



Quick Facts: Shelter and Human Rights

Close your eyes, and imagine what it would be like to flee your home land. When you arrive in a safe country, you find yourself without a roof, without a place to sleep for the night, without the most basic shelter. Imagine you had to live like this for weeks or months. What kind of impact would this have on the rest of your life?

Shelter is important because it protects us from the elements, provides us with a basic sense of security, and a place for our families to interact. But it is also linked to many other aspects of what we consider "normal life": privacy, independence, dignity, safety. Shelter is fundamental to the enjoyment of many human rights.

Lack of adequate shelter affects, directly or indirectly, all of these other rights:

- Right to an adequate standard of living
- Right of access to safe drinking water and sanitation
- Right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- Right to a safe and healthy environment
- Right of the child to an environment appropriate for physical and mental development
- Right of access to resources, including for cooking, heating and lighting
- Right to freedom from discrimination in access to housing and related services based on sex, race or any other status
- Right to choose where and how to live and to freedom of movement
- Right to privacy
- Right to security, including security of tenure
- Right to protection from forced eviction and from the destruction/demolition of one's home in all situations, including military occupation, armed conflict, establishment and construction of alien settlements, population transfer and development projects
- Right to equal protection of the law and judicial remedies for the redress of the violation of the human right to adequate housing.