

Forced evictions for Commonwealth Games violated human rights

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New Delhi, Feb 7 (IANS) Forced eviction of people from their homes because of the 2010 Commonwealth Games seriously violated their rights and even led to the deaths of some people, a report said Monday.

The irony is that most of the sites of forced eviction covered by the report are lying vacant or unused.

Former Delhi High Court chief justice A.P. Shah, who released the report by NGO Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), said that there has been 'failure of the political and legal system' to investigate, try and prosecute officials who violated human rights.

The HLRN fact-finding mission covered 19 sites in Delhi from where the government 'forcibly' evicted families because of the Commonwealth Games, 'for reasons ranging from construction of infrastructure to security and city beautification'.

One of the major findings of the report, titled 'Planned Dispossession: Forced Evictions and the 2010 Commonwealth Games', was that there was no notice sent of demolition of houses in 16 of the 19 sites.

Among the sites mentioned are ones in east Delhi opposite the Commonwealth Games Village and opposite the Thyagaraja Stadium in south Delhi. There were no public hearings conducted and no information given before the eviction.

'There were several cases of injury and at least three deaths reported during the process of forced eviction in Delhi,' the report said.

Meanwhile, the evicted families have not been compensated or rehabilitated, as a result of which they continue to languish.

In its recommendations, the report said that the Delhi government should take immediate measures to provide adequate housing and security of tenure to all communities living in inadequate conditions, including in slums and informal settlements.

'Most of the sites of forced eviction covered in the report are currently lying vacant and unused. The government should make provisions to enable communities to return to their original sites in safety and build houses that meet international standards of safety,' it added.

Based on field work and research, HLRN estimated that at least 200,000 people in Delhi have been forcibly evicted since 2004 as a result of the CWG.

The Commonwealth Games took place Oct 3-14 last year.