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Vital to ensure human rights in post-conflict, post-disaster rebuilding – UN expert



UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing Raquel Rolnik

8 March 2011 – An independent United Nations expert today stressed the need to ensure that human rights standards, particularly the right to adequate housing, are included in post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction processes.

“This has disastrous consequences, particularly for the most vulnerable,” Raquel Rolnik, the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, [said](#) in her annual report to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council.

This is “particularly alarming when we know that armed conflicts and natural disasters are not only a massive but a growing problem worldwide,” she added.

Ms. Rolnik emphasized that “the impact of conflicts and disasters should not be measured simply in terms of physical assets destroyed and people displaced but also and perhaps primarily in terms of the extent of disruption of social relationships, networks and assets.”

The issue of access to land warranted special attention, according to the Special Rapporteur. “The most vulnerable are very often displaced from the land they were living in before disasters or conflicts to open the way for real estate projects,” she noted. “No institutional or financial provision for either the acquisition of well located land for the landless or to create more secure rights for the vulnerable population in situ are usually provided.”

Ms. Rolnik called for a system of rapid assessment and analysis of pre-existing tenure and property rights in the immediate aftermath of a disaster or conflict, to guide all urgent steps taken to protect the right to adequate housing and tenure security of all, but particularly the poorer and marginalized members of society.

She urged all relevant actors to ensure the effective consultation and direct participation of affected communities in the design and implementation of post-conflict and post-disaster responses, particularly on matters of housing and land.

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