

# **Forced Evictions in Karachi Socio-economic and political consequences**



(March 20<sup>th</sup> 2006, Juma Goth, near NIPA Chowrangi)

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## **Land regularization policy and its implications:**

No housing policy or program exists for the low and middle income groups in Karachi. Mostly poor communities purchase land from land grabbers, this process is continuing for the years now. People buy land without land title (or illegal in nature) build their houses incrementally and organized themselves to obtain basic facilities as well as land titles. The existing land regularization policy Sindh Katchi Act 1987 (amended in 2009 and extended cut date from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1985 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 1997) is not going well in term of providing land titles to these settlements. The reasons for difficulties in getting land titles include;

- i. Corruption in process of land regularization.
- ii. No Objection Certificate (NOC) from land owning agencies. The land owning agencies usually do not issue NOCs in the favour of these settlements. There case for NOCs pending over two decades.
- iii. Issue of the cut date; the law is completely silent for the settlements that are being established after this cut date.
- iv. Settlement located on amenity plots; Dispute of the settlements located on such land remained unresolved for decades now.

This situation makes it impossible for the large number of the settlements to secure their housing rights. Over the years many settlements gained political powers through their affiliation in such way that they do not need land titles any more.

But there are still a number of settlements which are vulnerable and face eviction threats. For vulnerable settlements it has become irrelevant to have land titles or not. As such settlements could be demolished any time regardless they have land titles or not. There are various reasons behind forced evictions, these includes

- i. Concept of world class city;  
The city authorities and politicians are promoting the concept of world class city. Therefore they feel these settlements of the poor communities present an ugly look and damage the image of world class city.
- ii. Mega projects:  
A number of mega project are being proposed for Karachi city. These mega projects involve massive dislocation of poor communities. A careful redesigning with a humane heart could avoid (or may reduce the number displacement) such evictions. These projects include Lyari Expressway, Karachi Circular Railway, Gojar Nala project etc.

- iii. Increasing land values:  
Many settlements of the poor communities are now situated on prime location land where over the years the land prices have gone up many folds. The builders and developers of the city are eyeing these locations to build commercial plazas or shopping malls.
- iv. Activities of land Mafia:  
The land is actively carrying out its activities in the city. It has gained support from various corridors of power. It uses the conventional techniques of land grabbing initially it settles some poor families on a vacant land and after some time when land price goes up it evicts them for reselling the same piece of land.



Open ads inviting people to purchase land such ads are now also appearing in the classified section of the leading news papers. (May 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, Ghaziabad, Orangi Town)

### **Physical conditions of the settlements in Karachi:**

It is important to mention here that housing for the poor is linked with socio economic conditions such as:

- Access to livelihood
- Development of Infrastructure
- Provision of social services such as education, health etc.
- Transport
- Social and ethnic relationships

In the process of incremental development the poor communities struggle to create these conditions for themselves either on self help basis or through their social and political linkages to obtain these services and facilities.

### Physical conditions of the settlement in Karachi



(March 26, 2009, Kausar Niazi Colony)

### Views of the settlements which is facing eviction threats



(July 29<sup>th</sup> 2006, Pahar Gunj0)

## Physical conditions of the settlements in Karachi



(July 29<sup>th</sup> 2006, Pahar Gunj)

Instead of providing land titles the government departments contemplating to demolish these settlements.



(October 08, 2007, Wahid Colony)

## Physical conditions of the settlements in Karachi



(August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005 Madina Colony I)



(September 8<sup>th</sup> 2005, Central Muslimabad)

It is interesting to mention here in Karachi most of settlements of the poor communities do not fall in the category of Katchi Abadis any more. Generally Katchi Abadi are defined as settlements which have despicable housing conditions besides lacking community facilities including water supply, sewerage disposal, electric supply, gas, roads and other public utilities.

Where as the existing settlements in Karachi have already obtained all community facilities mentioned above. The houses are well built single or double story buildings. Only thing which they lack is the land title. This makes them illegal settlements that's why they are called Katchi Abadis and thus the option for demolishing such settlement remains open for various reasons.

### **Evictions in Karachi**

URC has been monitoring evictions in the city since 1992. The reported figures show that more than 40,900 houses have been bulldozed by various government agencies since 1992. As a result of these evictions 286,300 people have been displaced, including women, children and elderly. No compensations or alternatives land in most of the cases were awarded to the victims of these demolitions.

These evictions mostly took place in brutal colonial way without issuing prior notices. In many cases where communities refused to leave their houses their household goods were also smash under bulldozers. The deaths and injuries were also reported in many settlements.

This brutal type of demolition operations led by various government departments against poor communities had been sparking resistance. The communities were organizing themselves to resist such forced evictions at any costs. These communities were also receiving support from national and international NGOs. The linkages between NGOs working on housing rights developed with the communities facing evictions.



Eviction in Karachi: The bulldozers of the CDGK are demolishing a settlement in Karachi.

(April 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, Allah Wali Colony Jamshid Town)



(April 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, Allah Wali Colony)



(April 14<sup>th</sup> 2004, Anwar Shah Goth)

## Evictions in Karachi



(April 14<sup>th</sup> 2004, Anwar Shah Goth)

The communities tried to rebuild their houses on the rubbles of their previous houses.



(August 7<sup>th</sup> 2007, Gahi Faqir Goth, Korangi)

## Evictions in Karachi



(August 7<sup>th</sup> 2007, Gahi Faqir Goth, Korangi)

The views of different settlements demolished in early 2006.



(May 6<sup>th</sup> 2006, Sikander Goth)



(May 6<sup>th</sup> 2006, Sikander Goth)

The government departments were aware of this fact and this has now become impossible for them to demolish a settlement by ignoring national and internal housing rights guidelines. Therefore they started contemplating to compensate such settlements.

In 2002 the federal government has announced the construction of Lyari Expressway project. The initial survey showed that around 14,350 houses had to be demolished to get the right of way for this project. The city government had prepared a compensation package for the affected families. This package was consisting Rs 50,000/- and an 80 square yard plot in one of resettlement sites for each family. The compensation was flat for all. Three locations were selected for the resettlement projects, which include Hawksbay, Baldia and Surjani town.



Lyari Expressway: The communities rejected the government's compensation package and initiated a campaign to resist forced evictions. (April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2002, Press Club Karachi)



Lyari Expressway: The demonstration against forced evictions. (February 16<sup>th</sup> 2005, Press Club Karachi)

The communities rejected this compensation package and initiated a massive campaign against demolition of their houses. The government forcefully continued the demolitions. The houses of politically weaker communities had been demolished but the government is unable to demolish the stronger communities. This caused unlimited delay in completion of the project, besides serious financial implications. The project remained uncompleted till to date.



Lyari Expressway: A large number of actual affected families could not receive their compensations. On other hand many fake claims were rewarded. (April 10<sup>th</sup> 2004, Azam Nagar)

There were also very serious questions about the transparency for awarding compensations and plots to the victims. Whereas the resettlement sites were located far way from the city therefore over 70 percent of families sold their plots to the real estate agents and return back to the city. It is very important to understand dynamics of socio-economics consequences while developing a resettlement project for the poor section of the society. Any resettlement plan which ignores well known urban planning concept will lead to wastage of national resources. Throwing poor communities away from the city centre would be lost of their livelihoods and increasing traveling time and costs. The education needs could not be addressed simply creating some primary and secondary schools. The growing children need a variety of vocational trainings such as computer centers, coaching centers, boutique and beautician courses etc. The demand for getting high education in the poor communities is also increasing. Similarly the health needs of a community could not be fulfilled by just creating few clinics or dispensaries certainly a community needs completed health facilities round the clock. All such facilities would not be available out side the city centre, thus major reasons for the failure for resettling poor communities out side the city.

In early 2006 the newly formed city government announced it plans to make Karachi a world class city. The former City Nazim Syed Mustafa Kamal announced that each and every katchi abadis that sprang up after 1985 is being considered as an encroachment (and therefore illegal) and they would be removed any time. He further said that the city government was soliciting suggestions and solutions to tackle the matter from different countries, which have experienced the same problem. The city Nazim said the whole thing was being made part of the City Master Plan and a strategy would be drawn up to resolve the issue once and for all. He said that we do care for poor people who live in slums but we can never compromise on the future of Karachi. We have to develop this city in a strategic manner so that it is seen as the seventh largest

city of the world, an engine of growth for Pakistan and an attraction for people from around the world.

Soon after of this announcement the city government had started demolishing various settlements in the city.

During first five months of 2006 (Jan – May 2006) the city government bulldozed over 3,490 houses in the various parts of the city. A total of 23,124 people were made homeless as result of these recent evictions. These evictions were took place in very brutal colonial way and no prior notices were served to the affected families. The city government also did not pay any compensation to victims of these forced evictions.

People's investment of over Rs. 1.047 billion on construction of these 3,490 houses had been lost. This does not include the cost of land, infrastructure and services that people obtained over a period of time.



(March 20<sup>th</sup> 2006, Juma Goth, Near NIPA Chowrangi)



(April 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, Allah Wali Colony)



(March 20<sup>th</sup> 2006, Juma Goth, Near NIPA Chowrangi)



(May 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 Sikander Goth)

Pictures of the settlements  
demolished during early  
2006



(March 20<sup>th</sup> 2006, Juma Goth, Nipa Chowrangi)

Here is a list of settlements demolished during this period. (Jan – June 2006):

- The municipal administration of Baldia Town has demolished some 200 houses in Qaim Khani Colony's Sector-12 in Baldia on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006. The town administration launched an anti-encroachment operation on the directives of Town Nazim, Kamran Akhter. The Town Nazim said that all illegal settlements on government land in any area of the town will be bulldozed.
- Over 1,000 huts opposite side of Karachi University's main gate were demolished on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006 by the city government. According to city government officials these were illegal encroachments and occupying land over a water supply pipeline of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB). No prior notice or any compensation was paid to these poor families. The community after losing their houses were scattered to other parts of the city.
- 150 houses were demolished on the instruction of Town Nazim (Mayor) in Yousuf Goth New Karachi on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2006. As many as 300 other houses were also demolished in various other parts of New Karachi Town on the eve of a road extension program. The government did not pay any compensation for these demolitions. Most of these houses had land titles, which were issued by the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA).

- The Town administration demolished over 200 houses in Shaheed-e-Millat Colony Korang Sector 3 ½ on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006. This settlement was also demolished for road extension. No compensation was paid to effected community.
- Another 1,250 houses were demolished in Jumma Goth near NIPA Chorangi on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006. The eviction of the settlement was brutal and without any prior notice. Many families also lost their household goods as there was no time given to take out these items. According to the government the settlement was illegal and located on one of the main water supply pipeline. A survey of the area showed that there were many other high-rise buildings illegally constructed on the same water pipeline. But these high-rise buildings were not demolished by the government. The settlement was at least 30 years old. The operation started on the directive of the Town Nazim, (Mayor) Gulshan-e-Iqbal. The operation people resisted this action but police used tear gas and baton charged.
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2006 the City District Government Karachi (CDGK) demolished another 40 houses in Allah Wali Colony Block 6, PECHS Jamshid Town Karachi. The community strongly protested and took out demonstration against demolition of their houses. Women and children pelted the CDGK employees with stones. Heavy contingent of police was present to control the situation by using aerial firing, tear gas and baton charge. Police and para-military forces arrested 25 community activists. According to Haji Rafique, a community activist no compensation or alternative land was given to the people and their houses were bulldozed in brutal way. The settlement was established in 1954. According to Mr. Khawer Din, a general councilor from the area a case was in pending in the Sindh High Court and the next hearing was to be held on 27 April.
- Another 100 Houses near Graveyard Masira Colony Landhi on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 were demolished.
- On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006 the City Government demolished 250 houses in Sikander Goth. A community activist was shot dead and another seriously injured when police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration. A number of community activists were arrested by the police. The demolition operation took place to grab village land to construct a high rise building. The builder's private guards were also used to demolish the houses. Residents of the area, however, tried to resist the operation and hurled stones on the squad, police and paramilitary forces. Police and paramilitary forces tried

to control the situation and lobbed teargas shells to disperse the angry protestors. They also baton-charged the demonstrators but the situation kept getting worse. Police opened fire on the village people. One protestor, Rafiq, 24, suffered bullet wounds and died on the spot. Police fired hundreds of teargas shells to disperse the protesters.

These forced evictions sparked anger amongst citizens. This forced opposition political parties to raise the issue in the Sindh Provincial Assembly and City Council.

A number of demonstrations and All Parties Conference (APCs) were held against these demolitions. The leaders of all major political parties actively took part in these demonstration and APCs.



The demonstrations against forced evictions in Karachi. (January 19<sup>th</sup> 2006, in front of City council M.A. Jinnah Road)



(March 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, Press Club Karachi)

The demonstrations against forced evictions in Karachi.



(March 26<sup>th</sup> 2006, Press Club Karachi)



(January 19<sup>th</sup> 2006, M.A. Jinnah Road)

The demonstrations against forced evictions in Karachi.



(Demo at Marvi Goth June 11<sup>th</sup> 2006)



The demonstrations against forced evictions in Karachi.

(March 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, Press Club Karachi)

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2006 a major protest rally was held against forced evictions in Karachi: The protest rally was organized by the Pakhtoon Action Committee (Loya Jirga), turned out to be a show of strength as it was attended by a large number of public transport drivers and activists of almost all mainstream opposition parties.

Apart from Karachi many big demonstrations were also held in other cities of Sindh.

These protests forced the city government to stop its plans for further evictions. The city government also realized that it would not evict the settlements of poor communities in violation of national and international guidelines on housing rights.

Later on the city government completely changed its strategy towards forced evictions. The CDGK started negotiating with communities on the compensation and resettlement plans. There are at least two cases where the CDGK successfully negotiated the compensation package with the communities. These include:

- i. A link road between North Nazimabad and Qasba colony called Khasa Hill Project. The community was awarded compensation at market value for their land and house construction. In this the compensation was awarded in 2007.
- ii. Shah Faisal colony and Korangi link bridge construction. The community got compensation at market value as per Land Acquisition Act 1884. In this the compensation was awarded in 2008.



North Nazimabad and Qasba Colony Link Road: The community was awarded compensation at market value for their houses. (February 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 View from North

This is worth while to mention here the details of compensation paid in case of Shah Faisal colony and Korangi link bridge construction.

Detail of compensation:

The compensation rate for land was awarded Rs 10,000/- per square yard and cost of construction category wise was as under:

- i. For RCC structures Rs 900/- per sq. ft.
- ii. For pre cast slab Rs 500 per sq. ft.
- iii. For temporary construction 450 per sq. ft.

In addition to above 15 percent compulsory acquisition on compensation allowed to the affected families as per section 23 (2) of the Land Acquisition Act 1884. It also awarded 15 percent interest per annum under the section 28A of the Land Acquisition Act 1884. Besides this an 80 square yard plot was also allotted to each affected family in nearby Korangi area.



Shah Faisal Colony and Korangi link bridge project: The community awarded compensation as per land Acquisition Act 1884. (September 30<sup>th</sup> 2008, Reta Plot)

Immediately after receiving the compensation the communities vacated their houses and subsequently the city government was able to complete the projects in time.

This under line need of a consistent policy for the compensation in any case of displacement of the poor communities.

It seems there is a very limited institutional memory with the government and no lessons were learnt from past experiences.

In the case of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) a resettlement plan is being developed along the similar lines of Lyari Expressway Resettlement Project (LERP). This will make the project controversial and implementation of the project would become entirely difficult as it happened in Lyari Expressway project case.



Now the communities along railway tracks in Karachi are facing eviction threats.

(November 20<sup>th</sup> 2007, Umer Farooq Town)



(September 13<sup>th</sup> 2007, Umer Colony 2)

The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) is a vital project for the city but the issue of the resettlement of poor communities needs to resolve in a much better way than the LERP. There are 35 settlements located along Karachi's railway tracks, having a total number of 21,344 housing units. This is important to mention here these communities are much well organized as compare to affected communities of the Lyari Expressway. All these settlements are part of the network and are

well equipped with information and technical knowledge to present their case in any national or international forum. This network (Karachi Circular Railway Affectees Action Committee) assists its member communities in their struggle to resist evictions and to obtain secure tenure rights. The network holds regular meetings in different settlements, to give information about land regularization policies and to discuss new eviction threats from the Pakistan Railways. It would be a major mistake from city authorities to impose any resettlement plan against their wishes.

### **The case studies of under threat settlements:**

Urban Resource Centre has prepared a number of case studies of the settlements which are facing eviction threats. These case studies showed that the people have invested huge sums for the constructions of houses and infrastructures. In many of these settlements the government also made investment on intra-structure. The abstract of few case studies are quoted below:

#### **i. Hasan Aulia Village**

This is an over century old settlement, having a population of 10,400 people. It has been facing eviction threat since 2002. The government wants to demolish the settlement to make way for the Lyari expressway project. The community refused to leave their houses and has been resisting this eviction for last 9 years. The estimates shows that the community has invest around Rs. 3.0 billion on housing and infrastructural development of the settlement.

#### **ii. Chaman Iqbal Colony**

This settlement was established in 1974, having a population of 5,625 people. The colony located on university road near meteorological department in Gulshan-e-Iqbal town Karachi. It has been facing eviction threats as builders and developers want this land for high-rise construction. The estimates show that the community has invested around Rs. 282.35 million on housing and infrastructural development of the settlement.

#### **iii. Bilawal Jokhio Goth**

Bilawal Jokhio Goth is located in Gulshan Town Karachi. It has 1,179 housing units with a population of 10,574. The community has spent over Rs. 343.1 million on housing and infrastructure development of the settlements. Where as the government has also spent Rs. 2 million for the provision of electricity to the settlement. The settlement is constantly receiving evictions threats as some relevant government departments refuse to grant land ownership to the community.

#### **iv. NTR Colony**

NTR colony is located on Pakistan railways' land in Saddar town. There are 843 housing units with a population of 6,322. The community has invested over 257.6 millions on housing and infrastructural development of the settlement. Whereas the government has also invested an amount of Rs. 1.9 million on paving of the streets. The settlement faces eviction threats as railways needs the land for the extension of the tracks.

#### **v. Moria Khan Goth**

This is an old settlement located on railway land in Shah Faisal town. There are 1,248 housing units in this settlement with a total population of 11,070 people. The community is facing eviction threat from Karachi Circular Railway project. The community has invested over 1801.1 million on housing and infrastructural development of the settlement.

#### **vi. Kashmir Mujahid Colony**

The colony is located in the civil lines area near Dr. Zia uddin Road. It has 223 housing units with a population of 2,091. The community investment on construction of housing and development of infrastructure is estimated around Rs. 125.1 millions. This settlement is also facing eviction threat from the KCR project.

#### **vii. Umer Colony 1**

This settlement is located near Baloch colony flyover along the railway track in Jamshid town. This settlement has 1,146 housing units with a population of 13,470 people. The community has invested an estimated amount of Rs. 341.99 million on the housing and infrastructure. The estimated cost of government investment on the construction of infrastructure is Rs.6.86 million.

#### **viii. Kausar Niazi Colony**

This settlement is located in North Nazimabad Town along Gojar Nala. It has 3,500 housing units with a population of 31,200 people. The construction cost of housing and infrastructure in this settlement is estimated around Rs. 1.76 billion. The government is also invested Rs. 4.11 million on additional infrastructure construction.

All these settlements have paved streets, water supply connections, under ground sewerage disposal and gas connections. There are community facilities such as health clinics, private schools, mosques etc..

It is important to understand their livelihood patterns as most of men provide their services in nearby areas in variety of skilled and un-skilled labour.

It is more interesting to note that the women are also playing a very important role in the economic activities. Traditionally it was conceived as women from the poor communities work only in factories or as domestic workers. But it is not true any more, women also provide their services in a variety of skilled labour areas, which includes teachers, office assistant, computer operators, beauticians, lab assistant, hospital nurses, boutique workers etc..

The forced evictions have multiple impacts on the lives of poor communities. There is not only question of loosing their houses and livelihoods, but this action of the government is directly responsible to through an entire well established community into a cycle of poverty from which they would never be able to cover themselves.

One can easily calculate the socio-economic damages of the forced evictions but cost of psychological damages remains unanticipated.

Here are some estimated costs of evictions which one of the most vulnerable communities paid in case of their displacement:

**Financial costs;**

- The minimum average construction cost of a 80 square yards is Rs. 400,000/-. This does not include the price of land which varies from location to location. This also does not include cost infrastructure. As described these communities make a significant invest on developing infrastructure.
- All family (3 –5 members at average) work over a period of 10 – 15 years to construct a house. This is their life saving.
- Once evicted from their properly built houses these families take refuge under the bridges or on footpaths, but most of families live on the rubble of their houses for many days before moving to a new location.

**Economic costs;**

- There many research studies which indicate that the forced eviction and displacement are major reasons for increasing urban poverty
- They are major cause of livelihood lost permanently or temporarily.
- It increases their travelling time and costs if resettled out side of the city.
- Through various studies it is now proved that the women permanently lost their jobs in all cases and they had never been able to get another job for any long.

**Social Costs;**

- Loss of children's education: In all cases it was noted that 100 percent girls of evicted families had never been able to get readmission in schools and colleges. On other side male child regain their education after a break of year or two but their parents instead of sending them schools preferred them to work.

- Health facilities become inaccessible for displaced families.
- It was also found that the evicted communities lost their social and political contacts developed in years in their previous neighbourhoods. It is important to mention here such contacts were essential for their survival in urban context.
- Once displaced women and children are exposed to the sexual harassments. Particularly the kidnapping of girl child were reported in many cases in Karachi.

The forced evictions are men made earthquakes for the poor communities. The government action to carry out demolition operations without adequate notices and compensations create a psychological impact in minds and hearts of poor communities. It develops a feeling detestation and revenge against state. There are very rare chances of recovering from this condition of shock.

## **Recommendations;**

It is strongly suggesting that the government must avoid all types of the evictions of poor communities. The maximum efforts should be done to look into alternative options, which do not involve any evictions of the poor communities.

In any case where evictions might become essential, there must be a serious effort to minimize the total number of houses to be demolished. In such case an independent committee comprising members from civil society, communities and government must review the project. The basic task of this committee should be to examine that whether it is possible to avoid evictions or reduce the number of houses being demolished.

If evictions become essential then there must be a proper and consistent policy for the compensation in all cases. It is therefore suggested that the compensation must be paid at market value as per land acquisition act 1884.

- A committee must be formed to take up matter of the compensation.
- The committee must have appropriate representation from the affected communities.
- The committee must hold public consultations with the affected communities and invite their proposals or objections for compensation package.
- All properties whether leased or without lease must be dealt in same way for the compensations.
- The compensation package must include cost of house construction, land and livelihoods. All these must be compensated at the current market value. The city government is

already set up a precedent in this regard in the case of Shah Faisal colony and Korangi bridge project in 2008. This example must be followed in the future.

- A survey of the livelihoods assessment must also be done before compensating the poor communities.
- The process of awarding compensation must be transparent and accountable.
- There must also be a transparent process to address the cases of any complaints or irregularities.

It is further recommended that the non state actor elements (such as private parties, land grabbers, builders, developers etc.) should not be allowed to carry out demolition operations by their own for any reason. This always creates a law and order situation in the city. Therefore the government must also evolve a policy of compensation for the communities displaced by a third party (none state actor). Mostly the communities displaced by the non state actors remain un-compensated. In any such case a commission must be set to find actual causes/reasons of the evictions. Besides awarding compensations for the affected communities, there must also be appropriate punishment for the culprits.