

Don't abandon, rehab them: Activists

■ Accuse Govt of violating rights during demolition ■ Compare Bengaluru's situation with Syria, Libya

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Human Rights activists have come down heavily on the recent arbitrary and ad-hoc demolition drives taken up by the government without giving any thought about rehabilitation for the displaced citizens.

"The state government has violated human rights blatantly. How can a government displace its own people? There is no difference between Syria, Libya or Bengaluru. In 2016, when countries are taking in refugees, Bengaluru is causing a refugee crisis by displaying that we live in a third world city due to third world politicians," said Dr Dominic Dixon, consulting director for Academics, International Law and Justice UNITAR.

"In developed and developing countries, the government will ensure that their citizens do not become victims of circumstances. In the Bengaluru context, the citizens have become the victims of circumstances. The plight of people who have been victims of a natural disaster have made the government wake up from its deep slumber and with its hasty decisions it is continuing to make another set of people victims of a governmental disaster,"

said Mr Dixon, who is taking up the case with the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

"Here is a government that is putting salt into the injuries of already hurt by providing no rehabilitation measures for the displaced, leaving them to fend for themselves. Firstly, the citizens feel they have been swindled by government officials and builders which had led to this fate," Dixon said.

"Ideally the state should have come up with a bill in the sessions similar to that of the 2013 Land Acquisition Bill, where the government will house the people who are going to be displaced because of its action, as even government officials and builders were a part of the scam to a major extent," he added.



BBMP's recent demolition drive in Dodda Bommasandra

Legal aid for demolition victims: Rajeev Chandrasekhar

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Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who has been fighting for citizens' rights and pushing for prosecution of government officials and builders and compensating the home owners affected by BBMP's demolition drive, has announced his support to the victims and said

he will back and fund their legal battle to sue the government and get compensation.

The MP is also compiling a list of laws and rules that were flouted by the government officials and will push for prosecution under those sections. "I urge all those in #Bengaluru who have been victims of #DemolitionByCorruption to come together. I will help you

sue the government! Citizens have rights!" Mr Chandrasekhar tweeted.

The MP said, "Citizens in Bengaluru have reached a point where we cannot just pray anymore. Those who have lost their homes must go to the law and the government should be reminded of its responsibility towards the citizens. I have asked citizens to get in touch

with me. I'll hire a lawyer and pay for the case until they get justice. I am going to fight for their rights so that they get compensated because it is not their fault. The government should penalise officials and builders and get the money to pay compensation. We must fight to prosecute officials and builders who have violated the law," the Rajya Sabha MP said.

'WILL STAR HOTELS, BIG MALLS BE DEMOLISHED?'

Bengaluru: Members of an anti-corruption forum We the People of Bengaluru (WPB) have urged the government to carry out demolitions without any discrimination.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, the members told reporters, "There are at least two five star hotels and a shopping mall that has numerous foreign retail outlets, which are built over storm water drains. The public expects the government to pull down these structures as well. However, if the government winds up its demolition drive simply because it is unwilling to raze down the five star hotels and the mall, it is clear discrimination and will worsen the suffering of all the people whose structures were already razed down hastily and mercilessly."

"The people who resisted the demolition of their houses will cast doubts on the motive of the government to take this demolition drive to its logical conclusion - razing down every structure that blocks the storm water drain. They will feel abandoned if the government refuses to touch places belonging to highly influential and the wealthy," said K.V. Dhananjay, Supreme Court senior lawyer.

"If the Government won't even touch the five star hotels, we demand that it reconstruct all the houses that it has demolished so far. This demolition drive would be anti-people if it only targets the poor and middle classes, while leaving the wealthy to bend the law at their will," Dhananjay added.