

April 29, 2020

Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger  
President  
United Nations Human Rights Council  
Geneva, Switzerland  
(via email: [hrcpresidency@un.org](mailto:hrcpresidency@un.org))

Your Excellency,

The undersigned civil society organizations urge you to ensure that the rights of people who are living in poverty, and of people experiencing homelessness, are explicitly referenced in the draft Human Rights Council resolution on the human rights implications of the COVID-19 crisis.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic is having a catastrophic impact on millions of people around the world, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in our societies, who are suffering the worst of and will undoubtedly be the last to recover from this global health and economic crisis. Too many will not even survive the pandemic. We strongly believe, and we have no doubt you agree, that the international human rights system should leave no one behind when it comes to guaranteeing universal human rights. The U.N. Human Rights Council is responsible for ensuring that these rights are protected and enforced at all times, without discrimination - an imperative in times of global crisis.

Several U.N. human rights bodies have emphasized that certain communities face heightened threats as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically people living in poverty and individuals experiencing homelessness. On March 24, 2020, the Chairpersons of the ten U.N. Treaty Bodies [called](#) on States “to adopt measures to protect the rights to life and health, and to ensure access to health care to all who need it, without discrimination.” They urged governments to take extra care of those particularly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, including “older people, people with disabilities, minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, people deprived of their liberty, **homeless people, and those living in poverty.**” (emphasis added).

On April 22, 2020, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights issued a [statement](#) warning that many States’ responses to COVID-19 have had devastating effects on people living in poverty, and emphasized that “[d]espite often far-reaching policy reversals and huge financial support packages, the most vulnerable have been short-changed or excluded.” He estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic could push more than half a billion additional people into poverty, underscoring that this crisis “disproportionately affects poor people, who are more likely to have health complications, live in crowded housing, lack the resources to stay at home for long periods, and work low-paid jobs that force them to choose between risking their health or losing their income.”

We commend you for your leadership and for holding informal meetings and consultations since the onset of the pandemic. We remain hopeful that you will stand up for the rights of millions of people around the world who are experiencing homelessness and living in poverty. At a

minimum, the Human Rights Council should recognize this plight and include these populations explicitly in the global efforts to protect basic human rights.

Sincerely,

The Advocates for Human Rights

Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland

Africa World Now Project (AWNP)

African Diaspora Directorate (AfDiDi)

African Voices Forum Ltd. (AVF)

Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT)

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

Art and Resistance Through Education (ARTE)

Best Practices Policy Project (BPPP)

Black Voters Matter Fund

Broward for Progress

Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA)

Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

CHIRAPAQ Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru

Coalition for Public Education (CPE)

Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute

Columbia University Amnesty International

Community Resource Centre Foundation (CRC)

Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA)

Dejusticia

The Democracy Collaborative

Desiree Alliance

First Peoples Worldwide

Focus On the Global South  
Fourteenth Amendment Group  
The Franklin Law Group, P.C.  
Fundación Código Humano  
Geneva for Human Rights (GHR)  
Gente & Dignidad  
George Washington University International Human Rights Clinic  
Grata Fund  
Greens of Colour, Bristol  
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights  
Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)  
IDHEAS Litigio Estratégico en Derechos Humanos (iDHeas)  
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)  
Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)  
Justice Revival  
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice  
Lambda Legal  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Legal Resources Centre (LRC)  
Liberty Human Rights, UK  
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (NNIRR)  
New Afrikan People's Organization/ Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (NAPO/MXGM)  
NGO Committee for the Elimination of Racism, Afrophobia, and Colorism  
Organization for Human Rights and Democracy (OHRD)  
Partners for Justice  
Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance  
Project Blueprint  
Rights and Democracy Institute (RDI)  
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC)  
Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center (SWP)

SJSU Human Rights Institute

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP)

The Talking Drum Organization

Te Rau Ora

UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab

UNITED SIKHS

University of Chicago Law School International Human Rights Clinic

University of Miami School of Law Human Rights Clinic

US Human Rights Cities Alliance

US Human Rights Network (USHRN)

Witness at the Border

Women's All Points Bulletin (WAPB)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Woodhull Freedom Foundation