



Ensuring housing affordability, ending homelessness: A global challenge

Side-event - 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council
5 March 2024, 13:00-14:00 CET, Room XXV, Palais des Nations, Geneva

In presence with hybrid interventions via Webex
Follow the event virtually [here](#).

Affordability is a key element of the right to adequate housing. Today, however, more and more people around the world are struggling to pay for housing-related costs or are excluded from housing as it has become too expensive. The affordability crisis has been triggered by many factors, including rising inflation, hikes in interest and mortgage rates, climate and conflict-induced displacement, the financialization of housing, or policies that resulted in a shrinking social or public housing stock. Guided by the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing on housing affordability (A/78/192), experts will discuss what can be done to make housing affordable, protect tenants from rising rents and housing costs, and to prevent and end homelessness.

Welcome:

- **H.E. Ms. Tiina Jortikka-Laitinen**, Ambassador for Human Rights of Finland

Speakers:

- **Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal**, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing
- **Mr. Dan Nicander**, Secretary-General, International Union of Tenants (IUT)
- **Ms. Teija Ojankoski**, CEO, Y-Foundation
- **Mr. Indu Prakash Singh**, Facilitator, CityMakers Mission International
- **Mr. Rodrigo Faria G. Iacovini**, Executive Director, Pólis Institute

Closing:

- **H.E. Ms. Julia Imene-Chanduru**, Ambassador of Namibia (TBC)

Moderation:

- **Ms. Anh Thu Duong**, Global Cities Hub, Geneva



Link to the report:

<https://undocs.org/A/78/192>



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
SPECIAL PROCEDURES
SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS, INDEPENDENT EXPERTS & WORKING GROUPS



International Union of Tenants



GLOBAL
CITIES HUB
— GENEVA



Mr. **Balakrishnan Rajagopal** is the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing. He is professor of law and development at the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Last year, Mr. Rajagopal presented a report on housing affordability to the General Assembly (A/78/192). Mr. Rajagopal was also member of the academic advisory committee to inform the UN Secretary-General's report on inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness ([A/78/236](#)).



Mr. **Dan Nicander** is the Secretary General of the International Union of Tenants (IUT), representing 74 tenant unions in 51 countries. He previously held the role of Chairman of the Housing Policy Working Group at IUT, and was the regional manager of Hyresgästföreningen, the Swedish Union of Tenants. He holds a Bachelor's degree in business administration and economics, with a specialization in social and economic geography.



Ms. **Teija Ojankoski** is the CEO of the Y-Foundation, which is running a successful Housing First programme to reduce homelessness in Finland. She has over 20 years of experience in management and leadership in the field of social housing and homelessness. Before Ms. Ojankoski was the CEO of a rental housing company and worked as a Director of the Housing Department in the City of Vantaa.



Dr. **Indu Prakash Singh** is the Facilitator of CityMakers Mission International. A human rights defender, he has been at the forefront in promoting the rights of persons in situations of homelessness, whom he calls City Makers, and women's rights in India. He is the author of the applauded book 'CityMakers', which analyses urban development in India from the point of view of persons living in homelessness. He is a petitioner on homeless matters at the Supreme Court of India.

Mr. **Rodrigo Faria G. Iacovini** is the Executive Director of Pólis Institute, a Brazilian civil society organization with more than 35 years devoted to the right to adequate housing and the right to the city. A Brazilian lawyer and urban planner, he holds a PhD in Regional and Urban Planning from the University of São Paulo. He formerly worked at the Brazilian Institute of Urban Law, the Global Platform for the Right to the City, and was assistant of former UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik.