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Mission to Portugal

30 November 2016Share   

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Portuguese

GENEVA (30 November 2016) – Two United Nations human rights experts will visit Portugal from 5 to 13 December to examine the extent to which people's rights to housing, water and sanitation are being realized.

The Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha, and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation, Léo Heller, will conduct the visit at the invitation of the Government to assess achievements and remaining challenges.

Both Special Rapporteurs will focus on gathering information and testimonies to assess the impact of austerity measures on different populations, with a particular focus on groups living in vulnerable situations, including the Roma population, persons with disabilities, homeless people, migrants, and people living in poverty, in urban and rural centers, including informal settlements.

"I am interested in learning about the impact of laws, policies and programs on housing conditions for those whose rights are most often threatened," said Ms. Farha. "The financialization of housing, homelessness and how the right to housing can be claimed in Portugal are matters of special concern to me."

Mr. Heller added: "I will look at issues of affordability, non-discrimination and access to justice for affected groups, with a particular focus on water disconnections in the light of the economic and financial crisis faced by Portugal."

The experts will meet residents, government representatives, local authorities, and civil society and community organizations, in Lisbon,

Porto and surrounding areas.

At the end of the nine-day visit, both Special Rapporteurs will share their preliminary observations at a **press conference** on Tuesday 13 December 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lutecia Hotel conference room, Avenida Frei Miguel Contreiras, 52, Lisbon, 1749-086. Access to the press conference is strictly limited to members of the press.

Ms. Farha will submit a full report of her findings and recommendations to the Human Rights Council in March 2017. Mr. Heller will submit his comprehensive report to the Council in September 2017.

Ms. Leilani Farha (Canada) is the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context. She took up her mandate in June 2014. Ms. Farha is the Executive Director of the NGO Canada without Poverty, based in Ottawa, Canada. A lawyer by training, for the past 20 years Ms. Farha has worked both internationally and domestically on the implementation of the right to adequate housing for the most marginalized groups and on the situation of people living in poverty. Learn more:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/HousingIndex.aspx>

Mr. Léo Heller (Brazil) is the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, appointed in November 2014. He is a researcher in the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation in Brazil and was previously Professor of the Department of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil from 1990 to 2014. Learn more:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/WaterAndSanitation/SRWater/Pages/SRWaterIndex.aspx>

Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

UN Human Rights, country page – Portugal:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/PTIndex.aspx>

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