

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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In Wake of U.N. Torture Committee Call for More Action on Homelessness, U.S. Gets Failing Grades on Right to Housing Report Card *Advocates Share Resources for Addressing Concerns*

WASHINGTON, DC – Following the third examination of criminalization of homelessness by a U.N. human rights monitoring body this year, the [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) today issues its [annual report card](#) on the human right to housing, giving the U.S. failing grades in a number of areas.

On November 13 and 14, the [U.N. Committee Against Torture](#) held a [two-day review](#) of the U.S.'s record of compliance with the [Convention Against Torture](#), raising concerns from Ferguson, MO to Guantanamo Bay. Nepali Committee member Sapana Pradhan-Malla raised the recommendations of the two other U.N. monitoring bodies, saying, "I'm hoping the U.S. government will commit to implementing the recommendations of the [Human Rights Council](#) and the [CERD Committee](#) to use federal grant funding incentives to decrease the criminalization of homelessness."

"The U.S. government began its testimony to the Committee by emphasizing it shares the Committee's goal of eradicating torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment everywhere," said Eric Tars, Senior Attorney at the [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#), who was [in Geneva for the review](#). "Committee Member Pradhan-Malla emphasized back that 'everywhere' means not just at Guantanamo, but on the streets of America, where homeless Americans face the daily cruelty of being criminalized just for trying to survive." In this context, the Law Center marked December 10, [Human Rights Day](#), by publishing its annual [Human Right to Housing Report Card](#), its fourth since 2011. When judged against international standards, the U.S.'s policies come up as failing or close to it on many fronts.

"Everyone needs a place to call home, and the human right to housing is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But unfortunately, for millions of Americans that right is not a reality. And it is especially cruel that those who are homeless are subjected to criminal punishment because our own government fails to ensure the human right to housing," said Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of the Law Center.

The Law Center is also publishing a [new guide to effective human rights advocacy](#), discussing the steps it has taken to bring international attention to criminalization and turn it into domestic policy. The Law Center will host a webinar today at 2pm EST to launch these reports and its

new [criminalization advocacy manual](#). To register, [click here](#).

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The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to end and prevent homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.