



UCLA Veterans Legal Clinic



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2023

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PRESS RELEASE

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ISSUES REPORT CALLING FOR THE ABOLITION OF LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 41.18 AND PROMOTION OF A HOUSING FIRST MODEL

LOS ANGELES, CA – Last week, [Soledad García Muñoz](#), the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights at the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, issued a [statement](#) and 14-page [report](#) detailing her observations and recommendations on the situation of the rights of unhoused people in Los Angeles. The Special Rapporteur conducted an official site visit to Los Angeles in March, during which she met with federal and city officials, including Mayor Karen Bass. The Special Rapporteur also met with several community groups working to ameliorate the homelessness crisis.

The Special Rapporteur's report laid out a number of systemic recommendations which would have a powerful impact in addressing the homelessness crisis, including:

- Abolish Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 41.18, which prohibits individuals from sitting, lying, sleeping, or placing personal property in public areas. The Special Rapporteur found that § 41.18 violates unhoused people's rights to non-discrimination and non-criminalization.
- Implement policies that focus on root causes, harm reduction, and permanent, stable housing, without the use of force or other means of coercion.

The Special Rapporteur also highlighted that the minimum wage is not high enough for the current rental market in Los Angeles, making housing unaffordable for a large number of Angelenos. She noted that working full time at the current minimum wage would yield an annual salary of just under \$30,000, while the minimum living wage given the housing market is \$37,836. She also noted that reliance on the private market to provide a social

safety net is a failed economic model that exacerbates, rather than reduces, harm and inequality.

The site visit was organized by a coalition of community partners, including UCLA Law's [Promise Institute for Human Rights](#) and [Veterans Legal Clinic](#), and the [Los Angeles Community Action Network](#). Los Angeles Community Action Network Director Pete White noted, "the rise of informal settlements in Los Angeles sheds light on the gross human rights violations that continue to persist here. The Special Rapporteur's report and recommendations are timely, and we hope the City of Los Angeles takes steps towards implementing them."

"The Special Rapporteur's report is groundbreaking in finding officially that zoning large sections of the city where people cannot sit, lie, sleep or use property and enforcing that code against unhoused people violates their right to non-discrimination," said Catherine Sweetser, Deputy Director of the Promise Institute for Human Rights.

Faculty Director of the UCLA Veterans Legal Clinic, Sunita Patel, stated, "Unhoused people are banished, forgotten, and left to die on the streets in one of the wealthiest cities in the United States. The Special Rapporteur calls for bold action, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as veterans, persons with disabilities, and women."

The ball is now in the City Council's court to incorporate these recommendations into their policies.

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