

LEGISLATING THE RIGHT TO HOUSING IN CANADA

The UN has stated that Canada must adopt a "human-rights based national strategy on housing and ensure that all provincial and territorial housing strategies are aligned with the national strategy." The strategy must include "measurable goals and timetables, consultation and collaboration with affected communities, complaints procedures, and transparent accountability mechanisms."

We call on the Government of Canada to ensure that the National Housing Strategy legislation meet the following minimum criteria:

- 1 Recognition of adequate housing as a fundamental human right.
- 2 A mechanism to provide hearings into systemic violations of the right to housing and to ensure effective remedies.
Ensuring the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate and National Housing Council are independent, adequately resourced and given authority to make recommendations and require remedial action for compliance with the right to housing.
- 3 An adjudication body which includes both experts in human rights and persons with lived experience of homelessness or inadequate housing, to hold accessible hearings into systemic issues affecting the progressive realization of the right to housing and to recommend effective remedies.
- 4 A goal of ending homelessness in Canada by 2030 and of progressively realizing the right to adequate housing for all in as short a time as possible.
- 5 Rights-based participation by, and accountability to, diverse individuals and communities affected by homelessness and inadequate housing, in all NHS mechanisms.
- 6 Initiatives to identify and address the distinctive barriers, needs and rights of Indigenous peoples co-developed and negotiated on the basis of Inuit-to-Crown, government-to-government, nation-to-nation relationships and with urban, rural and northern Indigenous people, communities, organizations, and institutions.
- 7 Provision of resources and support for local lived-experienced-led monitoring of NHS programmes and for community initiatives to promote the right to adequate housing engaging all levels of government.
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Across Canada, 1.7 million people are in housing need, living in homes that are inadequate or unaffordable.

Homelessness and inadequate housing disproportionately affect people with disabilities, women-headed households, and members of racialized and immigrant communities.

28-34% of the shelter population is Indigenous, compared with 4.3% of the Canadian population.

On any given night in Canada, 3,491 women and their 2,724 children sleep in shelters because of domestic abuse.

Mass homelessness in Canada emerged in the 1980s, following a massive disinvestment in affordable housing, structural shifts in the economy and reduced spending on social supports