most prominent catalyst for the development of housing rights in the last several decades was an increase in world population, and simultaneously the increased rate of urbanization. In the 70s of the twentieth century, the planet's population was a little over three billion people; this figure is now near 6.8 billion. The disparities in standards of living between different parts of the world have become significantly stronger, which translates to urbanization. Poverty clusters (also known as slums or favelas) are growing in certain nations, and the phenomenon of homelessness is more present than ever. Numerous national as well as international armed conflicts account for some violations of fundamental housing rights. Growing scale of social exclusion and marginalization of the poorest in many regions of the world is not unfortunately accompanied by attempts of solving systematically the problem of housing.

Secondly, housing rights are one of the most fundamental rights for the development of every human being. For each person on the planet, home is an essential space for the realization of social ties. Psychologists point out that adequate housing is a key component in the proper functioning of the family. Without adequate guarantees regarding this matter (as well as the will of state authorities to take care of the issue), it is very hard to implement not only social and cultural rights but also some basic civil and political rights. At the present time, we can consider homelessness or unacceptable housing conditions as the primary factor limiting proper human functioning in surrounding communities. The strong relationship between difficult

housing conditions and the increase of crime rate in many regions of the world is well-known.

This bibliography highlights works relating to right to adequate housing. The entries are divided by type: 1. books, 2. chapters in edited vollumes; 3. journal articles and 4. research papers, conference papers, and reports. While not a comprehensive bibliography, the first two sections list approximately 100 references.

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