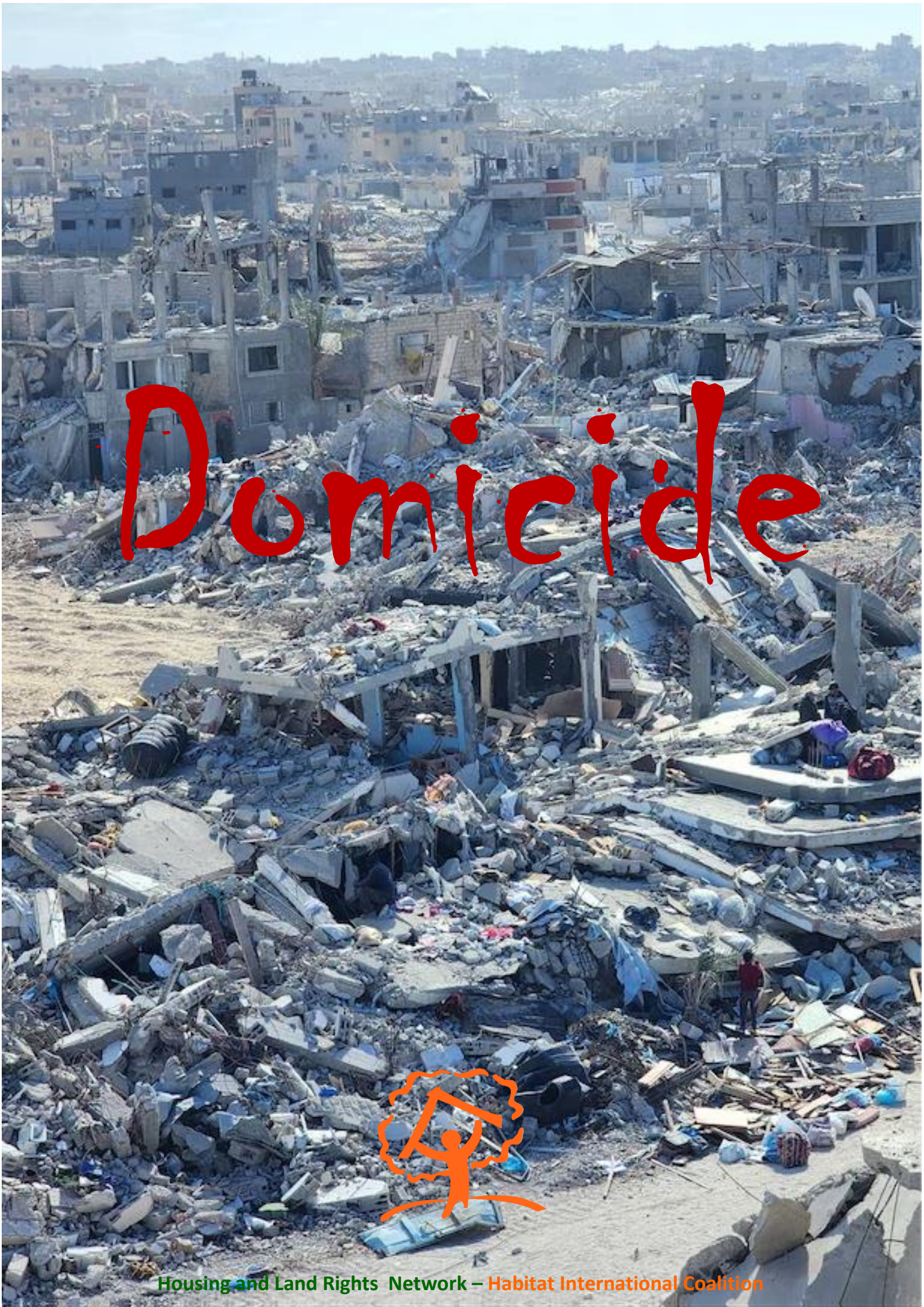


Housing and Land Rights Network – Habitat International Coalition

Domicide



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Cover photo: Destruction in Gaza City after Israeli carpet bombing, 2024. Source: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

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"The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more….

I would recommend … to lay waste all the settlements around with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner, that the country may not be merely overrun but destroyed."

—**George Washington**, 1779[1]

Abbreviations

AfCHPR	Africa (Union) Commission on Human and Peoples Rights
AI	artificial intelligence
Art.	Article
CEDaW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CoP	Conference of Parties [to a treaty]
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DARIO	draft Articles on the Responsibility of International Organizations (2011)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHR	European Commission for Human Rights
ETO	extraterritorial (human rights) obligation
HIC	Habitat International Coalition
HLP	housing, land and property
HLRN	Housing and Land Rights Network
IACHR	Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICL	international criminal law
IDP	internally displaced person
IHL	international humanitarian law
IHRL	international human rights law
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JA	The Jewish Agency for the Land of Israel
JNF	Jewish National Fund
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NCSR	(Lebanese) National Council for Scientific Research
NELD	non-economic loss and damage
OCHA	Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OP	Optional Protocol
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RRF	UN's remedy and reparations framework (A/RES/60/147)
UN	United Nations
U.N.T.S.	United Nations Treaty Series
UP	Uttar Pradesh, India
VDB	HLRN Violation Database
WZO	World Zionist Organization

Executive Summary

Domicide — the deliberate, systematic destruction of homes and habitat — is rising in frequency, scale and method, yet it is still not named as a crime in international criminal law. Drawing on HIC-HLRN's Housing and Land Rights Violation Database (VDB) since 2015, this World Habitat Day / Urban October 2026 report defines domicide, maps its eight typologies, identifies its structural drivers and proposes a six-tier accountability framework with specific recommendations for concerned parties.

The report's central call is to codify domicide as a standalone crime against humanity and war crime under the Rome Statute, while using existing law to prosecute perpetrators and deliver reparation to victims.

Defining domicide and the legal gap

The report adopts the definition advanced by former UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing Balakrishnan Rajagopal: "the deliberate and systematic destruction of homes, rendering them uninhabitable, or the systematic denial of housing, in violation of international law." It covers both physical destruction and functional disruption — destroying water, power, farmland, civil registries and/or denying return.

Following Porteous and Smith (2001), domicide spans "everyday" forms (evictions, redevelopment, extraction) and "extreme" forms (bombing, scorched earth). It may be committed by act or by omission, incrementally or *en masse*.

Existing law already prohibits its components:

- **Human rights law:** ICESCR Art. 11 (adequate housing) and ICCPR Arts. 9, 10 and 17.
- **Humanitarian law:** Fourth Geneva Convention Arts. 49, 53 and 147 — but treaties treat housing loss as secondary property damage, not a method of erasing communities.
- **Criminal law:** Rome Statute Arts. 7 and 8 can reach home destruction, but no named charge directs prosecutors to it.

Key findings from the Violation Database

The VDB holds 1,958 records of housing, land and property violations, with an aggregate victim count above 1.22 billion people. Entries peaked in 2020 (88 records), but victim numbers are highest in 2023–26, driven by domicides in Palestine, Ukraine and Sudan. The report sorts documented cases into eight typologies:

Typology	Emblematic cases since 2015
1. Armed violence and active conflict	Ukraine (13.6 million affected; Mariupol, Kakhovka Dam); Sudan (10.7 million); Palestine (over 2.3 million newly affected); Lebanon (~290,000–300,000 housing units damaged or destroyed since October 2023); Yemen (4 million IDPs); Rohingya in Myanmar
2. Latent conflict and protracted crisis	Sudan: civil war layered on Darfur displacement, dam projects and climate-driven drought and flooding
3. Market, corporate and state land capture	Asia leads with 32.5 million displaced; Shanghai redevelopment (est. 3 million+ relocated); Baku

4. Occupation, colonization and population transfer (cross border)	Historic Palestine (16.6 million documented victims since 1917; ~9.7 million refugees and descendants); Western Sahara; Tibet; Kashmir; southern Lebanon
5. Ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering (within a state)	Nagorno-Karabakh (entire Armenian population expelled in 2023); Naqab villages (e.g., al-`Araqib demolished 244 times); Uyghurs (3 million)
6. Punitive and persecutory action	India's "bulldozer justice" against Muslim homes; ICE raids on homes in the USA ("Midway Blitz", Chicago, 2025)
7. Infrastructure development	Three Gorges Dam (~4 million); Shandong village clearance (5 million); Jeddah (558,000+) and Neom, Saudi Arabia
8. Genocide	Gaza: an estimated 82% of buildings destroyed, affecting some 2.1 million residents, with AI-assisted targeting of homes as military doctrine since 1948

Domicide is a composite crime. Each case triggers a cascade of violations — of the rights to life, adequate housing, decent work, health, water, food, education, work, culture and self-determination, etc. Five VDB cases combine all five monitored violation types (eviction, destruction, dispossession, privatization, environmental harm), the largest being the Philippines "Flooded by Corruption" case (2.7 million victims).

Structural drivers and impunity

Domicide is not random. The report traces it to recurring drivers:

- **Racism, religion and nationalism** — targeting groups by identity to achieve demographic homogeneity.
- **Patriarchy** — women without male title holders are evicted and excluded from compensation; displaced women face sharply higher maternal-health risks.
- **Competition over development resources** — oil, minerals, water, farmland and, increasingly, tourism and short-term rentals (Benin, Cádiz, Madrid).
- **"Green" eviction** — climate-adaptation and conservation schemes used to justify forced evictions.

Impunity is total. Across all 1,955 VDB records, no perpetrator has been held fully accountable for domicide, and no victims have received remedy under the UN remedy and reparations framework. ICC convictions touching on home destruction (Katanga, Al Mahdi, Ntaganda, Ongwen) treated it as incidental to other charges.

Six tiers of accountability

Responsibility extends well beyond the hand that demolishes:

1. **Sovereign governments** as primary duty holders must prevent and remedy such demolitions.
2. **Non-state combatants**, chargeable under IHL (Additional Protocol I) and the Rome Statute.
3. **Corporations and other enterprises** such as developers, extractive firms, mega-project consortia and “charities” that fund domicide, such as Israel’s parastatal bodies registered abroad.

4. **Multilateral institutions:** World Bank, IMF, development banks and climate funds bear independent responsibility under the ILC's 2011 Articles on the Responsibility of International Organizations.
5. **Third states** bear extraterritorial obligations to bar recognition and support, supplying arms, finance or complicity in domicide.
6. **Individuals**: ICC can already try commanders, officials and accomplices for home destruction under Arts. 7 and 8; the gap is the lack of a named charge, not of jurisdiction.

Priority recommendations

Governments should criminalize domicide in domestic law, create national investigation commissions, impose immediate moratoriums on demolitions and forced evictions, ban wide-area weapons and AI targeting in populated areas, incorporate the UN reparations framework, ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, and recognize customary land tenure.

Third states and multilateral institutions should suspend arms transfers under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, apply sanctions and divestment, make lending conditional on HLP rights assessments, and empower regional normative bodies to issue emergency injunctions.

The UN should adopt a General Assembly resolution defining domicide ahead of a Rome Statute amendment; the Security Council should refer ongoing situations (Kashmir, Lebanon, Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan, Tibet, Ukraine,) to the ICC; the Human Rights Council should create a Special Procedure on domicide; and the CESCR should issue a specific General Comment.

Civil society should expand the VDB into a Global Domicide Documentation Consortium producing ICC-ready evidence, defend housing rights defenders and pursue strategic litigation.

Resourcing remedy: Escrow funds could be financed by fines, seized assets of liable states and enterprises, the ICC Trust Fund for Victims should channel resources directly to affected communities through the social production of habitat, with household-level assessments of both material and non-economic loss.

Conclusion

Domicide is neither accidental nor natural: It is an organized instrument of destruction and capital accumulation, enabled by state action and inaction and sustained by impunity. The duty holders are identifiable and the legal tools largely exist. What is missing is political will, a named crime and remedy that is as structural as the harm — and a recognition that consumers and financiers everywhere may be subsidizing the destruction of other people's homes.

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Introduction: Setting the Crime Scene

When a crime scene is just a localized event, our legal frameworks are very straightforward. If someone deliberately breaks a window, that's vandalism. Someone sets a building on fire; that's arson. Such acts fall within a clear, legislated boundary of national law, identifying a specific perpetrator of an isolated event that disrupts the normal order. But what if the crime scene reveals the systematic, deliberate destruction of hundreds or thousands of homes?

For this World Habitat Day/Urban October 2026 reflection from its Housing and Land Rights Violation Database, HIC-HLRN is defining and applying the phenomenon of "domicide." The term is a hybrid combining two Latin words: *domus* (home) suffixed with *-cide* (derived from *caedĕre*: to strike, murder). But the cases presented here do not refer to just some bulldozer knocking down a single physical structure. The scale of the crime is much larger.

The objective of such targeted destruction may differ from case to case. For example, we find wide patterns of destruction in contexts such as large-scale infrastructure development; gentrification; environmental destruction (ecocide); apartheid, violent conflict and warfare; invasion and state-to-state aggression; population transfer (across state borders),[2] demographic manipulation (within a state),[3] or other forms of colonization and prohibited acquisition of territory by force. Domicide may result also from failing to take preventive or remedial measures in cases of foreseeable climate-change events. Hence, it could result from negligence as a violation of omission, as well as commission.

In all cases, whether by acts of omission or commission, the destruction of the housing is a device toward a further end. Domicide is a means of implementation that brings widespread deprivation to many holders of the human right to adequate housing[4] in all situations and/or protected persons under the Fourth Geneva (civilians) Convention[5] in times of war, as the case may be.

The present inquiry reveals patterns emerging from cases in the HLRN Violation Database (VDB) since 2015. However, previous cases may be reverenced in passing to emphasize the continuity of such acts against certain communities historically.

While each cited case has involved wide denial of property rights and "forced eviction,"[6] a gross violation in international human rights law,[7] and/or grave breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL). Despite the human rights and IHL treaties that prohibit the practice in less-explicit language for large-scale commission of the crime, it has a name. Classified as "domicide," this particularly devastating practice endures since ancient times and at 'biblical' scales without ceasing, but rather is increasing in frequency, magnitude and method, without recognition yet in international criminal law.

This report explores such recent and ongoing cases since 2015 to demonstrate that this uncivilized and decivilizing practice is not relegated to some distant past, attributed to draconian despots of old. Domicide is a ruthless contemporary practice that begs a definitional framework for the purpose of prosecution under international law. Accountability is the obviously indispensable step toward deterring such unconscionable human and material harm.

Mindful of the long historic lineage of this crime, the dataset for the period under review shows a dramatic peak in domicide over recent years, dominated by the sheer volume of destruction through Azerbaijan's 2023 population transfer of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabagh, Israel's

2009, 2014 and 2021 attacks on homes across Palestine's Gaza Strip, Israel's ongoing genocide across Palestine and its domicidal ethnic cleansing of the West Bank, Israel's massive destruction of habitation across southern Lebanon, and the numerically even greater magnitude of destruction during the current Civil War in Sudan.

The practice of domicide on such a large scale — whether by military or other means — seeks to eliminate entire communities in their most civilian of spaces: The home. Domicide strips the targeted homes and community of their civil status and converts them into a strategic or tactical instrument in breach of fundamental human rights, in particular, the right to adequate housing, and IHL.[8]

In addition to its dire material and moral consequences, the governing structural incoherence that descends into domicide generates chaos and a costly collapse of civil order. Domicide sends civilization and the pursuit of 'sustainable' development into extreme retrograde. The accompanying revelation is that 'sustainability' in the global political, social, ecological or developmental order is wholly insufficient. Rather, the damage that destructive human powers already have inflicted on the planet call for global efforts at development rather by restorative justice[9] and regenerative design.[10]

This report contributes to a countervailing trend toward a world where we make a clean break with such destructive practice, remedy its effects, and deter its repetition. That deterrence can take place only through the accountability and prosecution of its authors of such practices that echo the seriousness of genocide. For that purpose, legal precision is required.

The premise of this inquiry is that adequate housing, like any similarly codified human right, is a need — either something material and substantive, or a requisite condition — for human life in peace and dignity. Often, we can best identify the normative content and value of a human right by knowing the impacts of its deprivation. The many cases of domicide highlighted here clarify the values at stake. Hence, the practice of domicide is a dramatic example of deprivation that provides further reason and specificity to reaffirm adequate housing as a human need and, therefore, human right, and likewise for determining the corresponding obligations of the state to respect, protect and fulfill it.

Domicide: "The deliberate and systematic destruction of homes, rendering homes uninhabitable, or the systematic denial of housing, carried out in violation of international law"…"the widespread or systematic destruction of housing and civilian infrastructure essential to the survival of a population." It could destroy entire cities or villages, often leading to death, injury, destruction and forced eviction that displaces a large number of persons into homelessness.

—Balakrishnan Rajagopalan, former UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing

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Defining Domicide

In legal and socio-legal literature, domicide is currently defined as the deliberate, systematic, or widespread destruction of homes or human habitations, causing severe suffering and rendering places uninhabitable. While the concept originated in human geography and sociology fields, international legal scholars and human rights experts have increasingly operationalized it to address structural gaps in IHL, international criminal law (ICL), and international human rights law (IHRL). This review paints a picture of domicide with a broad brush to capture the crime's various scales and manifestations and to stimulate further debate and deliberation toward codifying domicide as a standalone war crime and crime against humanity.

The most widely cited legal definition within UN frameworks and international law scholarship—advocated prominently by Balakrishnan Rajagopal, the most-recent UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing—defines domicide as:

> "The deliberate and systematic destruction of homes, rendering homes uninhabitable, or the systematic denial of housing, carried out in violation of international law" and "the widespread or systematic destruction of housing and civilian infrastructure essential to the survival of a population." [11]

Rajagopal further describes how domicide could involve the destruction of entire cities or villages, often leading to death, injury, destruction and forced eviction that displaces masses of people into abject homelessness. The Special Rapporteur observes that this deliberate, widespread or systematic destruction of housing

> "underscore[s] the urgent need for accountability, prevention and reparations. Ending impunity for violations of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly the right to adequate housing and land, is indispensable to restoring justice and preventing recurrence. Accordingly, justice compels criminalizing, prosecuting and ending such brutal, yet such ubiquitous injustice."[12]

In legal literature, definitions capture two core elements of impact:

- **Tangible Destruction:** The physical demolition or destruction of structures used for habitation and
- **Intangible/functional Disruption:** Actions that render living space permanently uninhabitable (e.g., destroying water/power infrastructure, agricultural lands, or civil registries) or systematically deny the right to return.

Legal literature draws heavily on the seminal work of J. Douglas Porteous and Sandra E. Smith,[13] who divided domicide into two categories:

- **Everyday (or Structural) Domicide:** Destruction occurring during peacetime through administrative, economic, or development processes. This includes forced evictions, aggressive urban redevelopment, exclusionary zoning, or displacement linked to industrial development and resource extraction. Legal scholars examine this form through the lens of human rights law and states' regulatory obligations.
- **Extreme (or Conflict-driven) Domicide:** Massive, planned destruction executed during armed conflict, counterinsurgency, or campaign-style violence (e.g., scorched-earth tactics, carpet bombing, and neighborhood clearing). Scholars refer to extreme domicide in connection with war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

Since the Porteous and Smith publication in 2001, a body of social science literature has emerged to give further endorsement and specificity to the concept and term 'domicide.'[14] One insightful writer recently noted:

> "Where genocide seeks the destruction of a people, domicide describes the destruction of the spaces that allow a people to exist. It names a violence that is both physical and psychological: the erasure of a landscape that holds belonging and the capacity for return."[15]

With this distinction, both domicide and genocide share the objective of eliminating a people, but domicide seeks also to eliminate the people's most intimate built environment and deprive them of their own means of subsistence, any prospect of return and the very physical evidence of their existence as a civilization.

As discovered in the case of the related complex crime of population transfer, with its push and pull factors that expel and replace populations with state support,[16] domicide can be perpetrated incrementally or *en masse*.[17] Both terms refer to a deliberate policy, or an indirect result of government policy, by commission or omission, that culminates in large-scale home destruction, forcible depopulation and repurposing territory. However, domicide's outcome is always grand-scale and often violent or forcible denial of housing of entire communities by a variety of means.

Like the complex crime of population transfer, domicide can be perpetrated incrementally or* en masse*. However, the outcome is always grand-scale and often with violent or forcible denial of an entire community's housing and, therefore, its existence by various coercive and/or destructive means.

Current Legal Framework/Sources in Law

Classifying acts of massive destruction together with the privatization of a local water supply or a city failing to enforce building codes as domicide may seem incongruous. The first of these sounds like an act of war, while the others sound like terrible municipal policy. However, in practice, we find these often to be mutually reinforcing elements of the crime domicide.

The legal framework in this report draws heavily on the state obligations enshrined in two instruments:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a core UN treaty, guaranteeing the right to an adequate standard of living, including the human right to adequate housing and the "continuous improvement of living conditions"[18]
- The Rome Statute — the treaty that established the International Criminal Court at categories of crime adjudicated at The Hague.

The legal threshold focuses on deliberate acts or crucial omissions by identifiable perpetrators responsible for rendering habitation unviable. Even not doing something to confront domicide could have the same effect as wielding a weapon directly against already IHL-prohibited civilian targets. Imagine a government that deliberately fails to enforce building codes in a marginalized neighborhood in an earthquake zone; when the earthquake hits and only that neighborhood collapses, that is a deliberate governance failure manifesting as a human rights violation.

Legal scholars evaluate domicide across three primary branches of international law, including:

A. Human Rights Law (IHRL)

Under IHRL, legal literature frames domicide as an egregious violation of the right to adequate housing guaranteed in ICESCR, Art. 11, and the rights to family life, Art. 10, security of person and privacy, Arts. 9 and 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).[19] Scholars and international human rights instruments emphasize that a home, in legal theory and lived reality, is not merely real estate or shelter. Its social function encompasses personal identity, culture, social networks, historical memory, and security. Thus, domicide constitutes distinct forms of both psycho-social and material deprivation.

B. International Humanitarian Law

In IHL, the destruction of civilian housing is addressed under rules prohibiting attacks on civilian objects, wanton destruction of property not justified by military necessity, and unlawful displacement. However, legal scholars point out a protection gap: Current treaties largely view housing destruction as secondary property loss rather than a central method of warfare intended to erase communities.

C. International Criminal Law and Proposals for Codification

Recent academic literature focuses on the prospect of domicide being codified as a standalone crime against humanity under Art. 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998). Proposals argue that, when the destruction of housing is carried out as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population, it should be prosecuted independently, comparable to how starvation was explicitly integrated into international criminal frameworks.[20]

HIC-HLRN researchers also rely on a framework established in the 1976 Vancouver Plan of Action, the first UN Conference that defined habitat not merely as four walls and a roof, but as a comprehensive ecological, social, cultural, and economic complex, the entire spatial web where a community produces and sustains its life. The states gathered at that first UN Habitat Conference also to warn: "The ideologies of States are reflected in their human settlement policies. These being powerful instruments for change, they must not be used to dispossess people from their homes and their land, or to entrench privilege and exploitation. The human settlement policies must be in conformity with...human rights."[21]

This review paints a picture of domicide with a broad brush to capture the crime's various scales and manifestations and to stimulate further deliberation toward codifying domicide as a standalone war crime and crime against humanity.

These discoveries compel us to think of a home not as a container you put your stuff in, but metaphorically as the complex root system of a plant.[22] If someone paves over the soil or poisons the local water supply, that plant dies just as surely as if one were to take an axe to the stem. The crime of domicide is about severing those roots, and that severing rarely happens through a single action. Domicide has a similar lethal, uprooting effect on entire communities. This report frames domicide around various violations: Forced eviction, dispossession of land title, severe damage and destruction, denial of vital basic services, and even privatization of public goods and services

or environmental disasters linked to governance failure leading to deprivation of a community's means of subsistence. Hence, domicide also manifests as compound violations and complex crimes, as illustrated in cases cited below.

The Dataset: HLRN Housing and Land Rights Violation Database

Now let us unpack the VDB. On the occasion of this year's World Habitat Day and Urban October, HLRN is taking an annual deep dive into the extensive VDB dataset to focus entirely on the documented practices that qualify as domicide.

The VDB currently documents 1,958 recorded cases of housing, land and property (HLP) rights violations across all human-inhabited regions. Its contributors monitor five often-overlapping categories of violation: (1) forced eviction — 1,457 records; (2) demolition/destruction — 372 records; (3) dispossession/confiscation — 319 records; (4) privatization of public goods and services — 51 records; (5) environmental/climate event — 151 records. Across all 1,958 records, the aggregate victim count exceeds 1.22 billion individuals, encompassing populations in compound-violation cases and spanning decades.



Figure 1: Aerial view of a burned Rohingya village near Maungdaw in northern Rakhine State, Myanmar. Source: Wa Lone/Reuters.

Eight Typologies

1. Armed Violence and Active Conflicts

This is the most-expedient and most-violent method, generating the highest cumulative victim totals. Residential infrastructure is converted into tactical objectives. Prominent cases include, but are not limited to:

Russia–Ukraine War (2022–present): 13.6 million afflicted

Mariupol (2022) Russian forces targeted residential areas in urban centers through and 8-week Siege of Mariupol, forcing hundreds of thousands of the city's inhabitants to live with death and destruction, cowering underground, enduring incessant shelling and airstrikes, between the crossfire of opposing armies. Some 350,000 residents had fled Mariupol by mid-May 2022, by which time up to 90% of apartment buildings in the town center were rendered uninhabitable.[23]

Amid the tremendous loss of life, tens of thousands of residents lost their homes and often all their belongings, enduring deep psychological suffering beyond the economic loss of homes turned to rubble. Russian forces carried out at least 14 attacks on residential apartment buildings, medical, educational and other public facilities or emergency shelters in Mariupol, demonstrating a distinct pattern of deliberate, IHL-prohibited indiscriminate attacks on civilians, residential homes, other private property, public facilities and infrastructure.[24]

Kakhovka Dam Destruction, Ukraine (6 June 2023): The deliberate destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Dam on the Dnipro River is attributed to Russian forces by Ukrainian authorities and multiple international investigations. The bomb attack caused the flooding of approximately 80 downstream communities in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts, directly displaced approximately 30,000 persons and deprived an estimated 700,000 persons of drinking water. This constitutes infrastructure domicide: The deliberate elimination of the material preconditions for civilian habitat, rendering also downstream territories uninhabitable.

Sudan Civil War (2023 to present): 10.7 million subjected

Domicide has been a feature of statecraft across Sudan for decades and the emergence of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reflects a continuation of that practice. Considering those VDB entries since 2015, or only since the Civil War's 2023 outbreak, does not reveal the longer pattern. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) also has practiced domicide throughout Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan for decades and the state has used surrogates to commit the same in Darfur since 2003. However, the 10.7 million victims cited are all made homeless by the combined violence of the Army v. RSF since April 2023.

The town and vicinity of al-Fasher became a target of RSF domicide from 2023 to 2025. The Siege of El Fasher was the 30-month RSF siege of that Sudanese city in North Darfur. It was preceded by a series of battles for control between the RSF and SAF, during which the city became the last stronghold of the SAF in Darfur. By late April RSF fighters burned Zamzam and Abu Shouk IDP Camps, previously home to almost one million displaced people. In late October 2025, after over two years of siege, RSF overran the city, surrounding villages and camps and killing tens of thousands in the ensuing El Fasher massacre.

Lebanon under Israeli bombs (2015–present)

Lebanon has been under Israeli attack and invasion since Israel's seminal domicide in Palestine and expulsion of its people across the Palestine's northern border, operationalizing its JNF-devised military doctrine there since 1948. However, in this review period, Israel's signature domicidal practice is not only repeated but wantonly escalated in Lebanon.

No official totals of destroyed homes exist for the two phases of Israel's war on Lebanon since 2023, and the domicide remains ongoing. The most recent figures enumerate "destroyed or damaged" built environment as much as possible to mid-September 2026, but not disaggregating

housing units. From October 2023 to early 2026 (first phase): Lebanon's Environment Minister said more than 220,000 housing units were damaged and destroyed between 2023 and 2025. A CNRS assessment put it at approximately 230,000 housing units destroyed or damaged over a period of two years and three months. The World Bank's earlier and narrower estimate, covering only the first 14 months, identified about 99,000 homes damaged or destroyed. The gap is mostly due to different methods and time periods.

Since 2 March 2026 (renewed war), Lebanon's National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS) reported that over 2 March–16 April 2026, Israel either destroyed or damaged 50,424 housing units. In the month after the ceasefire, Israel struck an additional 18,228 housing units, destroying 8,086. Israel destroyed 11,095 buildings in the south, affecting 17,891 housing units. A separate assessment of Beirut and Mount Lebanon found 3,168 housing units destroyed and 4,437 partially damaged.[25]

Adding the official phases together gives roughly 290,000 to 300,000 housing units damaged or destroyed since October 2023, as of mid-May 2026. That total is likely an undercount, because Israeli forces have continued to demolish and detonate homes in southern Lebanese towns and villages, including with white-phosphorus bombs, erasing the Lebanese people and ground those foreign forces currently occupy. Some ominously predict this erasure-by-domicide to be permanent.[26]

Between October 2023 and December 2024, Israeli attacks in Lebanon killed more than 4,000 people and displaced over one million. At its April 2026 peak, Israel's domicide in Lebanon has displaced more than 1.2 million people, almost 22 percent of Lebanon's population.[27] In addition, nearly 200,000 Syrians fled back to Syria, along with nearly 32,000 Lebanese. Many people were displaced twice, once in 2024 and again in 2026, so the two million-plus peaks should not be added together as separate individuals, but separate instances. However, cumulatively, Israel has displaced millions over 48 years of its incursions into Lebanon.

The dozen Lebanon entries in the VDB are necessarily cumulative reports, given the magnitude of each attack. Nonetheless, individual cases reveal details of the volume and nature of domicide in Destruction of the southern suburbs (in Arabic: إبادة الضاحية الجنوبية) since September 2024, with details in Ain le Mreisse, Masakan Shaabiyye and Hay el Sellom cases that Public Works Studio have provided to the VDB. At this writing, the comprehensive costs, loss and damage have not yet been quantified. However, in Urban October 2026, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz bragged about his domicide, wiping out dozens of villages in south Lebanon.[28]

Yemen: Crisis (2015–present) — 4,000,000 IDPs

This review's 2015 start date has a logic in Yemen, since that was the year the Ansar Allah (Houthi) Movement captured the capital, Sana`a'. Domicide replaced the previous regime's pattern of confiscating citizens' land and housing.[29] The four million internally displaced persons (IDPs) figure since 2015 reflects the cumulative human toll of *all* parties to the conflict attacking Yemenis at home.

The Saudi-led Coalition (Operation Decisive Storm, March 2015–present) bears documented responsibility for aerial bombardment of residential infrastructure and the naval blockade of civilian supply chains. Ansar Allah bears co-equal documented liability: the Houthis Sept–Nov 2021 VDB entry records 128,070 victims of Houthi-conducted forced evictions and residential destruction in Marib, Ta`iz, and Hudaydah Governorates. Multi-party responsibility applies: (a) Saudi-led coalition, (b) Ansar Allah and (c) Yemeni government-aligned militias. Plans for resolving pre-2015 HLP claims as a hopeful transitional justice process now languish.

The VDB contains 38 entries for Yemen. Key conflict records since 2015: War Displaced (August 2015) — 3,000,000 victims (forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession/confiscation); Saudi Attacks (April 2015) — 150,000 victims; Houthis Sept–Nov 2021 (September 2021) — 128,070 victims; Yemeni Crisis (2021) — 4,000,000 victims (largest single Yemen entry). Land-rights violations compound displacement: displaced populations face secondary victimization when absent property is seized by armed actors or profiteers during protracted conflict.[30]

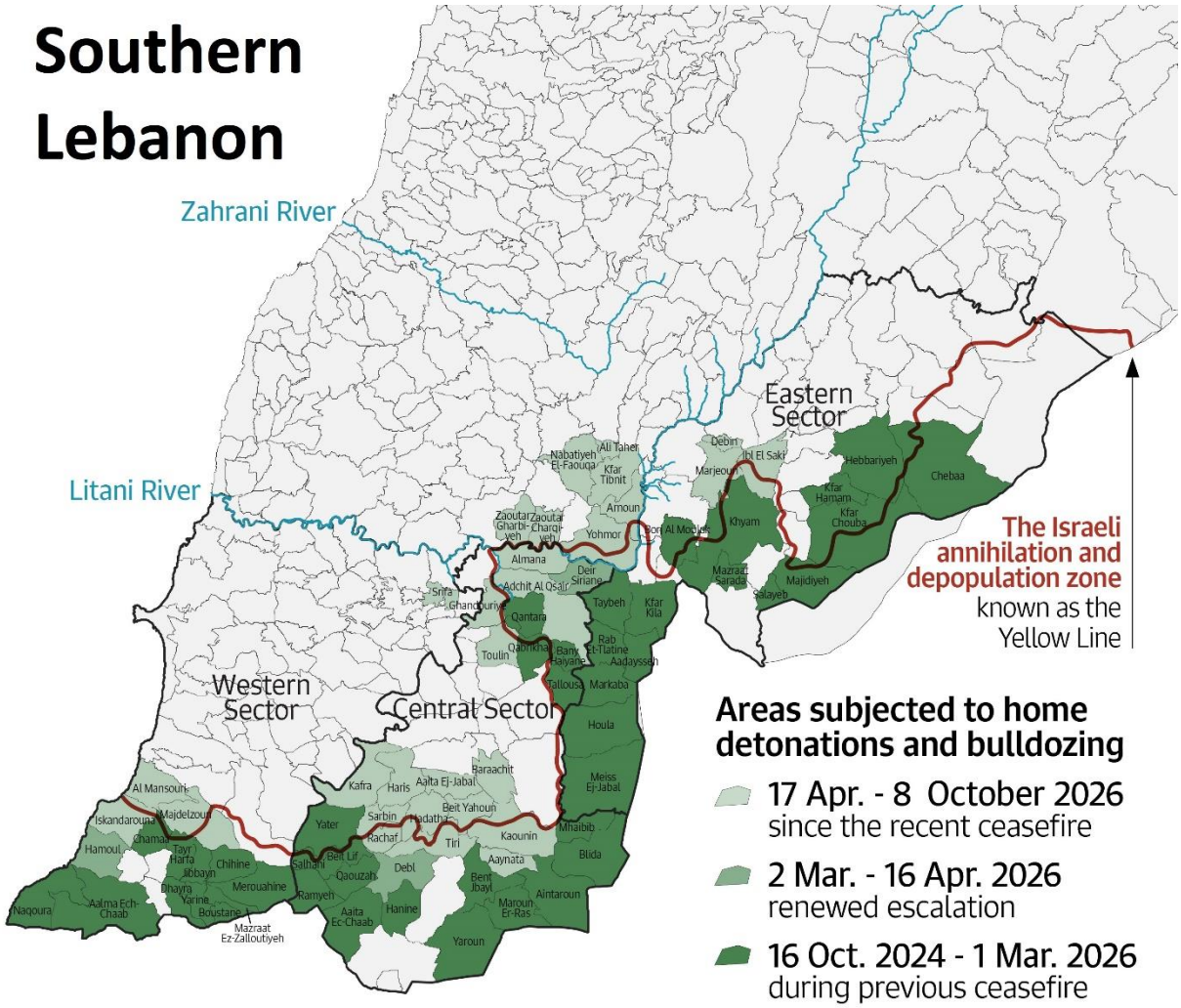


Figure 2: Map indicating chronology of Israel's destruction across southern Lebanon. *Source:* Public Works Studio.

Palestine (2015–present)

By sheer proportion of the national population affected by domicide, Palestinians exceed all others. With 25 distinct entries during the period, including combined cases, Israel's practice of domicide has affected at least 2.1 Palestinians. This must be seen in the context of Israel's *raison d'état* and, thus, Zionist state ideology calling for the colonial replacement of the Indigenous People. This pattern emerges not only through the serial VDB entries dating from 1917, but in government representative statements of intent. These are expressed without reference to the term 'domicide,' but take various forms, even invoking biblical passages that establish continuity of current practice with historic atrocities and seek scriptural license to do so in the present day.[31]

Continuity is also observed in the VDB entries of domicidal acts against at least 84,525 Indigenous Palestinian citizens of Israel in 16 distinct entries during this review period.[32] Perpetual IDPs living inside Israel and refugees outside their country dating from 1948 fall outside this numerical

review, but remain by far the majority of the Palestinian people subjected to domicide and entitled to full reparation.[33]

Rohingya in Myanmar (2015–present)

Also emblematic subjects of domicide in this period are the Rohingya. After Burmese military operations such as the *Nagamin* operation) forced hundreds of thousands to flee into Bangladesh in 1978 and the early 1990s, a military crackdown triggered initial mass border crossings in October 2016–January 2017. In August 2017, the combined Myanmar military (*Tatmadaw*) responded to Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) resistance with Rohingya "Clearance" operations, characterized by mass killings, sexual violence and burning hundreds of villages.

Ever since, Rohingya refugees number over 1.2 million in overcrowded Cox's Bazar (Kutupalong) and Bhasan Char Island settlements. Roughly 600,000 Rohingya remain inside Rakhine State, enduring the Myanmar military junta and ARSA. Thousands have risked dangerous sea passage to Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and India, where they face ongoing detention and forced returns.

On 30 September 2026, Malaysia repatriated the first group of a target 5,000 Rohingya returnees to Myanmar. Officially, Kuala Lumpur says they agreed to "voluntary" repatriation from detention centers amid a spike in anti-migrant sentiment in Malaysia.[34] They will be returning to a country where domicide is a standard tactic of armed conflicts, in general, as evidenced by the Noh T'Kaw and Kruh Tuh displacement instance.

2. Latent Conflicts and Protracted Crises

Sudan, the largest case of quantitative housing-unit and human-victim terms, is cited as the ultimate contemporary protracted-crisis paradigm, involving:

- Kinetic armed violence of the 2023 Civil War
- Pre-existing multi-generational colonial domicide in Darfur
- Development domicide from dam construction on the Nile
- Environmental domicide from climate-exacerbated droughts.

VDB Sudan entries since 2015: Darfur displacement cycles (multiple entries, 2.5 million+ displaced cumulatively since 2003, ongoing); Sudan Civil War 2023 (Khartoum/Darfur). Developmental domicide has caused Nile dam displacement in Blue Nile and Nubian territories. Climate-exacerbated drought has made habitation impossible in Sahel-adjacent zones (2015–2023). IDP Camps (August 2022) saw 349,000 victims of climate-exacerbated flooding of underserved IDP settlements.

Other conflict-related domicide practices recorded since 2015 include: (1) Army v. RSF (15 April 2023) — 10,700,000 victims; forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession/confiscation. (2) Kreik Conflict (January 2022) — 500,000 victims. (3) Jabal Marra (June 2020) — 27,000 victims. (4) al-Janaina Clashes (January 2020) — 30,000 victims. (5) Arba`at Dam (August 2024) — 50,000 victims due to demolition/destruction and negligence leading to an environmental/climate event; and (6) RSF Atrocities (October 2025) — 62,263 victims. Combined VDB records since 2015 areas at least 10.7 million victims across all four violation categories cited above.

3. Market-driven, Corporate and State Capture of Land

Asia region leads: 32.5 million forcibly displaced – Asia is not only the largest continent, but also the most rapidly developing. The vast expanse and variety of domicide cases is attributed to

various forms of market-driven, corporate and state capture of land, while demolishing much of the housing stock in its place. The Azerbaijani capital, Baku, is a case in point, where oil revenue resourced drastic modernization often at the expense of historic housing and other structures through the present. A more recent case in the Narimanov quarter is only an indicator of wider housing destruction with yet untold numbers of domicide victims with little or no compensation. However, the pattern is compiled also in the HLRN's *Housing and Land Rights Issues in Azerbaijan*, published on the occasion of the World Urban Forum hosted in Baku this year.

Since the 1990s, China's City of Shanghai has been demolished and rebuilt into a gleaming megacity in recent decades, now ranking with New York and London as a hub of global finance. That transformation has come at a grave—and largely untold—human cost. Such cases challenge the narrative of 'happy' or 'voluntary' displacees that—whether deliberate or unintended—conceals the perversity of displacement and legitimatizes it as natural, inevitable, or even politically and morally beneficial.

The removal of Shanghai's residents for market-driven urban development is treated in the critical literature as domicide for its scale and speed, and because it was deliberately state-driven, coercive with weak redress, causing loss beyond property, but also for its resistance.[35] The defiance against removal was exemplified by "nail households" (*dingzihu*) whose inhabitants refused to leave. Petitioners have appealed to higher authorities for years. Residents who documented their losses have asserted evidence of what was lost, showing that displacement was not simply accepted as the price of progress. The literature commonly summarizes the impacts as having uprooted "millions."[36]

Old Shanghai's clearance continued until the city announced in 2022 that it had finished redeveloping its large central blocks of old *lilong* housing, but any cumulative figure is elusive. Not all these relocations were universally coercive in the way the cited domicide definitions provide. The best-supported estimate could be some million households, or at least 3 million persons relocated since the early 1990s, with an unknown number removed against their will.

4. Foreign Occupation, Colonization and Population Transfer (cross border)

The highest frequency of discrete incidents in the entire dataset. Bureaucratic, administrative, and multi-generational:

- Middle East & North Africa: 64.1 million victims (highest regional total globally, all categories)
- Historic Palestine, including Israel-claimed territory: 16.6 million documented victims since 1917, categorized as structural apartheid:[37] demographic manipulation (inside the Green Line) and cross-border population transfer.

Inside Israel's pre-1967 boundaries, the weaponization of civil planning has produced zoning regimes and ethnic spatial restrictions favoring "Jewish nationals," making it virtually impossible for specific demographics to obtain legal building permits or occupy homes under any tenure arrangement.[38] When people build without permits, the state issues punitive demolition orders. Combined with systematic land confiscation and movement restrictions, the state slowly alters the demographic composition of an entire territory over decades. The violence is carried out by inspectors and courts, but the habitat is eradicated just as effectively as it would be by an airstrike.

1948 Palestinian refugee properties: This serious and continuing crime of population transfer initially expelled at least 770–780,000 (in the 1948 Nakba alone),[39] but an unrecorded number

over several months before 1948 and affecting nearly over 9.7 million victims and their descendants entitled to reparation today. Palestinian refugees form the world's largest and longest-standing refugee population in absolute terms, encompassing 1948 expellees and descendants, those forcibly expelled in the 1967 War and subsequent operations, and secondary-displacement victims.[40] Although the initial crime targeting homes, shelters and shelter seekers occurred nearly 80 years ago and continues, no structural remedy has been achieved. Refugee Properties (Palestine-Israel, 1948). The original crime of domicide remains live until reparation is done to the victims and their progeny. Therefore, the domicide is classified as an ongoing.

Western Sahara: Under illegal Moroccan occupation for half a century, Western Sahara and its Indigenous People are subjected expatriate military control, government operations, and corporations conducting domicide throughout the period. HLRN documents systematic domicide in Western Sahara consisting of forced relocation of Sahrawi pastoralists from ancestral territories; demolition of traditional dwellings; confiscation of land for phosphate extraction, export-oriented agriculture and tourist development; settler colonies of Moroccan nationals in occupied territory constituting population transfer prohibited and prosecuted under the post-World War II Statutes of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals,[41] and strictly prohibited under Art. 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The VDB contains 17 entries for Western Sahara — from "Invasion, war & occupation" (October 1975, 330,000 victims) through Azmeilat el-Guezlan & Tadkhast (22 April 2025, 100 victims of forced eviction, demolition/destruction, and dispossession/confiscation). In this review period, *Human Rights to Habitat in Western Sahara* documents in greater breadth and detail how the Moroccan military occupation, colonial government operations and complicit corporations have sustained systematic destruction of Sahrawi habitat throughout the half-century occupation.[42]

Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon: Between October 2023 and December 2024, Israeli attacks in Lebanon killed more than 4,000 people and displaced over one million inhabitants. At its April 2026 peak, Israel's domicide in Lebanon had displaced more than 1.2 million people, almost 22 percent of Lebanon's population.[43] In addition, nearly 200,000 Syrians fled back to Syria, along with nearly 32,000 Lebanese. Many people were displaced twice, once in 2024 and again in 2026, so the two million-plus peaks should not be added together as separate individuals, but separate instances. However, cumulatively, Israel has displaced millions of Lebanese, targeting homes, shelters and shelter seekers over 48 years of incursions into Lebanon.

The dozen Lebanon entries in the VDB this period are necessarily cumulative reports, given the scale of each attack. Nonetheless, individual cases reveal details of the magnitude and nature of domicide in Destruction of the southern suburbs (in Arabic: إبادة الضاحية الجنوبية) since September 2024, with details in Ain le Mreisse, Masakan Shaabiyye and Hay el Sellom cases that Public Works Studio have contributed to the VDB. At this writing, the comprehensive costs, loss and damage of this domicide have not yet been quantified. However, in Urban October 2026, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz bragged about wiping out dozens of villages in South Lebanon.[44]

Tibet: One of the oldest occupations on the planet is that of Tibet, whereby Han Chinese planners and development agents have targeted the living spaces of Indigenous Tibetan urban and rural dwellers since 1950. VDB entries for Tibet since 2015 document a Chinese-occupation policy of forced demolition of traditional housing under China's "Village Consolidation" (*cunzhuang zhengli*) program and mandatory relocation of nomadic pastoralists under "ecological migration" (*shengtai yimin*) policies. These programs displaced an estimated 500,000+ Tibetan nomads

between 2000–2020, with enforcement continuing since 2015 across Qinghai, Sichuan, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, severing pastoralist land-tenure relationships constituting the material basis of Indigenous Tibetan cultural and cosmological identity.

Specific VDB Tibet entries since 2015 include: Upper Wonto & Shipa Villages (February 2024) — 10,000 victims (forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession/confiscation, environmental/climate event); Red City Temple (August 2021) — 3,000 victims; Kharmar Monastery (July 2021) — 3,000 victims; "Comfort Housing" (January 2020) — 550,000 victims (all three primary categories + environmental); Forced Labor Camp Transfer (January 2020) — 500,000 victims. Over one million victims are documented from 2020–21 entries alone.[45]

In **Indian-occupied Kashmir**, house demolitions and seizures against the occupied population have steadily increased, especially since India's parliament rescinded protections of indigenous land tenure in 2019. VDB entries since 2015 include: (1) punitive demolitions by Indian security forces as collective punishment in Shopian, Pulwama, and Sopore districts; (2) revocation of special status under Article 370 (August 2019) enabling non-Kashmiri nationals to acquire land and establishing preconditions for demographic engineering; (3) seizure of properties under the Public Safety Act without judicial process.

VDB Kashmir entries since 2015 include: Land Grab, Disempowerment (August 2019) — 213,627 victims (forced eviction and dispossession/confiscation following revocation of Article 370, opening land to non-Kashmiri ownership); Gujjar & Bakarwal Forest (November 2020) — 113,031 victims (forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession, privatization); Nawakadal (May 2020) — 110 victims; Security Forces Loot, Burn (May 2020) — 65 victims; multiple 2022 records of seizure of political prisoners' properties (e.g., JeI properties, Shabir Shah Home) — punitive property seizure as political persecution; Indo-Pak conflict (May/September 2025) — 10,300 victims (demolition/destruction in latest escalation). A series of articles in HIC-HLRN's *Land Times*/*أحوال الأرض* also has chronicled these trends in detail, resulting in land-tenure insecurity affecting approximately 14 million Kashmir Valley residents.

5. Ethnic Cleansing and Demographic Engineering (within a state)

Nagorno-Karabakh: Phase 1 — First Karabakh War (1988–94): Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia, October 1988) — 235,000 victims; Karabakh War (Azerbaijan, January 1988) — 835,000 victims. Combined: 1,070,000 displaced.[46] The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group produced no final settlement over three decades. Phase 2 — 2018–20 / 44-Day War: A 1918 VDB entry Zangezur for Armenia documents massive HLP violations against Azerbaijanis, well preceding the September 2020 hostilities but still figuring in the calculus of reciprocal domicide. The 44-Day War (Sept–Nov 2020): Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan, September 2020) — 50,000 victims; Refugee-like conditions (Armenia, September 2020) — 36,989 victims. Phase 3 — Final Offensive (19–20 September 2023): Karabakh campaign (Azerbaijan, September 2023) — 120,000 victims. Azerbaijani forces expelled the entire remaining ethnic Armenian population within 72 hours, and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic dissolved within weeks. This closed a 108-year VDB record of reciprocal domicide by both Azerbaijani and Armenian state actors.

Within its internationally recognized borders, Israel continues to use administrative means and militarized police actions to serially dispossess and demolish Palestinian citizens' housing and land by multiple pretexts. Notorious among these are the refusal to recognize Palestinian Bedouin

villages left in the northern Galilee and the southern Naqab regions, subjecting them to incremental and mass demolitions following the destruction of 108 villages and habitations with the forced transfer of the Indigenous inhabitants into their enclosure (*siyaj*) in 1951–53. Among these instances are the serial demolitions of the Naqab village of al-Sirr, which underwent its fourth wave of demolitions on 17 September 2025 and a fifth wave in June 2026 by forced self-demolition to avoid exorbitant fees).[47] Emblematic of the cycles of domicide is the village of al-`Araqib, home to al-Turi and al-Uqbi tribes, which Israeli authorities have demolished for the 244th time in December 2025 after local inhabitants have rebuilt it in that area that JNF has designated to implant Ambassador's Forest of environmentally unsustainable Aleppo pines.

China distinguished itself as the country with the numerically largest set of unhoused persons as part of demographic manipulation. As the review period opens in 2015, the removal of Muslim citizens in the case of Uyghurs, E. Turkestan/Xinjiang counts 3,000,000 affected. The majority of these were subject to forced eviction for resettlement in 'rehabilitation' facilities.

6. Punitive and Persecutory Actions

Regimes motivated by racism involving agents carrying out house demolitions, forced evictions, arson or other forms of raids and direct destructive attacks on homes of subject populations include:

"Bulldozer justice"[48] is a term referring to the use of the bulldozer, an industrial machine, as a political tool and symbol in Indian politics, particularly in the State of Uttar Pradesh, starting in 2017. This trend of bulldozer injustice has seen heavy machinery being deployed to demolish houses of those who have protested and have been accused of rioting often without following due process. State authorities in India have bulldozed houses, shops and small establishments, disproportionately targeting illegal construction in the country. However, the bulldozer has become a rallying symbol for Hindu nationalist politicians against other faith communities.[49]

Bulldozer campaigns against Muslim households have characterized domicidal policy and practice in India. Multiple records of punitive demolitions ordered by state governments are entered in the VDB for India since 2015 from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat states against properties of Muslim residents accused of participation in protests or sectarian unrest, without judicial process. No records are found of comparable measures against Hindu provocateurs, including state officials at all levels. Documented incidents concentrate in 2022–2024 (Rajgarh & Khargone, Jahangirpuri and multiple sites across Uttar Pradesh in April 2022), when India's "bulldozer raj"[50] razed 74,000 homes.[51] The Supreme Court of India issued a conditional stay against the practice in October 2024, but only after considerable damage was done.

VDB India entries targeting Muslim households since 2015 include: Anti-Muslim UP Govt (June 2022) — 15 victims (forced eviction, demolition/destruction); Karauli Hindu Riot (April 2022) — 50 victims (forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession); Delhi Govt. Razes Muslim Homes (October 2022) — 125 victims; Muslim Properties (December 2022) — 21,825 victims (the largest single India VDB entry targeting Muslim-owned properties); G20 'Beautification' (April 2023) — 35,000 victims (forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession targeting informal settlements, also targeting Muslim communities); and Assam Families Homeless (September 2021) — 5,200 victims.

Additional VDB cases: Muslim-owned properties targeted in sectarian (communal) violence — Baruch, Gujarat (2015 cycle); Muzaffarnagar (2013–15); Delhi Pogrom (February 2020, northeast Delhi) — destroying mosques, Muslim-owned commercial and residential structures, excluding

victims from reconstruction assistance. The cumulative documented victim count exceeds 200,000 persons.[52]



Figure 3: A Palestinian Bedouin woman screams as she watches Israeli police raze her village, al-Sirr, in the Naqab region of Palestine, now in southern Israel, on 17 September 2025. *Source*: Oren Ziv/*Middle East Eye*.

In addition to the India entries above, VDB records involving Muslim victims from other regions since 2015 include: Myanmar/Rohingya entries (multiple records from 2017–2019, totaling 724,000+ victims); Uyghur communities in Xinjiang/China (multiple records 2018–2020); and Bosniak communities (historical records carried forward). The Indian-occupied Kashmir and Israeli-occupied Palestine entries represent the highest-frequency of punitive/persecutory records targeting Muslim households in the VDB since 2015. Meanwhile numerous observers have taken note of the similarities in strategy, tactics and methods applied by Israeli forces across Palestine and those in Indian-occupied Kashmir.[53]

United States urban renewal policies and urban policing in low-income neighborhoods have long demonstrated domicide applied along racial and economic lines under civil cover well before the codification of the human right to adequate housing.[54] The dramatic September 2025 "Midway Blitz" entry of aerial bombing of a Chicago USA tenement cites a government agency's attack on low-income housing where immigrants were known to reside. The case establishes continuity of historic state-sanctioned domicide as a domestic policy instrument in a nominally democratic context, this time as part of a Trump Administration assault on immigrants of any legal status appearing to hail from the Global South.

In the Chicago Midway Blitz case, federal agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) destroyed homes and brutalized residents during military-style immigration raid. On 30 September 2025, approximately 300 federal agents deployed a Black Hawk helicopter, unmarked vehicles, and tactical assault teams on a residential apartment complex in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood. The state agents targeted a predominantly Latino and Black residential community, breaking down doors without warrants and detaining adults and children at gunpoint. As of May 2026, 18 of those residents filed federal tort claims alleging unlawful arrests and physical brutality.

While this is a singular act of attacking homes, it forms part of a pattern of violent ICE raids on homes, as well as schools, workplaces, shopping centers, parking lots and other public spaces, However, the result is to subject a perceived class of persons to arbitrary detention, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and/or punishment. This pattern also renders it impossible for this perceived class of persons to inhabit such spaces, extending also to their homes, where they remain subject to random attack. The VDB classifies these manifestations under the punitive-and-persecutory typology, while the historic VDB repertoire shows continuity of such localized practice as in Razing 14,000 Chicago Public Housing Units (1999), whereby 70,000 persons, largely of the same swarthy ethnic classification, were subject to forced eviction and demolition/destruction. During Urban October 2026, federal agents also raided Somali-born U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's home[55] under the guise of an immigration enforcement-related criminal investigation. Therefore, the notorious Midway Blitz raid is not an isolated incident in that country context but part of a broader policy to demonstrate that, wherever U.S. immigrants reside, they can never feel safe or free.

7. Infrastructure Development

Cases from China are prominent among the examples of domicide practiced in the context of large-scale and infrastructure development. Examples provided here form part of the country's ambitious habitat re-engineering policy that calls for the largest population-transfer scheme on record, seeking the unhousing and rehousing of 250 million Chinese.[56]

Shandong Province village clearance: The Shandong entry documents 5 million rural residents forcibly relocated under China's land-consolidation (*tudi zhengli*) program: Communities relocated from low-density rural settlements into high-rise apartment blocks in county-seat towns, severing agricultural land-use rights and traditions without adequate compensation or informed consent. Village demolitions proceeded faster than resettlement infrastructure could be completed.

Three Gorges Dam construction: 4 million people displaced: The initial 2007 Three Gorges Dam VDB entry documents displacement of approximately 4 million persons from the Yangtze River gorge zone, 1994–2008, for reservoir-zone impoundment. At least 13 cities, 140 towns and 1,350 villages along the river were destroyed with the displacement of some 1.3 million people (some observers set the figure at 1.9 million).[57]

The project, for which planning began in 1939, became operational in late 2015, while the wider development has sought to forcibly urbanize the last of two-thirds (21.6 million) of the region's 31 million rural population by completion of the shipping locks and portage railroads in late 2020.[58] Although China's development efforts have raised millions out of poverty over the past 50 years, independent assessments have documented inadequate land-replacement ratios and loss of agricultural livelihoods, with an estimated 300,000–400,000 resettled Three Gorges area residents remaining in post-relocation poverty.[59]

Neom and Jeddah Urban Projects: In Saudi Arabia, two prominent demolition cases count among large-scale development projects involving domicide. In January 2022, an estimated 500,000 to over 1,000,000 inhabitants underwent mass demolitions under redevelopment project targeting south and central Jeddah. At least 558,000 people across more than 60 designated neighborhoods housing about 47% foreign nationals [60] were directly impacted by home demolitions, property seizures and forced evictions in Jeddah neighborhoods as part of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's *Vision 2030* announced in 2016. The plan aims to establish four main international landmarks on the newly levelled ground: An opera house, a museum, a

stadium and an aquarium in place of the destroyed homes. Residents claimed they were claimed given claimed 48 hours and, in some cases, just 24 hours to vacate their homes. Authorities also cut off people's water, electricity and other services before notice was given.

This case in an urban setting follows the removal of a targeted rural community to make way for the futuristic Neom Megaproject intended to cover an area the size of Belgium at the far north of Saudi Arabia's northwestern Tabuk Province Red Sea coastline. Advertising materials and solicitations to external investors stress that the Neom City and surrounding project would be built on 'virgin' land, ready to be conquered with futuristic technology. However, "For the Huwaitat tribe, Neom is being built on our blood, on our bones," says a member of the 20,000 al-Huwaiti tribe indigenous to the area and local activist now living in London. On 13 April 2020, the killing of Abdul Rahim al-Huwaiti, the face of the tribes' criticism of their forced eviction, and the imprisonment of several Huwaiti opponents to the project have characterized the tension between the tribe and the kingdom's development plans.[61]



Figure 4: At an eviction drive in Lucknow's Akbarnagar, more than a thousand residential properties and a hundred commercial properties were demolished in government-driven domicide in June 2024. *Source*: Naeem Ansari/ANI.

8. Genocide

Military uses of artificial intelligence (AI) in occupied Palestine: While the pattern emerging from Israel's military doctrine of targeting homes, shelters and shelter seekers continues to reflect the Jewish National Fund's 1948 Plan D. The pattern shifts only in "tactics and techniques, geographical scope, scale, intensity, rationale and technologies," while the underlying domicide doctrine remains constant. Post-2015 continuation: Israeli forces have repeatedly bombed displaced persons "in flight and/or their places of refuge," including areas previously designated as safe or humanitarian zones by military commanders. Israel's 2023–2026 Gaza campaigns represent the most intensively documented phase. The VDB records compound forced eviction, demolition/destruction, dispossession/confiscation, and privatization violations across hundreds of thousands of Palestinian residential units. Characteristic of the current phase of innovation is the infamous "Where's Daddy" application, which tracks and directs massive strikes on *Lavender* AI program-listed individuals when they are home at night to die with their extended family in the rubble of their home.[62]

Since 2015, expansion of settler-colony infrastructure (800,000+ settlers in 300+ West Bank settlements); demolition of 2,000+ Palestinian structures per year in Area C under permit denial policies; and "Operation Iron Swords" (October 2023–present) in Gaza were precursors to the current phase of domicide that has unfolded since Urban October 2023. Damage assessments estimate Israel's destruction of 82% of Gaza's buildings stock, affecting 2.3 million residents by this year's World Habitat Day, the most concentrated domicide operation recorded in the VDB dataset. Israeli occupation forces in Gaza continued to destroy some 10% of structures after the October 2025 ceasefire.[63] The October 2023–October 2026 pattern is consistent with a doctrine of denying Palestinian habitat as a strategic civil policy and military objective since the State of Israel's inception.

The Birzeit analysis frames this military doctrine within the arc of "apartheid, population transfer and genocide": Israeli state agencies pursue these three composite crimes domicide whether through during Israel's declared wars, annexation or occupation across all historic Palestine.[64]

Justice compels criminalizing, prosecuting, ending such brutal yet such ubiquitous injustice

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A Composite Crime and Cascade of Human Rights Violations

The database reveals five specific entries where all five VDB-monitored violation methods occur simultaneously: forced eviction, physical destruction, land dispossession, privatization, and environmental disaster. These include (1) Kintinian Community (Guinea, 5 December 2015) — 1,900 victims. (Outside this review's timeframe but still relevant is the pattern formed by domicides in the context of mining operations, combining physical destruction, land seizure, privatization and environmental contamination are: (2) Agritrans (Haiti, January 2014) — 800 victims of agricultural-land conversion. (3) Fertile Land for Sweatshops (Haiti, January 2011) — 4,000 victims in farmlands converted to export-processing zone development. (4) Plan Maroc Vert, Morocco (1 January 2008, ongoing) — estimated 9,500 displaced; "green" agricultural development scheme. (5) Flooded by Corruption, Philippines (1 January 2000 and ongoing) — 2,700,000 victims. The 5th example has the largest number of impacted people out of the all-five-violation cases in the VDB. This instance involved a governance failure through corruption that directly enabled a flood disaster.

Each instance recorded in the VDB potentially triggers a cascade of human rights violations:

- Adequate housing with the obvious destruction of the dwelling place
- Security of person due to the use of violence and weaponry
- The right to life in the case of deaths due to direct targeting or what may be dismissed as "collateral damage" (referred to summarily as "*naza*" in the context of Israeli-perpetrated domicide[65])
- The right to health, with water and sanitation infrastructure destroyed
- Denial of education where schools are also destroyed, or substituting as temporary shelters
- Loss of decent work, often as a consequence of local economic workplaces being erased and food producers being separated from their land and fishing grounds

- Denial of adequate food, with the destruction of food stores, disruption of food production and survivors' reliance on short-term humanitarian food relief, if available
- In addition to the denial of means of subsistence, Indigenous populations experience the rupture of the community's existential, spiritual and historical connection to land as recognized under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- The degradation of culture amid the disruption of normal life and social cohesion after the community's dispersal and loss of environment
- Other costs, loss and damage typically result from home destruction and demolition; e.g., loss of documentation required to formally exercise the right to leave and return to one's own country, interruption or loss of social security protection of the family (ICESCR, Arts. 9 and 10, respectively), notably with the loss of identity documents and ration cards.

The peak year for domicide entries initiated was 2020, with 88 distinct records logged in the VDB. However, the numbers of actual domicide victims are greatest in the period 2023–26. That is because the increased number of victims and accelerated pace of domicide committed in that period necessitated combining multiple instances in a single entry, notably in the coinciding domicide actions perpetrated in Palestine, Ukraine and Sudan.

Each instance recorded in the VDB triggers a cascade of human rights violations.

Structural Drivers

Racism

Racial stratification produces differential vulnerability by excluding racialized populations from property protection, legal remedy, and political representation. VDB records consistently show racialized minorities over-represented as domicide victims: From Jim Crow-era and subsequent urban clearances (USA) to Rohingya village burnings (Myanmar), historic forced removals carried out by apartheid South Africa in that country and in Namibia, and the particularly virulent forms of Israeli population transfer and apartheid throughout historic Palestine, including the 1967-occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Ideologies of racial hierarchy convert physical planning and security apparatus into selective habitat destruction instruments long after the antidiscrimination injunction issued at Habitat I (1976).

Religion

Religious identity has served as a common domicide targeting criterion: Destruction of Muslim residential neighborhoods under Indian state authority (2022–2024); demolition of Christian and Yazidi structures in ISIL-controlled territories (2014–2019); the militarized Buddhist nationalism government of Myanmar burning Muslim Rohingya villages; targeting Muslim households, homeowners and landowners in Indian-occupied Kashmir; discriminatory zoning and permit denial targeting Indigenous religious minorities in Israel and oPt. Religiously motivated domicide achieves forced population homogeneity through habitat elimination. Religiously-exclusive notions of "social cohesion" premise denying Indigenous Palestinian citizens of Israel their housing and residency rights,[66] violent "communal" animosity in India, and inter-sectarian urban

domicide with the 2017 total destruction of al-Awamiya village in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, with a 25,000 Shi`a population.

Nationalism

State-building ideologies defining the national body in exclusive ethnic or cultural terms generate structural pressure for eliminating housing communities deemed incompatible with the national project. Population transfer, settler-colonial displacement, and demographic engineering through planning law and practice are the primary instruments. The Nagorno-Karabakh record — 1,070,000 displaced across both communities in Phase 1 alone — demonstrates the reciprocal and self-escalating character of nationalist domicide during this period, with a legacy of mutual ethnic cleansing dating back to at least 1917–18.

Patriarchy

Gendered property and inheritance regimes deny women individual land title and tenure security, making female-headed households disproportionately vulnerable to eviction. VDB records from South Asia, West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa document cases where women's exclusion from formal ownership records is instrumentalized to void restitution and compensation claims after displacement, compounding the initial harm with permanent dispossession.

However, data that HIC-HLRN and partners have collected across Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe through 2017–22 point to the systematic dispossession of women's housing, often repeated multiple times throughout a woman's life. This pattern suggests that women's status — weather single, divorced, widowed or as heirs — is sufficient for communities and societies to consider it "normal" to appropriate women's residences and subject them to forced eviction with impunity. Such evictions and dispossessions targeting women without male title holders also premise women's dispossession and displacement policies by assigning resettlement and/or compensation benefits through male family members only. [67] Likewise, post-conflict reconstruction often restores property to men while ignoring women's prior occupation. All these methods may constitute patriarchally structured domicide.[68]

The VDB does not monitor gender-based violations as a distinct category, mainly because the incidents are globally under-reported and beyond HIC-HLRN's capacity to monitor faithfully across all regions. However, in this review, it deserves mention that where the systematic dispossession of women's housing is committed in various contexts and, particularly in development and resettlement cases, contemporary research has found that these are not merely housing crises, but also serious breaches of reproductive autonomy, consent and self-determination. They also have stark health consequences, whereas displaced women are three times more likely to die in childbirth and face monumental barriers to accessing contraception, prenatal services and emergency obstetric care.[69]

In Nairobi, for example, forced evictions from informal settlements under the pretext of development have demonstrated severe impacts on pregnant adolescents and young mothers.[70] The displacement of Indigenous communities such as the Sengwer & Cherangany in Kenya's Embobut Forest, framed as climate mitigation, have destroyed the social fabric that protects girls' wellbeing.[71] In addition to gross violations under the state's ICESCR obligations, these evictions also breach the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDaW)[72] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),[73] but the specific gendered consequences for adolescents remain largely unstudied.



Figure 5: The scene after riparian evictions in Nairobi, 2024. *Source*: Pamoja Trust.

Development Competition over Natural Resources and Built Environment

Competition over extractable natural resources — oil, gas, minerals, water and arable land — drives conflict manifesting as domicide when communities residing on, or adjacent to those resources are displaced to facilitate extraction. Documented VDB patterns cite oil-field expansion in South Sudan, displacing Nuer and Dinka communities; phosphate extraction in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara, displacing and dispossessing Indigenous Sahrawis; concessional and informal mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic has triggering armed evictions; water-control infrastructure (dams, irrigation diversions) in the Nile, Mekong and Tigris-Euphrates basins have displaced millions in upstream-dependent agricultural communities (see Three Gorges and Shandong villages VDB entries and "Nile Dam Building and Climate Impacts" on *HLRN News*). In each documented case, domicide is the mechanism through which resource commodification is operationally achieved. The displaced community's equitable and sustainable access to, use of, and control over land are treated not as rights to be accommodated, but as obstacles to be over-ridden, positioning domicide as a structural feature of extractivist economic models rather than the exception.

Such scrambles for resources such as land, water, minerals, fossil fuels and agricultural territory function as a primary driver of domicide where the removal of an existing population is the precondition for resource extraction. VDB-documented patterns include also:

1. **Extractive industries**: Kintinian Community, Guinea (2015, all five violation categories, 1,900 victims each entry). India mining entries document clearance of inhabited communities as a precondition for mineral extraction[74];

2. **Hydraulic infrastructure**: Three Gorges Dam (4,000,000 victims; China) and Arba`at Dam (50,000 victims; Sudan, 2024), where large-scale water infrastructure have flooded inhabited

valleys without adequate resettlement and hydraulic engineering has been converted into domicide by design; and

3. **Agricultural land conversion**: Fertile Land for Sweatshops (Haiti, 4,000 victims; 2011) and Plan Maroc Vert (Morocco, 2008), both invoking all-five-violation records and documenting how "green" or "development" framings mask resource-capture operations targeting agricultural communities.

4. **Short-term rental boom**: A contemporary trend in systemic forced evictions is found in the boom in "platforming" of short-term rental and "touristification" of entire urban neighborhoods and converting natural settings in tourist destinations. One of the most dramatic of these cases is found in Benin, with four tourism and coastal-development projects that have displaced and disposed thousands of local households since 2021. Displaced for Coconut Palms records the forced eviction and demolition of several villages housing at least 6,000 people in Benin.

Another illustrative case is that of the historic El Pópulo neighborhood of Cádiz, Spain, an urban area with a medieval past, boasting sites from Roman times. The eviction of Maria Muñoz (88) as part of landlord's conversion of the neighborhood into more lucrative short-term rentals for transitory tourists in 2024 enraged locals. Although this story may appear to be an isolated case, it represents a pattern of forcing long-time and often vulnerable renters into the street in favor of enterprising landlords and private corporations. Local resident and spokesman for the Platform of Neighbors and Friends of El Pópulo Antonio Gallardo exclaimed: "They are exterminating us. We are fighting to preserve the traditional neighborly morning greeting."

The story repeated itself with the 23 September 2026 eviction of María del Carmen Abascal (87), which set off a nationwide wave of protests against Spain's housing crisis. An estimated 10,000 concerned citizens turned out to protest her eviction from Madrid's Retiro neighborhood. Two weeks after the forced eviction on a stretcher from her home of 71 years, María del Carmen died on 7 October.

"They are exterminating us. We are fighting to preserve the traditional neighborly morning greeting."

— Antonio Gallardo, Platform of Neighbors and Friends of El Pópulo

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In each case, whether incremental, in the case of the two Marías, or *en masse*, the resource is immovable; the community is not. Domicide resolves the competition over natural resources and built environment by eliminating the presence of one party to it.

5. **Privatization and real-estate speculation:** Neoliberalism and the lack of a human rights-based housing policy lead to private-investor speculation in real estate that often forecloses needed land for housing. Low-income households who are excluded from housing markets and have no option but to build on vacant land often find themselves embroiled in legalistic disputes against them, pursuing destruction of the housing and community. When state institutions or absentee investors assert counter-claims to the same land, courts usually side with the title holders. The resulting domicide then becomes a kinetic violation within a pervasive system of housing injustice.

At Toma 17 Mayo, in the popular Cerro Navia sector of Santiago, the early hours of 16 May 2024 (one day before the 15th the settlement's anniversary), over 100 troops violently descended on the community, using tear gas, forced the families to the perimeter. Thus began the state's total destruction of 200 homes with backhoes. As assiduously documented by the Red de Derechos Humanos y Desalojos, the 1,000 victims of this act of violence were left on the street.

Destruction, Relocation amid Climate-change Adaptation

Measures that do not apply the legal criteria as safeguards for lawful evictions could result in turning human settlements into urban conflict zones. These failures to maintain system coherence by implementing the human rights obligations of the state and, by extension, subsidiary parties and agents could find operations by spheres of government and contractors carrying out climate-induced relocations that rise to the level of domicide.

Observing the pattern of these phenomena arising from the VDB in 2026, HIC-HLRN's inquiry into *Green Evictions* explores a growing category of domicide operating with environmental justification. This paradoxically seems to pit the current climate-action Sustainable Development Goal 13 against the adequate-housing Goal 11. This provokes repeating the call for forced eviction alternatives and remedies explicitly and meaningfully in the global development agendas.[75]

Governments, development banks, and conservation organizations are deploying "climate adaptation," "disaster risk reduction," and "resilience" frameworks to authorize forced evictions from territories designated for green infrastructure, conservation zones, or coastal protection schemes. Affected communities report coercive processes with inadequate consultation, no genuine alternatives, loss of livelihood and resettlement conditions that obviate the socioeconomic and cultural functions of their lost habitat.

The VDB entry Plan Maroc Vert (Morocco) — one of the only six all-five-violation records — demonstrates how a nominally "green" scheme simultaneously constitutes forced eviction, demolition, dispossession, privatization, and environmental harm to the communities nominally being "protected." Cases documented across Latin America (flood-mitigation and riverbank-restoration projects), Africa (conservation buffer zones and national park expansion), and Asia (coastal resilience and mangrove-restoration programs).

An example of malign neglect that led to massive climate-related destruction of homes is the case of Petrópolis Landslide, in Brazil. There, the incoming President Bolsonaro administration discontinued a Japanese-supported early-warning project in the area and defunded the Civil Defense to create the conditions for the destruction of 80 homes in a matter of minutes under exceptionally heavy rains in February 2022.

Impunity

Across all 1,958 records in the VDB, spanning millions of victims over decades, there is not a single documented case where a perpetrator was held to full structural accountability under a charge of domicide, or that victims enjoyed remedy according to the entitlements provided in the UN's remedy and reparations framework (RRF). Domestic legal systems either lack the instruments or are actively mobilized as tools of the domicide — rubber-stamping official demolition orders.

In cases of perpetrators across borders, as in the U.S., German and British collaboration with Israel's domicide in Palestine, the lack of political will to uphold international law in the official

sphere across powerful states and their governments is attributed as the principal impediment to prosecution of the already-codified crimes associated with these actions.

In the quarter century that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been in force, very few suspects of designated crimes have come to justice. As of 2024, the ICC has secured ten convictions since the Rome Statute entered into force (2002). Cases with documented proximity to acts of domicide include Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi (Mali, sentenced to nine years prison in 2016 was convicted of the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against historic monuments and buildings in Timbuktu. Bosco Ntaganda (DRC, sentenced to 30 years in 2019) for 18 counts, including attacks on civilian objects and pillaging in the residential destruction in Ituri province. *Union des Patriotes Congolais* (UPC) commander Germain Katanga (DRC, sentenced to 12 years in 2014) was convicted for operations involving attack on the village of Bogoro, Ituri Province, including burning and destruction of civilian homes, a direct act of domicide, but housing destruction was incidental to primary charges. Between 18 February and 3 March 2003, the UPC were reported to have destroyed 26 villages in one area, killing at least 350 people and forcing 60,000 to flee their homes.[76]

In no documented case was a perpetrator held to full structural accountability under the UN's remedy and reparations framework.

In 2021, the ICC convicted Dominic Ongwen (Uganda), former child soldier and commander of one of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) brigades, was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, torture and enslavement. His crimes included also destruction of civilian homes and attacks on IDP camps; the most proximate ICC analogue to the domicide framework.[77]

The critical gap is that these convictions did not involve "domicide" as a distinct charge. Housing destruction was subsumed under existing crimes against humanity and war crimes provisions under Rome Statute (Arts. 7 and 8, respectively). The absence of a named domicide charge means prosecutorial attention is not systematically directed to residential destruction as a distinct crime.

Six Tiers of Accountability

Tier 1 — Sovereign Governments

As primary duty holders, states must take preventive measures such as issuing legal moratoriums on administrative demolitions and integrate the UN reparations framework into domestic law toward respect, protection and fulfillment of the human right to remedy.

Tier 2 — Non-State Combatants

Armed militia groups must be charged explicitly for destroying civilian infrastructure for tactical gain. The basis for prosecution is found in existing norms of law and jurisprudence, including the extension of IHL prohibitions in the Fourth Geneva Conventions' Optional Protocol 1 (Arts. 1(4) and 96(3)) and criminal provisions of the Rome Statute.

Tier 3 — Corporate Entities and Other Enterprises

Real estate developers, multinational extractive industries, mega-project consortiums and non-profit organizations engaged in conducting, funding and/or otherwise. Culprit institutions also include self-described charities funding or otherwise aiding domicide operations. Notorious among these are Israel's ambiguously self-identified parastatal organizations (Jewish National Fund, World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency, Histadrut, Mekorot and their affiliates). JNF and WZO/JA are formally part of the State of Israel under legislation and Basic Laws [78] but paradoxically operate as locally registered, nongovernmental, tax-exempt charities in at least 50 extraterritorial jurisdictions, while seeking funds and recruits to commit domicide across historic Palestine for well over a century.

Tier 4 — Multilateral Institutions

International organizations bear obligations to avoid criminal actions and human rights violations and breaches of IHL. This includes institutions such as the World Bank, International Finance Corporation, International Monetary Fund (IMF), regional development banks and climate-finance facilities providing capital for displacement in the context of mega-projects. These obligations and liabilities are elaborated in the International Law Commission's draft Articles on the Responsibility of International Organizations (2011). These (DARIO) Articles extend to international organizations the same responsibility framework applied to states: prohibition of internationally wrongful acts; obligations of cessation and reparation. Under these Articles, international financial and development institutions bear responsibility when their instruments directly enable domicide operations, including through infrastructure loans and grants for projects that displace communities without rights-compliant resettlement and free, prior and informed consent.

Among DARIO's key provisions is Article 31, which requires full reparation for injury caused by the organization's internationally wrongful act. Articles 41–42 address serious breaches of peremptory norms (*jus cogens*) including the prohibition against forced displacement and the right to adequate housing, requiring not only cessation but non-recognition and non-assistance with the illegal situation. Article 53 protects human rights obligations from suspension even through countermeasures. A multilateral institution financing an infrastructure mega-project resulting in domicide bears independent international legal responsibility under DARIO, not merely accessory liability.

Tier 5 — Third States

Along with individual, collective and domestic duties under IHRL and IHL, states and their organs bear extraterritorial obligations (ETOs); i.e., responsibility for their actions and their consequences outside their own borders. These actions include supplying finance, arms, equipment, matériel, settlers or other benefits for such operations, including for conflict, occupation and war, development projects, bilateral investment and assistance, and any other measures resulting in domicide.[79]

Tier 6 — Individual Liability

Under the Rome Statute, individual responsibility is the subject of the ICC's deliberately limited jurisdiction. A case must meet several conditions before the Court can act, and once it does, the Statute details how a person can be held responsible for mass harm.

The ICC exercises jurisdiction across four dimensions:

1. **Subject-matter jurisdiction**: The four core crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression. Housing destruction is prosecutable under existing provisions: crimes against humanity (Art. 7) encompass deportation, forcible transfer, persecution, and other inhumane acts; war crimes (Art. 8) include extensive destruction of civilian property not justified by military necessity and attacking civilian objects.

2. **Territorial/personal jurisdiction**: Crimes committed on the territory of a state party, by a national of a state party, or when the Security Council refers a situation, regardless of state party status.

3. **Temporal jurisdiction**: Crimes committed only after 1 July 2002, the date the Rome Statute entered into force.

4. **Complementarity**: The ICC acts only when a state is unwilling or unable to genuinely prosecute, making domestic criminalization of domicide a prerequisite for deferral, and underscoring the urgency of domestic legislative action. Individual criminal responsibility attaches to persons aged 18 or over, regardless of official capacity (Art. 27), as principals, co-perpetrators, indirect co-perpetrators, superiors liable for subordinates, or those who aid, abet, or otherwise contribute. The prison sentence may be up to 30 years, though life imprisonment is available for the most severe crimes. The Court cannot try states — only natural persons. The critical gap is not in jurisdictional reach but in the absence of a named "domicide" charge directing prosecutorial attention to residential destruction as a crime in itself.

In short, the ICC reaches natural persons aged 18 or over, regardless of rank or official capacity, for four core crimes committed after July 2002. Housing destruction is prosecutable now under existing Rome Statute provisions as a war crime (Art. 8) and component of crimes against humanity (Art. 7). The operational gap is not in jurisdictional reach but in the absence of a named "domicide" charge that would direct prosecutorial attention to systematic residential destruction as a discrete crime.

Jurisdiction requires that the crime was committed on the territory of a state party, or by a national of a state party, or that the UN Security Council refer the situation under Chapter VII. States may also grant jurisdiction by *ad hoc* declaration, as Ukraine and Palestine did before formally joining. Individual responsibility extends well beyond the physical perpetrator. A person is liable if they commit the crime directly, jointly, or through another person acting within an organized apparatus of power; if they order, solicit, or induce a crime; if they aid or abet it; or if they contribute to a group acting toward a common criminal purpose.



Figure 6: Before of neighborhood in Gaza City, Palestine, after Israeli carpet bombing. *Source*: CNN.

Commanders are additionally liable for subordinates' crimes they knew of, or should have known of, and failed to prevent or punish. Official rank confers no immunity. Consistent with the complementarity principle, cases would be admissible only when national courts have not genuinely investigated or prosecuted. No statute of limitations applies to the crime of domicide. Superior orders are a defense admissible only narrowly; orders to commit genocide or crimes against humanity are always manifestly unlawful.

Proposed Remedies

What is required for international prosecution of large-scale housing destruction is to codify domicide in the Rome Statute. That would not expand the Court's jurisdiction but would sharpen the precision and consistency of how existing authority is exercised.

On the preventive side, states and their agents would be required to conduct housing, land, property, environmental and social risk assessments before projects or military operations are approved. This legal framework would mean that military commanders, political officials and corporate executives who plan, order, or enable the systematic destruction of housing can be held individually criminally liable, provided the political will and capacity to prosecute exist.

On the remedial side, the Court may impose up to 30 years' imprisonment (life in exceptional cases), fines, and forfeiture of assets upon defendants' conviction. Moreover, reparations — restitution (return, resettlement, rehabilitation and compensation for values that could not be physically restored), guarantees of non-repetition and satisfaction of the victims that justice has been done. Some forms of reparation may be ordered through the Trust Fund for Victims, as have been administered in the Lubanga, Katanga, Al Mahdi, Ntaganda and Ongwen cases.

Preventive and remedial methods should include conducting household-centered enumeration and quantification of both material and non-economic costs, loss and damage having incurred or foreseeable, as the case may be, ensuring to avoid methods that are inconsistent; macro scale; with high setup costs; involve greenwashing or risk-impact washing[80]; overly expensive and/or complex; misaligned with community needs; only partial; without legal framing; remotely conducted; and/or directed to and through governments exclusively.[81] A challenge remains in quantifying non-economic loss and damage (NELD) by predominant Big Data methods. As one author has observed, "The data captures displacement. It does not capture dismemberment."[82] What are needed are methodologies to quantifying costs, loss and damage that capture both material and moral values at stake, equipping communities with technology to determine remedy "to ensure the continuous improvement of living conditions."[83]

1. Resourcing Remedy

Remedial measures could involve creating international financial escrow accounts funded by:

1. Applying international finance, loans and grants to remedy domicide
2. Levying individual fines or assets seized from liable parties upon conviction
3. Voluntary contributions to the ICC's Fund for Victims
4. Withholding and diverting resources from culprit and enabling institutions and enterprises (e.g., repurposing the WZO/JA and JNF as mechanisms for reparation to the Indigenous Palestinian People)
5. Seizing assets of the liable extraterritorial state(s) located and appropriated in national jurisdictions by political or judicial process (as already done in the case of Canadian and Finland parliaments seizing Russian assets for reconstruction in Ukraine)[84]
6. Financial and institutional support should prioritize social production of habitat (SPH), which is understood to encompass all processes that generate habitable spaces, urban components and housing under the control of domicide victims as self-producers and other non-profit social agents. It fosters the participants' capacity for self-management and decision making,

and prioritizes the use-value of the affected structures and spaces over their market value. The such measures rests on the normative commitment of all states in the New Urban Agenda to support for SPH as a means of realizing the human right to adequate housing.[85]

These funds and other recovered properties and resources could finance reparation and recovery. SPH bypasses top-down state models and puts resources directly into the hands of affected communities to rebuild on their own terms. It would force the mechanism of accountability and reparations to be just as structural as legally defining the crime itself.

Needed approaches to quantifying costs, loss and damage are local, with more-granular methodologies that capture both material and moral values at stake, equipping communities with technology to determine remedy "to ensure continuously improving living conditions."

To counter the impunity surrounding this structural crime, the formal recognition and criminalization of domicide in both domestic and international law is indispensable. Concurrently, the international order and system coherence urgently require immediate remedies for current or past victims, and to prosecute perpetrators without waiting for new legal frameworks. To achieve these dual imperatives, HIC-HLRN outlines non-overlapping action matrices across four distinct operational tracks:

2. Recommendations to Governments

- **Criminalization and Accountability:** Enact domestic legislation establishing domicide as a distinct criminal offense with sentencing proportionate to the scale of destruction. Establish independent National Domicide Investigation Commissions with binding prosecutorial referral mandates to hold state and non-state actors accountable.
- **Immediate Cessation and Emergency Remediation:** Issue immediate moratoriums on all administrative and punitive demolitions, halting forced evictions.
    - Urgently provide displaced populations with safe return or adequate alternative housing, HLP rights documentation, interim financial assistance, and unrestricted humanitarian access.
    - Cease complicity in domicide, including through active assistance for or failures to prevent mass destruction of housing;
    - Immediately cease attacks on civilian housing and infrastructure and prohibit the use of weapons with wide-area effects, including drones and loitering munitions in populated areas;
    - Cease and prohibit relying on artificial intelligence for targeting during combat operations;
    - Cease and prohibit punitive housing demolitions or other mass clearance of housing after the end of active combat operations;
    - Change and implement rules of engagement for armed forces in all conflicts to avoid domicide and mass destruction of other civilian objects;
    - Refrain from providing arms, assistance or support where there is a clear risk or evidence of their use in housing destruction or forced displacement;

- Establish an independent housing rights ombudsman to issue interim injunctions to halt demolitions that meet the definition of domicide.

- **Legislative Harmonization and Reparations:** Integrate the RRF into domestic law, guaranteeing full restitution (including return, resettlement and rehabilitation), compensation, rehabilitation, and guarantees of non-repetition. Ratify the ICESCR Optional Protocol (OP-ICESCR), which would enable CESCR to adjudicate individual complaints for housing rights violations where domestic systems have failed to do so.
- **Customary Protection and Policy:** Recognize and institutionalize non-formal and customary land tenure systems to safeguard vulnerable communities from arbitrary expropriation. Adopt and implement national action plans on HLP rights with domicide prevention as an explicit objective and measurable indicators.

3. Recommendations to Third States and Multilateral Institutions

- **Extraterritorial Obligations (ETOs) and Arms Embargoes:** Invoke Common Article 1 of all four Geneva Conventions to "ensure respect" for IHL by suspending arms transfers to states conducting documented residential destruction. Enforce strict ETO compliance to ensure foreign assistance and state-backed corporate operations do not subsidize housing destruction abroad.
- **Sanctions:** Multiple unilateral and/or collective state measures are available to states, their commonly treaty-bound subnational organs and institutions to adopt selective procurement measures, boycott, divestment and sanctions against parties, including other states, liable for the practice of domicide, even before the crime's codification under the Rome Statute. Such measures would also be subject to international and domestic law norms.
- **Development Conditionalities:** International financial institutions (World Bank, IMF), export credit agencies, and climate action and green-transition facilities must institute mandatory HLP rights conditionality and risk assessments. Infrastructure loans and export guarantees must be suspended pending independent assessments for any entities engaging in involuntary displacement (i.e., forced eviction).
- **Regional Enforcement:** Adopt and implement multilateral regional action plans on HLP rights with domicide prevention as an explicit objective and measurable indicators. Regional human rights bodies (ECHR, IACHR, AfCHPR) must develop domicide-specific reporting procedures and provisional measures with authority to issue emergency injunctions.

3. Recommendations to the United Nations and Specialized Human Rights Mechanisms

- **International Criminalization & Urgent Prosecution:** The UN General Assembly should adopt a declaratory resolution defining domicide as a precursor to formal treaty codification in the Rome Statute (Arts. 7–8). Meanwhile, the Security Council must urgently refer ongoing domicide situations (e.g., Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar) to the ICC Prosecutor, and states parties must vigorously support these active investigations.
- **Escrow and Reparation Trusts:** Establish international financial escrow accounts or asset recovery funds derived from penalized violating actors to directly finance SPH and provide immediate relief for communities evicted, dispossessed and/or incurring large-scale destruction or demolition.
- **Specialized Mandates and Legal Development:** The Human Rights Council should establish a Special Procedure mandate on domicide. The CESCR should develop a General Comment

specifically addressing domicide as a specific violation of the human right to adequate housing under Art. 11, elaborating effective preventive and remedial measures available under the Covenant. The International Law Commission should consider the law as it relates to domicide in its program of work to produce draft articles.

4. Recommendations to Civil Society and Social Movements

- **Database Expansion and ICC-ready Documentation:** Expand the dynamic VDB data architecture to support existing documentation, enumeration and quantification efforts, including the establishment of a Global Domicide Documentation Consortium to standardize evidence collection and legal analysis, making documentation packages ICC-ready from the point of collection to accelerate prosecutions.
- **Community Rights and Protection:** Ensure affected communities are recognized as rights-holders with free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in all remediation processes. States must protect housing rights defenders and strictly prohibit the criminalization of domicide documentation, journalism, and advocacy.
- **Strategic Litigation and Academic Focus:** Coordinate cross-border strategic litigations utilizing regional charters to challenge state land-use restrictions and corporate capture. Academic institutions should prioritize domicide in domestic and international criminal law curricula to build the prosecutorial theory necessary for future trials.

Conclusion

Domicide is not an unforeseeable accident. It is not a natural disaster. It is a highly organized, systematic tool of human and material destruction and capital accumulation often enabled by organs of the state by commission and/or omission,[86] thriving on impunity to erase entire communities for the benefit of powerful perpetrators.

The core revelation of this report strips away the convenient excuse of global chaos to carry out domicide. Each VDB entry clearly names the duty holders, identifies the deliberate commissions and omissions that weaponize domicide as policy, including development practice and military doctrine, and outlines the exact financial and legal mechanisms required to achieve structural remedy. It joins the urgent call for treating displacees with greater respect and dignity by applying normative instruments already binding on states, their organs and agents. Some hold-over cases mentioned in passing help us reflect on the enduring responsibility and reparation entitlements for domicides continuing in the present and on the belated and cumulative nature of domicide effects.

The Palestine entries, in general, and, particularly since 2015, constitute the clearest example of domicide perpetrated over time. The massive destruction of homes in Gaza since October 2023 is the most prominent case exemplifying the elements of the crime of domicide to be prosecuted and remedied.

A final question to consider is the following: If a home is faithfully defined as the entire ecological and social web of a community, and domicide is the deliberate erasure of that web for the sake of profit, punition or power, how many of the everyday consumer products we buy, or the massive international financial institutions we rely on to fund our own homes, are quietly subsidizing the systematic destruction of someone else's? The answer suggests that each of us has a role to play in ending the criminal practice of domicide.

Endnotes

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