



**The Global Initiative**  
*for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*



**Parallel Report submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of  
Discrimination against Women**

**Philippines, 64<sup>th</sup> Session**  
**(04 Jul 2016 - 22 Jul 2016)**

---

**Submitted by:**

**Defend Job Philippines**

*and*

**Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR)**



This project was supported by a grant from Australian aid. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Defend Job Philippines and the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The information provided is not official Australian Government information and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of Australian aid or the Government of Australia

### **Submitting Organizations:**

**Defend Job Philippines** is a non-profit and non-stock organization registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission in September 2009. The organization was founded by displaced women and men workers, labor unions and other sectoral groups in Metro Manila affected by the global economic crisis. Under the banner of Defend Job, Defend Life, workers, urban poor and different sectors are united for the realization of human rights including right to adequate standard of living, right to work, health, food and housing.

Defend Job Philippines gives focus to economic, social and cultural rights as they have particular importance in improving the condition of the poor especially women. The organization also believes that causes of the violations of civil and political rights are found in the violations of ESC rights. Thus, the organization strives to learn and effectively use international human rights framework and mechanisms to claim people's rights.

Defend Job Philippines' mission it to raises awareness in various workplaces and communities about human rights, document and expose violation of these rights, address these cases to the government's attention and forge solidarity amongst social movements and affected people for the realization of human rights and social justice.

#### **Defend Job Philippines**

2410 Topacio St., San Andres  
Manila, Philippines  
Phone: 02.353.57.60

*Email:* [defendjobphilippines@yahoo.com](mailto:defendjobphilippines@yahoo.com), *Website:* <https://defendjobphilippines.wordpress.com/>

**The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR)** is an international non-governmental human rights organization which seeks to advance the realization of economic, social and cultural rights throughout the world, tackling the endemic problem of global poverty through a human rights lens. The vision of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is of a world where economic, social and cultural rights are fully respected, protected and fulfilled and on equal footing with civil and political rights, so that all people are able to live in dignity.

#### **The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR)**

8 North 2nd Ave. East, #208  
Duluth, MN 55802, USA  
Phone/Fax: +1 218 733 1370

*Email:* [globalinitiative@globalinitiative-escr.org](mailto:globalinitiative@globalinitiative-escr.org), *Website:* [www.globalinitiative-escr.org](http://www.globalinitiative-escr.org)

## Introduction

In the State party Report (UN Doc. CEDAW/C/PHL/7-8), there was no mention about the condition of women in urban poor communities. The government mentioned under ‘ highlights of developments since the combined 5th and 6th report,’ that (at para.8):

*With inclusive economic growth as its goal, the incumbent Aquino Administration (2010-2016) included as one of its commitments the promotion of equal gender opportunity in all spheres of public policies and programs. Accordingly, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016 integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting concern such that all but one of its chapters included specific provisions along this end. As a companion document to the PDP and guide to agencies in the implementation of the MCW, the Women’s Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality Plan (Women’s EDGE Plan) 2013-2016 was formulated, and is now being implemented through the gender and development planning process in national and local government.*

Tagged as a cornerstone strategy for national development, the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Program is at the center stage in achieving the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016. Public Private Partnership is Benigno S. Aquino’s flagship program in line with his “righteous path” framework which according to his Social Contract with the Filipino People envisions a country that has achieved inclusive growth and is characterized by rapid, sustained, and broad-based economic growth. In short, it claims that the PPP can solve the deep and worsening problem of poverty and hunger in the Philippines.

Yet for the urban poor families, the PPP has been a tool in depriving and violating land, housing and property rights as well worsening the already dire condition of the poor and pushing them to hunger and inhumane living condition. Instead of creating adequate jobs and livelihood through industries and agriculture development, the PPP as a policy authorizes foreign and local businessmen to invest in the construction, operation, management and maintenance of huge infrastructure projects in the country. Large parcel of land and seawaters are subjected to privatization and denationalization in the hands of private sectors.

Defend Job Philippines through its program Demolition Watch documented **57 incidents of forced evictions affecting 73 013 families from 2010 to 2013** and also noted killings and illegal arrest and detention during demolition to give way to various privatization and PPP projects. Urban poor especially poor workers, women and children were left jobless and homeless.

## Documented Cases of Forced Eviction and their Impact on Women

On 23 April 2012, a brutal and violent eviction and demolition took place in Silverio Compound, Paranaque City to give way to a PPP project—construction of a high rise condominium and commercial building by a giant business tycoon.

The community market as the source of food and livelihood of the community mostly women was brutally destroyed. One resident Arnel Leonor was killed, 14 others had gunshot wounds and 33 were illegally arrested and detained including women and minors.

This incident happened despite the fact that the community successfully acquired a city government resolution on 2003 authorizing the Mayor to process the expropriation” for the Community Mortgage Program and for the benefit of the residents. In fact, the city government has initially deposited P10.41 million for the expropriation. The community’s collective action halted the demolition.

On 27 August 2009, the Ayala Land Inc. and National Housing Authority signed a joint venture agreement to develop the land for the Quezon City Central Business District. Under this project, Ayala Land Inc. will construct forty five (45) towers consisting of commercial, condominium, hotels, retail shops and business

process outsourcing establishments or the so called Vertis North Project amounting to P65 billion. Nevertheless, we believe that this development must have a human-rights based perspective. The needs of the residents of the community that faces demolition must be prioritized in any urban development scheme rather than having urban development schemes result in further impoverishment.

Since July 2010 up to present, massive demolitions, both violent and under scheme of voluntary demolition, are taking place. Also, affected families are promised with P 5000 financial assistance and a better life in the relocation site. That on September 23, 2010, more than 2000 demolition forces, 4 (6×6) trucks, 700 members of Philippine National Police along with 20 SWAT, 20 military personnel, 2 police dogs, 2 fire trucks and 2 bulldozer violently demolished the homes of San Roque residents. The collective resistance of the residents in the community stopped the violent demolition. More than 4000 people participated in the barricade to defend the community which lasted for almost 5 hours.

*“Ano ba talaga ang gusto nilang gawin sa amin? Makailang ulit na nila kaming pinalalayas at itinataboy malayo sa pangisdaan. Nandito ang kabubayan namin. (What do they want from us? They have driven us far away from where we can fish. This is where we earn our living.)”*

These are bitter questions from Nanay Gemma. She is one of the thousands of urban poor residents who eke out a living in the coastal areas of the Manila Bay. The Paranaque City government demolished their community at the Marina Compound, Tambo, Paranaque in 2007. In its place now stands the ASEANA Business Park and the Bagong Nayong Pilipino Entertainment City. The victims of forcible eviction and violent demolition have resorted to a floating community at the coastal area of San Dionisio, Paranaque, where there is again a threat of eviction to give way to the city’s reclamation project – another Public Private Partnership project.

People’s homes and sources of livelihood in Las Pinas and Paranaque are in great danger due to the implementation of Boulevard 2000 which includes the reclamation of more than 850 hectares around the coastline of Freedom Islands. According to research of the Save Freedom Island Movement more than 27,000 families will be directly affected. Reclamation will be followed by the construction of condominiums, malls, hotels, casinos, private establishments and PPP projects such as the following: Radial Road1 extension project; rehabilitation and privatization of the Fisherman’s Wharf (Bulungan Market); LRT1 extension and the NAIA Expressway project.

Unemployment in the Philippines reached the record of 11 million in 2015, the highest in Philippine history. Urban poor mostly women strive to find alternative livelihoods such as vending and selling foods at home. However, the meager income and small properties of small vendors are also targeted by the PPP program of the government specifically the no vending policy for small vendors while allowing the privatization of the land, people’s park and public utilities in partnership with big and foreign traders.

Since 2001, the Peoples’ Democratic Hawkers and Vendors Alliance submitted a letter to the authorities regarding their demand for organized livelihood program inside the Luneta National Park and their letter were granted by the director of the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC). However, on 2010, when a new NPDC Director Juliet Villegas took office, a new program was implemented. Juliet Villegas ordered NPDC officer Estelita Laraya to implement the demolition and eviction of vendors in their respective places. This resulted to the major changes inside the park and disturbed the lives of the vendors and their families inside the park.

On 6 February 2012, 15 vendors inside the Halamanang Pilipino were forcibly evicted. The vendors did not follow. Instead, staged protest in front of the Department of Tourism. On 15 February 2012, another forcible eviction took place and the NPDC was successful and confiscated the goods and livelihood

materials of the vendors. On 27 March, at around 8:45 in the morning, more than 20 members of the Department of Public Service (DPS, under the Local government of the City of Manila) arrived in 4 government vehicles in the vending area, and confiscate all the goods and livelihood equipments of the vendors. DPS officials threatened vendors with a knife, punched a pregnant vendor and brutally harassed the vendors. At around 10:00 am, the vendors went to the office of DPS to negotiate and to get the goods. Instead of talking with the vendors, DPS official threatened to punch one of the vendors and slammed the vendors with bad words. The vendors also trooped to the Office of Mayor Lim which resulted to release the confiscated goods.

On 19 August in the morning, more than 120 joint forces of policemen, security forces and demolition team arrived in the community of Factor Compound, Las Piñas City. The policemen released more than ten (10) warning shots. The residents were all surprised and went out from their makeshift houses to see what's going on. This is the second incident of demolition. The first incident was on 6 August wherein more than 200 houses, facilities and structures in the community were demolished by more than 500 policemen and SWAT and three buses of demolition team.

The second incident is worse. Policemen burned all the remaining lumber, scrap materials and makeshift tents of the homeless residents. This is to make sure that they cannot construct a shelter inside their former community or they will not come back again inside the community. Lucila Bunayog one of the resident saw how policemen burned her house while they were still inside and her baby was sleeping in the cradle. She rushed and went outside to save her family. They even heard policemen laughing while doing the demolition and burning of houses. A backhoe was also used to crush everything in the community. Later the community was fenced with barbed wire and closely guarded by private security forces armed with shotguns.

Rural poor faced the same inhumane condition brought by demolition and forced eviction. On 3 July 2014, 25 buses of demolition team and more than two thousand joint forces of Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police and Special Weapons and Tactics demolished the fishing and agricultural community of 600 families in Sitio Balagbacan, Laiya, Batangas. Not a single house was spared. All were crushed and flattened including small fruit trees and vegetables. For the residents, the incident was worse than the strongest typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines last year. On 28 August, the homeless families are threatened with clearing operation of their makeshift tents.

“Our livelihood is in the sea. It's like a fish place in the plains with no water which cannot breath. No one owns the sea. The sea is for everyone.” said Elsie Lucero, one of the residents. Immediately after the demolition, the community was fenced with barbed wires. More than 160 private armed security forces were deployed to guard the community. Police and military are regularly monitoring the area. The residents are not allowed to enter the vicinity or to fetch water from their wells. The way going to the sea was fully guarded and anyone who will try to enter is threatened with guns from the security forces. The fishermen are not allowed to fish and place their boats in the shores adjacent to the demolished community.

The demolished families built makeshift tents in the national high way. No access to water, electricity and other basic needs. Many of the children were traumatized and some have lost their interest going back to school. A relocation site was offered to the residents but majority refused to accept it because it is not relocation that they are fighting but their right to the community. In addition the relocation site offered by the developer is temporary, far from the sea and farming is not allowed.

“You are on your own.” This is the statement of San Juan, Batangas Mayor Rodolfo Manalo as a response to the appeal of the homeless residents to restore their homes and their livelihood. The governor of the province, Governor Vilma Santos Recto also ignored the request of the residents for a dialogue even

before the demolition took place. Even the barangay chairman or village chieftain refuses to talk to the residents and to extend public service to the victims of demolition.

The residents of Sitio Balagbacan describe their community as a paradise. They live there for more than 100 years already. Ninety percent (90%) of the residents are dependent on fishing while others are in farming. However, the government connives with businessman Federico Campos III, a rich beach resort tycoon and developer who have huge business interest in Sitio Balagbacan community. The said tycoon is the owner of the luxurious Virgin Beach Resort. A court decision was ruled converting the land from agricultural use to commercial use.

Defend Job Philippines conducted a Fact finding Mission in one of the relocation sites on 2012 in Montalban Rizal and conducted a separate investigation in an in city relocation site in Muntinlupa City on 2015. The area of Montalban Rizal is a declared fault line area that is why from the very start, the area is not conducive and safe for the people to live. There are also quarrying sites operating in the mountains of Rodriguez Rizal that cause the destruction of the environment.

The living and working condition of the relocatees worsened especially in terms of jobs, livelihood, access to social services and the condition of women and children. Some relocatees already went back and plan to go back to former places in Metro Manila or else they will die in hunger in the relocation site. Others have already resorted to pawn or sell their right to the housing unit for P60 000 to 80 000.

Life in the relocation site is very hard for the women especially in terms of livelihood and coping up for the daily needs of the family. The women find it very difficult to take good care of the family alone. Their husbands and children are working in Metro Manila and nearby provinces like Cavite and Bulacan. And they seldom go home to save their money. Women are budgeting a very small income and most of the time they eat instant noodles or fried fish instead of nutritious food to their family. Worst, they skip meals because there is nothing to eat.

Most of the women are worried and pressured to find money to pay for the monthly amortization of the house and utility bills.

### **CEDAW and Related International Standards**

The CEDAW Committee has previously expressed concern over the disproportionate impact of forced evictions on women. In its 2011 review of **Israel**, the Committee asked the State party to “revoke its policies allowing for and refrain from the practice of forced eviction and house demolitions, which negatively impact on the physical and psychological well-being as well as the development and advancement of palestinian and israeli arab women” (UN Doc. CEDAW/C/ISR/CO/5 at para. 29(a)). Similarly, in its 2012 review of **Togo**, the CEDAW Committee asked the State party to “ensure that land lease contracts with foreign companies do not result in forced eviction and internal displacement or the increased food insecurity and poverty of local populations, including women and girls, and that the company concerned and/or the state party provide the affected communities with adequate compensation and alternative land” (UN Doc. CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/6-7 at para. 37 (e)).

In its **General Comment No. 7**, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has defined forced evictions as *“the permanent or temporary removal against their will, of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.”* The Committee has also recognized that women deserve special consideration and assistance in cases of evictions: *“Women ...,”* the Committee acknowledged, *“suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced evictions. Women in all groups are especially vulnerable given the extent to statutory and other forms of discrimination which*

*often apply in relation to property rights (including home ownership) or rights of access to property or accommodation and their particular vulnerability to acts of violence and sexual abuse when they are rendered homeless.”<sup>1</sup>*

Over the years, former UN Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women and on the Right to Adequate Housing have also addressed women’s experiences violence within the context of forced eviction. In 2000, the then Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UN DocE/CN.4/2000/68/Add.5) said:

*While the entire family is affected by forced eviction, again it is the women who suffer most. Women will have to cope with the new circumstances, will have to fulfil their responsibilities as before, but with more limited means, and will need to work harder to make ends meet. ... Often the land assigned for resettling does not enable the people to continue their way of life. Such disruption interferes with and prevents women from exercising traditional responsibilities. It has been shown above that this leads to the devaluing of women and often to increased violence against women. ... Violence occurring in relation to forced eviction starts before the eviction process. Psychological stress on learning about the eviction can destabilise the family atmosphere and cause emotional trauma. Sometimes, rape is used by the evictors to break resistance. During the eviction, verbal abuse and beatings, rape and even killing are common. The destruction of the home and the destruction of property are further traumatic experiences. The destruction of the home is often equivalent to the destruction of life; everything that was accomplished so far is destroyed. Coping with injuries, the death of family members, inadequate housing or even homelessness, poverty, lack of community support when relocated away from the home town are all possible burdens that have to be taken on by women after eviction.*

In 2009, these issues were again raised by the then Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UN Doc. A/HRC/11/6/Add.6):

*The impact of these forced evictions, often by militia or armed forces, is profoundly devastating for women and is correlated with heightened rates of physical, psychological and economic violence against women before, during and after the evictions. This is true both in terms of violence against women at the hands of state authorities, non-state actors, community members, as well as violence against women by their partners or relatives within the home.*

Similar concerns have been voiced by the former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, whose global consultations revealed that within the context of forced evictions women were often beaten by the authorities, arrested, morally abused, inhumanly transported, and even put in arbitrary detention.<sup>2</sup>

### **Impact on Jobs and Livelihood**

In the Philippines, the relocatees’ livelihoods in former communities are vendors, construction workers, drivers, sales lady, security guards and massage therapist. They are earning from P50-500 per day. Others became jobless after the forced eviction and relocation. Some retain their work and source of livelihood in Metro Manila but spend very high on transportation ranging from P70-250 going to work and back to the relocation site. Others rented rooms near their work and spend P500-1000 per month.

---

<sup>1</sup> In its resolution 2004/28 on forced evictions, the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights reiterated that “every woman, man and child has the right to a secure place to live in peace and dignity, which includes the right not to be evicted unlawfully, arbitrarily or on a discriminatory basis from their home, land or community.” The Commission also recalled that while certain groups were more vulnerable to forced eviction because of social exclusion and discrimination, the fact remains that “women in all groups are disproportionately affected, given the extent of statutory and other forms of discrimination which often apply in relation to the property rights of women, including homeownership and rights of access to property of accommodation, and given the particular vulnerability of women to acts of gender-based violence and sexual abuse when they are rendered homeless.”

<sup>2</sup> Women’s Right to Adequate Housing and Land: Middle East/North Africa Proceedings of the Alexandria Consultation, Miloon Kothari (UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing) with collaboration and support from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 23–26 July 2004.

The government promised them livelihood program in the relocation but it did not happen. A training program on soap making was conducted but did not prosper because the residents have no funds to buy the raw materials and there was no plan for the marketing and sustainability of the livelihood program. The women in the relocation sites strive to live by setting up sari-sari store and selling foods inside the community. However, many have already closed due to lack of capital and unpaid accounts. While other men work in the construction site earning P150-200 a day and have no benefits.

### **Impact on Security of Tenure**

All of the interviewed residents do not have the Contract Agreement with them. They have signed the agreement but do not fully know about the content of the contract with the National Housing Authority. In fact, in their answers on how much is the cost of the housing unit, it varies from P100 000 to 200 000. Right now, they have no title over the land and house but only the orange and green entry pass issued to them by the National Housing Authority. This is the only paper proving their rights to the house.

### **Impact on Access to Essential Services**

Thousands of relocatees endured with no water and electricity for more than one (1) year. Many children and residents were sick. This is contrary to the commitment of the National Housing Authority to provide the basic needs of the relocatees before they were relocated on 2010.

During these times, they get water from artesian well or water delivery from the developer and also buy purified water for drinking. The water was only connected last December 2011.

The electricity connections are sub meters from Baque Corporation and New San Jose Builders. In Southville 8-B, the residents are seriously facing problems on irregularities, high payment of system loss, overpricing in the electricity bill ranging from P16.75 to P23 per kilowatt per hour and also the compulsory payment of flat rate of P375 or a minimum of 10 kilowatt per month.

Regarding garbage disposal, the garbage is collected once to twice a month by Truck Collector of the local government of Rodriguez, Rizal. Because of this, residents burn their garbage or dump them in the nearby creek.

The housing units have cracked floors and walls, exposed sockets and fuse box, door knobs damage and leaked water pipes. The steel bars used is 8mm, hollow block is 4 inches width and very thin galvanized roof.

### **Impact on Health**

The common illnesses are cough, fever, diarrhea, dengue, asthma and ulcer which is caused by the extreme temperature changes, dust from nearby quarrying sites and hunger.

There is only health center and infirmary in two relocation sites where there is no medicine and doctors. There are private hospitals in Montalban but the residents cannot afford it. The nearest public hospital is in Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Memorial Medical Center in Marikina City which is too far from the relocation sites. Other residents still go to East Avenue Medical Center or in any public hospitals in Metro Manila.

### **Impact on Children's Situation**

Many children are malnourished and others did not attend school anymore. There are reports on missing children, drug addiction and also child prostitution. There were no reports of rape, abuse or incest. There is no playground and day care centers.

Many children stopped schooling after the forced eviction. Others continue schooling in the schools near the relocation sites such as Southville 8-B National High School, Pamantasan ng Montalban and. However, the said schools cannot provide enough and conducive classroom and schooling to the children of thousands of relocatees. The number of students in one classroom is ranging from 70-130 students while the class hours particularly in the elementary is only 3 hours in Southville 8-B. School drop outs continue as children did not attend to school anymore because of hunger and poverty.

### **Impact on Peace and Order**

The security volunteers (Tanod) are complaining about lack of street lights and also in their post. They also raised about the lack of food allowances for the volunteers from the barangay.

There are many cases and reports of robbery and hold up operations inside the relocation sites. Items robbed are money, kitchen utensils, containers, appliances and including steamed rice and other food. New relocatees are always victims of robbery.

### **Recommendations**

**We respectfully recommend that the Committee express its deep concern over the discriminatory impact of forced evictions on women and urge the State party, as a matter of priority, to**

1. Stop the massive demolition, further impoverishment and displacement of urban poor families giving way to Public Private Partnership Program. The State party should be asked to immediately cease the practice of forced eviction, put into place effective procedural protections against forced eviction, and repeal legislative provisions used to facilitate forced evictions (in particular the Urban Development and Housing Act or UDHA law), as consistent with international human rights standards;
2. Ensure that affected residents and communities, including women, are able to meaningfully and effectively participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of 'development' and 'urban renewal' projects, and are able to offer alternatives. Affected residents and communities, including women, must be adequately informed of their legal rights to be protected against forced eviction in this regard;
3. Ensure that women evicted from their properties be provided with full restitution, compensation and/or offered adequate relocation,
4. Stop the destruction of the livelihood and properties of families in urban poor communities. Instead, the government must give decent and adequate jobs to the people, including women;
5. Ensure that the families who are already relocated in relocation sites are transferred to a suitable place and are guaranteed with proper access to work, access to facilities and adequate basic services;
6. Investigate the human rights violations and prosecute public officials, individuals and government offices involved. All victims, including women, must be assured access to justice and judicial remedy;
7. Guarantee that relocation sites meet adequate housing rights standards under international human rights law and are provided with basic services (including drinking water, electricity, washing and sanitation facilities) and adequate facilities (including schools, health care centres and transportation) at the time the resettlement takes place.