

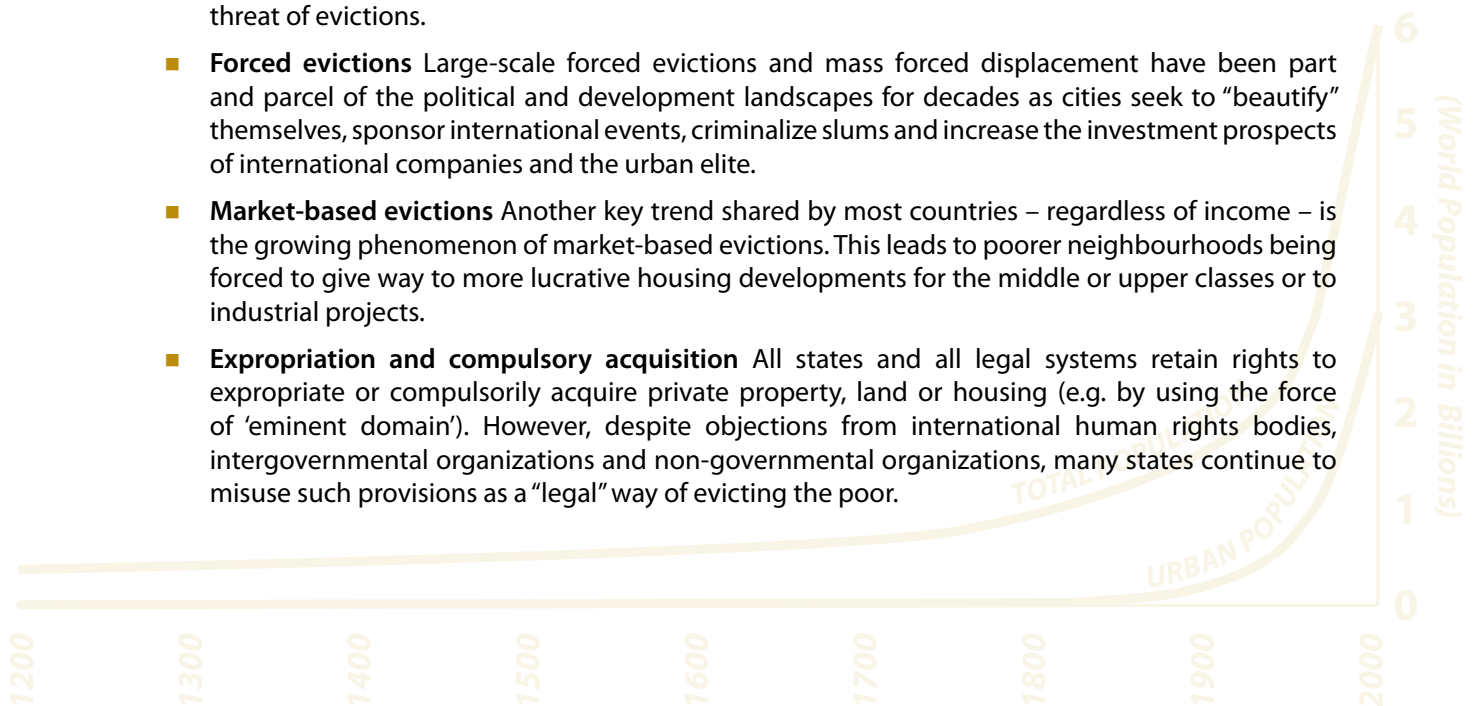
## SECURE TENURE *at a glance*

### Security of Tenure

Few issues are as central to the objective of adequate housing for all as security of tenure. Poverty and inequality remain the key determinants of vulnerability from tenure insecurity. Generally, the poorer a person or household is, the less security of tenure they are likely to enjoy. The UN-HABITAT report *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements 2007* details the issue of tenure security and how its absence affects millions of people all over the world.

While approaches towards achieving this objective vary widely, it is clear that virtually all commentators agree that secure tenure is a vital ingredient in any policy designed to improve the lives of those living in informal settlements throughout the world. Some of the key issues the report highlights on security of tenure are:

- **What is security of tenure?** A whole range of tenure types may offer security of tenure. On a simplified level, any type of tenure can be said to belong to one of six broad categories – namely, freehold, leasehold, conditional freehold ('rent to buy'), rent, collective forms of tenure and communal tenure. All of these categories may provide various degrees of security.
- **Measuring security of tenure** Despite the fact that an individual's, household's or community's security of tenure is central to the enjoyment of basic human rights and sustainable development, there are currently no global tools or mechanisms in place to monitor security of tenure.
- **Scales and impacts of tenure insecurity** Reliable and comparative data on the scale of tenure insecurity are globally non-existent, but few would argue against the fact that the number of slum dwellers is growing, not declining. UN-HABITAT estimates show that the total slum population in the world increased from 715 million in 1990 to 913 million in 2001.
- **Scale and impacts of eviction** While insecure tenure is experienced by many as a very real fear, the real outcomes include the inability or unwillingness to improve dwellings because of the constant threat of evictions.
- **Forced evictions** Large-scale forced evictions and mass forced displacement have been part and parcel of the political and development landscapes for decades as cities seek to "beautify" themselves, sponsor international events, criminalize slums and increase the investment prospects of international companies and the urban elite.
- **Market-based evictions** Another key trend shared by most countries – regardless of income – is the growing phenomenon of market-based evictions. This leads to poorer neighbourhoods being forced to give way to more lucrative housing developments for the middle or upper classes or to industrial projects.
- **Expropriation and compulsory acquisition** All states and all legal systems retain rights to expropriate or compulsorily acquire private property, land or housing (e.g. by using the force of 'eminent domain'). However, despite objections from international human rights bodies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, many states continue to misuse such provisions as a "legal" way of evicting the poor.



## Major causes of large-scale evictions

- **Infrastructure projects** Millions of people are evicted every year as a result of the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects,
- **International mega events** International mega events, including global conferences and international sporting events such as the Olympic Games, are often the rationale behind large-scale evictions.
- **Urban beautification** Evictions are also commonly carried out in the name of urban beautification, or simply cleaning up a city, often in conjunction with investment inducements.

## Groups particularly vulnerable to tenure insecurity

- **The urban poor** Poverty and inequality remain the key determinants of vulnerability from tenure insecurity. Generally, the poorer a person or household is, the less security of tenure they are likely to enjoy.
- **Tenants** If there is any particular group of urban dwellers who is under-protected and under-emphasized and frequently misunderstood, it is surely the world's tenants and the numbers could be in billions.
- **Women** Beyond the trends of increasing poverty and inequality, continued discrimination against women also contributes to tenure insecurity and resultant forced evictions.
- **Other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups** Such groups include children (including orphans, abandoned children, street children and those subjected to forced/child labour), the elderly, the chronically ill and disabled, indigenous people, members of ethnic and other minorities, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrant workers, and many others.

## Policy responses to tenure insecurity

- **Upgrading and regularization** Slum upgrading and tenure regularization are perhaps the most common policy responses to illegal settlements throughout the developing world.
- **Titling and legalization** During the last few years there has been an increasing focus on titling to achieve the goal of security of tenure for all.
- **Land administration and registration** The question of land administration and registration is also vital in any attempt aimed at ensuring that security of tenure will best serve the interests of the urban and rural poor.
- **Legal protection from forced eviction** Various debates have been under way within the human rights community on related questions, focusing primarily on the issue of forced evictions and the human rights and security of tenure impacts that this can have upon the urban poor.
- **Addressing violations of security of tenure rights** Development of effective remedies for the prevention and redress of violations of economic, social and cultural rights, including security of tenure, has been slow, several developments in recent years have added to the seriousness given to these rights and are graphic evidence of the direct linkages between human rights and security of tenure.

## International and Civil society responses to security of tenure and forced evictions

- A growing number of non-governmental organizations at international, national and local levels have recently become involved in efforts to support the provision of security of tenure and opposing forced evictions. In addition to the numerous efforts of civil society actors, a range of international organizations have also been focusing increasing attention on security of tenure in recent years.