

HOUSING RIGHTS

In all previous cycles, Kazakhstan has not received any recommendations regarding housing rights and homelessness. This is not because there are no issues in Kazakhstan, but because nobody has paid attention to housing rights and homelessness. We are the first from Kazakhstan to present a report on these topics. It is very important for us to be the voice of a new generation of human rights defenders.

Kazakhstan interprets the right to housing merely as an obligation to implement housing programs and views housing as a commercial product. I need to focus on the most serious human rights violation – forced evictions. One of the major issues is the lack of accurate and unified statistics on the number of forced evictions in the country, which often happen without court orders.

Forced evictions can take place under extremely harsh conditions for residents. These evictions are often carried out at night, during holidays, in extreme weather conditions like severe cold or heat, and with the involvement of the police. The police degrade human dignity and enforce one-hour evictions, throwing personal belongings onto the street.

WE RECOMMEND

- Establish safeguards against forced evictions, making sure they happen only with a court order and are reasonable for the purpose of the eviction.

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HOMELESSNESS

Homeless individuals in Kazakhstan face persecution, harassment, and discrimination because of their housing status.

There are no reliable statistics on homelessness in Kazakhstan. National shelters register between 10,000 and 15,000 homeless people each year, but the real numbers are much higher. Homeless shelters have limited funding, so they can't accommodate everyone in need. As a result, many homeless individuals are forced to spend nights on the streets in extreme conditions, such as freezing temperatures, often leading to deaths or chronic illnesses. Shelters allow only a one-year stay, after which no help is provided, and homeless people end up back on the streets over and over.


Homelessness is criminalized in Kazakhstan. The Ministry of Internal Affairs arrests homeless individuals to check their documents and places them in special places under police departments for 30 days. These are special operations that take place several times a year.

In 2020, the Ministry reported the detention of 5,500 homeless individuals during a single special operation over three days. After that, the Ministry has refused to publish new information. The latest special operation took place in October of this year, and homeless individuals remain in detention without charges to this day.

Police relocate homeless individuals outside city limits during big and major events to create a "clean and beautiful" image for foreign investors and visitors. This often leaves them stranded on streets or in open fields, without access to water, food, or basic necessities.

WE RECOMMEND

- Repeal laws that criminalize homelessness.
- Take effective steps to prevent homelessness, including a National Program to End Homelessness.

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