

Ms. Raquel Rolnik
Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate
Housing
Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Via Fax: +41-22-917-90-08

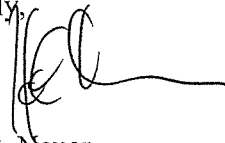
22 July 2010

Dear Ms. Rolnik,

Please find enclosed our joint NGO appeal for the 18,000 victims of forced eviction by the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. We urge you to take immediate action.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director

Enclosure

UNITED NATIONS WATCH

1, rue de Varembé, Case Postale 191, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 734 1472 / Fax: +41 22 734 1613 / www.unwatch.org

**JOINT NGO APPEAL FOR 18,000 VICTIMS OF
FORCED EVICTION BY 2010 SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO**

22 July 2010

Dear UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,
Dear UN Habitat Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka,
Dear UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing Raquel Rolnik,

We urge you to investigate the forced eviction of 18,000 families to make way for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, China, which is running now through October, and to take action to redress the serious violations of human rights inflicted upon them.

The Shanghai Expo's slogan is "Better City, Better Life." This is supposed to represent the common wish of humankind for better living in future urban environments. Yet all of this is lost on the thousands of victims who were forcibly removed from their homes—without compensation or fair notice—in order to make room for the exposition. Many of the evicted have since been detained by the Chinese government. Others are kept under close surveillance and intimidated into silence. We are further alarmed by the reported mistreatment and intimidation of a group of women housing activists who have been prevented from leaving their homes.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, under Article 12, guarantees that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his home. Article 25 guarantees the right to adequate housing. Article 17 guarantees that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property. Articles 19 and 20 guarantee the right to peaceful protest. All of these rights appear to have been grossly violated in this case, creating a situation that requires the United Nations—and specifically your offices—to investigate and intervene.

This responsibility is particularly acute given that the United Nations itself, as you know, is actually a major participant in the Shanghai Expo, being the sponsor of a 32,000-square-foot pavilion. In fact, it is UN Habitat, the agency on urban development, which is coordinating the world body's presence at the Expo. Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka herself opened the pavilion.

Our global civil society coalition calls your attention to such victims as Ms. Hu Yan, whose home was forcibly demolished in 2005 to clear land for the Expo. She petitioned the Chinese government to address her forced eviction but was met with ridicule, intimidation, and harassment. She left China in April 2010 and has held a daily vigil outside UN Headquarters calling for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to hear her case. Her letter to the Secretary-General is attached.

Ms. Yan also petitioned Under-Secretary-General Anna Tibaijuka, the director of UN Habitat, asking for an explanation as to "how the United Nations and UN Habitat, organizations with missions to improve the lives and dignity of human beings, can not only participate in such degradation of humanity but actually praise it." (Letter attached.)

Moreover, Chinese human rights activist and Tiananmen Square survivor Yang Jianli has also written to Under-Secretary General Tibaijuka (letter attached), noting that the 18,000 families were forcibly evicted “without fair compensation or any due process for redressing their grievances.” The ground upon which the Shanghai Expo structures sit, he wrote, is “littered with the pulverized remains of the homes and hopes of citizens who were forcibly evicted to make room for these projects.”

We urge you to exercise your United Nations responsibilities to investigate and redress the grave violations caused to these 18,000 innocent families. They deserve justice, fair compensation and the restoration of their dignity.

Sincerely,

Hillel C. Neuer, Executive Director, UN Watch, Switzerland
Jim Geheran, Director, Initiatives for China, USA
Nguyễn Lê Nhân Quyên, Delegate, Vietnamese League for Human Rights, Switzerland
William F. Mei, President, Asia-Pacific Human Rights Foundation, USA
Zohra Yusuf, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan
Ibrahima Niang, Human Rights Commission, Mouvement Citoyen of Senegal, Senegal
Amina Bouayach, Présidente, l'OMDH, Morocco
Abdurashid Abdulle Abikar, Chairman, Center for Youth and Democracy, Somalia
John J. Suarez, Human Rights Director, Directorio Democrático Cubano, USA
Alim Seytoff, Director, Uyghur American Association, USA
Michael Craig, Chair, China Rights Network, Canada
Fengsuo Zhou, President, Chinese Democracy Education Foundation, USA
Guelord Mbaenda, Executive Director, ADECOP, Democratic Republic of Congo
Jonathan Cao, President, Coalition for Citizens Rights, USA
Omar Lopez, Director, Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba, USA
Fatiha Azzabi, Director, Africa Women in Development, Germany
Jiehmei Li, Officer, Deng Liberty Foundation, Taiwan
Naomi Ichihara Røkkum, VP, International Federation of Liberal Youth, Norway
Dr. Sev Ozdowski, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Univ. of Sydney, Australia
Dr. Ahmed Subhy Mansour, President, The International Quranic Center, USA
Nathaniel Ngwu, Officer, Legal Resources Consortium, Nigeria
Dickson M. David Ntwiga, Executive Director, Solidarity House International, Kenya
Mamadi Kaba, President, Raddho-Guinee, Guinea
C. Gautam, Nepal International Consumers Union, Nepal
Harris O. Schoenberg, President, UN Reform Advocates, USA
Bell Wong, President, Alliance for a Democratic China, USA
Fei Liangyong, President, Federation for a Democratic China, Germany
Huang Hebian, President, Allies of the Guard of Canadian Values, Canada
Nazanin Afshin-Jam, President and Co-Founder, Stop Child Executions, Canada
Christina Fu, President, New Hope Foundation, USA
Kok Ksor, President, Montagnard Foundation, USA
Obinna Egbuka, President, Youth Enhancement Organization, Nigeria
Rev. Bob Fu, Founder and President, China Aid Association, USA
Sharon Gustafson, President, International Council of Jewish Women, USA
Wang Shujun, President, Hu Yaobang & Zhao Ziyang Memorial Foundation, USA
Aleksander Smolar, Chairman, Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland
Eliel Masson, Secretary General, ARTZA-Switzerland, Switzerland
Anne Shay, PBVM, Lismore Presentation Congregation, Australia



June 4, 2010

Dr. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director
UN Habitat
First Avenue at 46th Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Madam Under Secretary:

My name is Hu Yan. I am a Chinese Citizen, a mother, and one of 18000 evictees who were forcibly evicted, without compensation, from our homes to clear land for the Shanghai Expo at which your recently spoke.

I have petitioned the authorities in Shanghai and Beijing for more than five years to address the forced eviction of my family from our home in Shanghai. During these five years, I have received nothing but ridicule and further intimidation from my government. As a last resort, I left China in May to take my case to the United Nations. My letter to the Secretary General is attached. Since May, I have been holding a daily vigil in Ralph Bunche Park across the street from the UN Headquarters.

You can imagine my despair when I learned of your speech at the inaugural ceremonies for the UN Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo. Forgive my lack of understanding, but I cannot comprehend how you can award such praise to authorities that behave with such malice and with such disdain for the very people that they are supposed to protect.

I know longer know where to turn for justice. Please explain to me how the United Nations and the UN HABITAT, organizations with missions to improve the lives and dignity of human beings, can not only participate in such degradation of humanity but to actually praise it. I, my family, and 18000 of my fellow citizens await your reply.

Sincerely,

Yu Han



June 7, 2010

Dr. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director
UN-HABITAT New York Office
Two United Nations Plaza
Room DC2-0943
New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.

Dear Under-Secretary General:

I am Yang Jianli, a Harvard Fellow, Kennedy School of Government and President of Initiatives for China. I read with great interest your remarks opening the Shanghai Expo's United Nations Pavilion. They were inspirational in their hope of "better cities, better life" for the urban citizens of the 21st Century.

Understandably, such ceremonial speeches must be dressed with a certain amount of hyperbole to adorn the occasion. However, even with this consideration, I am profoundly concerned with your glowing tribute to the government of China and the municipality of Shanghai for "*accommodating the UN system here, and for making the dream of a wonderful Expo a reality that just takes the breath away!*" At best, this is a surreal distortion of the noble principles of the United Nations, especially of UN HABITAT, the very organization you lead and whose mission is to improve the lives of citizens around the world.

I respectfully submit that no exhibition, no city, no government, however grand its design, deserve such praise when the very ground upon which its structures sit is littered with the pulverized remains of the homes and hopes of citizens who were forcibly evicted to make room for these projects. It has long been an established tenet of civilized societies that the end does not justify the means.

It is a matter of fact that the land upon which the Expo rests and upon which you stood, was home to 18000 families who were forcibly evicted without fair compensation or any due process for redressing their grievances. This is the reality that takes my breath away. The forced evictions that cleared the way for the Shanghai Expo mirror the plight of 300,000 citizens of Beijing who were forcibly evicted for the 2008 Olympic "beautification projects." In fact, forced evictions, and "land grabbing" by government officials in collusion with local developers, account for over 80% of citizen petitions to the Chinese government. The overwhelming majority of these petitions are either ignored or subject the petitioners to further harassment.

I am confident as the executive director of UN HABITAT that you are committed to the ideals of "better cities, better life." It is with this confidence in mind that I respectfully request a meeting with you and a contingent of Shanghai evictees in the spirit of promoting a better understanding of the mission of UN HABITAT and explore how we might truly make "better cities, better life" a true reality for the citizens of China.

Sincerely,

Initiatives for China 公民力量
Gong Min Li Liang

Yang Jianli
President

533 Fifth Street NE Washington, DC 20002 202.290.1423
www.initiativesforchina.org

Complete Text of Hu Yan's Letter to the UN Secretary General

Dear Honorable UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon:

My name is Yan Hu, and I come from Shanghai, China. As the Chinese government seriously violated the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in the process of hosting the 2010 World Expo by depriving me and tens of thousands of Shanghai residents of our human rights and private properties, and that I have exhausted all legal means in China, seeking justice in vain, and that I was advised by officials of the Shanghai government to petition the United Nations, I am herein appealing to you for justice.

1. Facts and Evidence. On Dec 29, 2005, my house that I inherited from my parents and grandparents was forcibly demolished by the Shanghai government to clear space for the 2010 World Expo. My personal property was also crushed to pieces during the demolition, and my family received no compensation at all for my demolished home.
2. The Shanghai government has not only been robbing Shanghai residents of their private properties, but also has been persecuting and cracking down on those residents and their families petitioning for their rights. My husband, Bin Jiang, has been continuously defending our right to private property. The Shanghai government has been intimidating our family, tapping our phones, following us wherever we go, and has been detaining my husband under non-existent charges. My family has been living in fear.
3. The Shanghai government directed my work unit to persecute me. The company I worked for has been threatening me, deducting money from my salary and bonuses, depriving me of my right to work and promotion; I was hurt mentally and physically, and in the end, I am having serious mental problems.
4. In China, the government has blocked me from seeking justice by all legal means, and if I went to petition in Beijing, I would be subjected to more serious persecution! The Shanghai government has become an "independent kingdom", and it does not care about the central government at all. The government asked me to petition to the United Nations. I have no choice but to come here to tell you the truth about the "Shanghai World Expo", and to tell the international world that thousands of Shanghai residents have lost their homes to forcible demolition and are persecuted relentlessly.
5. The 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, hosted by the Chinese government, is acknowledged and supported by the United Nations; the Exhibition Hall of the United

Nations at the World Expo is provided by the host free of charge. 33 international projects of the UN will be exhibited there. For this reason, I herein appeal to you, the Honorable UN Secretary General, to urge the Shanghai government to return my looted private property to me, and to stop persecuting those Shanghai residents who lost their homes to forcible demolition and relocation as a result of the 2010 World Expo, and who had no choice but to go on petitioning in vain for their private property looted by the Shanghai government!

Respectfully,

Yan Hu

Refugee of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo