**OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister 80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

August 14, 2018

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On November 22, 2017 your government announced a national housing strategy based on its commitment to “progressively implement the right of every Canadian to access adequate housing.”  
Consultations held in recent months regarding the National Housing Strategy demonstrated a strong consensus that implementing legislation must explicitly recognize the right to housing as defined in international human rights law. Widespread homelessness and lack of access to adequate housing, in so affluent a country as Canada is clearly one of the most critical human rights issues facing all levels of government. Rights-based legislation must establish mechanisms for those affected to raise systemic issues regarding the progressive realization of the right to housing and ensure that governments will respond by implementing remedies. These mechanisms need not rely on courts but they must be effective.

In addition, the legislation must require goals and timelines for the reduction and elimination of homelessness that are consistent with international human rights obligations to realize the right to housing within the shortest possible time based on available resources. It should ensure that Canada meets its commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to eliminate homelessness by 2030. It must also include measures to eliminate the deep disparities in access to adequate, affordable, safe, and secure housing for Indigenous peoples, women, members of racialized communities, persons with disabilities, trans and gender-diverse people, older adults, children and young people, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons.

Draft legislation has been developed by civil society and experts, demonstrating how this can be accomplished and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss it with you.  
We call on the government to ensure that the National Housing Strategy legislation:  
• affirms the recognition of the right to housing as a fundamental human right;  
• implements accountability mechanisms through which those affected by homelessness or inadequate housing can hold governments accountable for the progressive realization of the right to housing;  
• ensures that the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate and National Housing Council are independent, adequately resourced and given authority to make recommendations and require remedial action for compliance with the right to housing;  
• provides for an adjudication body which includes both experts in human rights and persons with lived experience of homelessness or inadequate housing, to hold accessible hearings into systemic issues affecting the progressive realization of the right to housing and to recommend effective remedies;  
• requires goals and timelines for the elimination of homelessness and access to adequate housing, in accordance with Canada’s obligations under international human rights law and commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals;  
• mandates rights-based participation by, and accountability to, diverse individuals and communities affected by homelessness and inadequate housing, in all NHS mechanisms including the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, National Housing Council, adjudication body, and community initiatives;  
• provides resources and support for local lived-experience-led monitoring of NHS programmes and for community initiatives to promote the right to adequate housing engaging all levels of government;  
• provides for initiatives to identify and address the distinctive barriers, needs and rights of Indigenous peoples, co-developed with Indigenous peoples’ organizations, as well as housing strategies for First Nations, Inuit, Métis Nation, and urban and rural Indigenous partners, negotiated on the basis of Inuit-to Crown, government-to-government, nation-to-nation relationships, to ensure the right to housing of Indigenous peoples both on and off reserve, in rural and urban settings, consistent with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The legislation implementing a rights-based national housing strategy provides an historic opportunity for the federal government to address, as a priority, a critical human rights issue at home and at the same time to provide leadership in human rights internationally. It is the first time that legislation implementing the right to housing has been contemplated in Canada, and it is critical that this be done right.

We look forward to ongoing dialogue with the government in the coming weeks and months, as this important legislation is brought forward.

Sincerely,  
Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing  
Anita Khanna, Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty in Canada  
Alex Neve, Amnesty International Canada  
Emily Paradis, Independent Researcher  
Bruce Porter, Social Rights Advocacy Centre  
Tim Richter, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness  
CC The Honourable Andrew Scheer. P.C., M.P., Leader of the Official Opposition  
Mr. Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party  
The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P., Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
SIGNATORIES  
Individuals  
1. Alex Himelfarb, Former Clerk of the Privy Council  
2. Senator Art Eggleton, PC  
3. Irwin Cotler, PC, OC  
4. Claudette Bradshaw, PC, ONB  
5. Kevin Page, Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy; Former Parliamentary Budget Officer  
6. Mathieu Fleury, Ottawa City Councillor; Chair, Ottawa Community Housing  
7. Matthew Green, Hamilton City Councillor, Ward 3  
8. Naomi Klein, Author  
9. Craig Kielburger, Social Entrepreneur  
10. David Hulchanski, Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, Dr Chow Yei Ching Chair in Housing, University of Toronto  
11. Mitchell Cohen, Daniels Corporation  
12. Alexis L. Wood, Director/Producer  
13. Andrew J. Bond, MD, MHA(c), CCFP, Inner City Health Associates  
14. Anne Latendresse, Directrice des programmes de premier cycle, Département de géographie, UQAM  
15. Antoinette Wertman Hon BSc., MD, Inner City Health Associates, St. Michaels Hospital, Toronto  
16. Rabbi Emeritus Arthur Bielfeld, C.M., Temple Emanu-El  
17. Cathy Crowe, C.M., Street Nurse, Distinguished Visiting Practitioner, Ryerson University  
18. David Wiseman, Associate Professor, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law, Common Law Section  
19. Deborah Pink, MD, FRCPC, Psychiatrist, Inner City Health Associates  
20. Deborah Sinclair, MSW, PhD(c), RSW, University of Toronto  
21. Elvin Wyly, Professor, The University of British Columbia  
22. Gary Bloch MD CCFP, University of Toronto  
23. Janet Mosher, Professor, Faculty of Law, York University  
24. Laila Jamal, MD, FRCP (C), Inner City Health Associates  
25. Leigh Chapman, RN, BScN, BA(Hons), MSc, PhD Candidate  
26. Margot Young, Professor, UBC Law  
27. Marie-Eve Desroches, PhD Candidate, Urban studies, Institut national de la recherche scientifique  
28. Marie-Neige Laperrière, Professeure de droit, Sciences administratives, Université du Québec en Outaouais  
29. Martha Jackman, University of Ottawa  
30. The Rev. Michael Shapcott, Deacon, Church of the Holy Trinity - Trinity Square  
31. Monia Mazigh, Author and Human Rights advocate  
32. Patricia Cavanagh, MD, FRCPC  
33. Penelope Simons, Professeure agrégée, Université d'Ottawa, Faculty of Law  
34. Peter Rosenthal, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics, Adjunct Professor of Law, University of Toronto  
35. Pieter de Vos, Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta  
36. Richard J. Doan, MD, FRCPC, Inner City Health Associates; Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, University of Toronto  
37. Roxie Danielson, RN, BScN, Innercity Family Health Team  
38. Samer Muscati, International Human Rights Program, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto  
39. Susan Woolhouse, MD, MClSc, CCFP, FCFP, Family Physician, Inner City Health Associates  
40. Vince Calderhead, Pink Larkin Lawyers  
National and International Organizations  
41. A Way Home Canada, Melanie Redman, President and CEO  
42. Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, Ranjith Kulatilake  
43. ACORN Canada, Judy Duncan  
44. Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, Sandeep Prasad  
45. Amnesty International, Alex Neve  
46. Amnistie internationale, Genevieve Paul  
47. Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty in Canada, Anita Khanna  
48. Canada Without Poverty, Harriett McLachlan, Deputy Director  
SIGNATORIES  
49. Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Tim Richter  
50. Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity (CCGSD), Jeremy Dias  
51. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Gauri Sreenivasan  
52. Canadian Coalition Against LGBTQ2S+ Poverty, Lori Ross  
53. Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, Kathy Vandergrift  
54. Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, Jeff Morrison  
55. Canadian Lived Experience Advisory Council, Debbie McGraw  
56. Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Laurent Marcoux, President  
57. Canadian Mental Health Association Interlake Eastern, Tristan Dreilich  
58. Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex, Susan Macphail  
59. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Stephen Gaetz  
60. Canadian Poverty Institute, Ambrose University, Derek Cook  
61. Canadian Women's Foundation, Paulette Senior, President and CEO  
62. Catherine Donnelly Foundation, Valerie Lemieux  
63. Citizens for Public Justice, Joe Gunn  
64. Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Jewelles Smith, Chair  
65. Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Steven Estey  
66. Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Elizabeth Dandy  
67. Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada  
68. Families Canada (formerly Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs), Kelly Stone  
69. Habitat for Humanity Canada, Mark Rodgers, President and CEO  
70. Habitat International Coalition  
71. Lived Experience Advisory Council, Lived Experience of Homelessness Network, Kym Hines  
72. Maytree Foundation, Elizabeth McIsaac  
73. National Association of Women and the Law  
74. Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC), Lynne Groulx, Executive Director  
75. Oxfam, Julie Delahanty  
76. Raising the Roof, Michael Brathwaite  
77. Right to Housing Coalition  
78. Social Rights Advocacy Centre, Bruce Porter  
79. The Leap, Bianca Mugyenyi, Co-Executive Director  
80. UNICEF Canada, Lisa Wolff  
81. United Church of Canada  
82. United Way / Centraide Canada, Dan Clement, President and CEO  
83. Women's Shelters Canada, Lise Martin  
84. YMCA Canada, Peter Dinsdale, O.Ont., President and CEO  
85. YWCA Canada, Maya Roy, CEO; Anjum Sultana, MPH  
Provincial and Territorial Organizations  
86. Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO), Kenneth Hale  
87. Alberta Network of Public Housing Agencies, Harvey Voogd, Interim Executive Director  
88. Alberta Rural Development Network, Jonn Kmech  
89. BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Jill Atkey  
90. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Trish Garner  
91. BC Society of Transition Houses, Joanne Baker  
92. CERA - Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, Katie Plaizier  
93. Colour of Poverty Colour of Change  
94. First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Adrienne Montani  
95. Income Security Advocacy Centre, Jennefer Laidley  
96. Justice for Children and Youth, Mary Birdsell  
97. M'akola Housing Society, David Seymour, VP  
98. MacKillop Centre for Social Justice and The PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy, Mary Boyd  
99. Metis Urban Housing Association of Saskatchewan Inc  
100. The Mustard Seed, John Rook  
101. Network of Non-Profit Housing Providers of Saskatchewan  
102. Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, Marlene Ham  
103. Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Debbie Douglas  
104. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH)  
105. Public Interest Alberta, Joel French  
SIGNATORIES  
106. Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), Dr(hc), O.ONT., Chief Executive Officer  
107. Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec (RCLALQ), Maxime Roy-Allard  
108. Réseau québécois des organismes sans but lucratif d’habitation (RQOH), Stéphan Corriveau  
109. Right to Housing (Manitoba), Tristan Dreilich  
110. South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO), Shalini Konanur  
111. Yukon Anti Poverty Coalition, Kristina Craig, Executive Director  
112. Yukon Status of Women Council, Charlotte Hrenchuk  
Community Organizations  
113. Adsum for Women and Children, Sheri Ecker, Executive Director  
114. Anova, Shelley Yeo  
115. Association of Local Public Health Agencies, Loretta Ryan, CAE, RPP  
116. Atlohsa Native Family Healing services, Raymond Deleary  
117. Centerpoint Facilitation, Tammy Ouellette  
118. Centre de counselling de Sudbury Counselling Centre, Carole Lamoureux  
119. Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Western University, Barb MacQuarrie, O.Ont.  
120. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, Ann Fitzpatrick  
121. Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, Avvy Go  
122. The City Institute, York University, Linda Peake  
123. Comox Valley Transition Society, Heather Ney  
124. The Dream Team, Joanna Pawelkiewicz  
125. Emily Murphy Centre, Lisa Wilde  
126. End Homelessness Winnipeg, Lucille Bruce  
127. Federation of Metro Tenant Associations, Maryanna Lewyckyj, Acting Chair  
128. Four Counties Addiction Services Team, City of Kawartha Lakes, County of Haliburton, Northumberland County and Peterborough, Kerri Kightley  
129. Fred Victor, Mark Aston  
130. Gillian’s Place: Empowering Abused Women of Niagara, Tanja Loeb, Executive Director  
131. Haven Toronto, Lauro Monteiro  
132. Healthy Transportation Coalition, Trevor Haché  
133. Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG), Waterloo Region, Lynn Macaulay  
134. Homeward Trust, Susan McGee, Chief Executive Officer  
135. Human Development Council, Saint John, New Brunswick, Randy Hatfield  
136. Innercity Family Health Team, Jo Connelly, Executive Director  
137. Interfaith Coalition to Fight Homelessness, Rafi Aaron, Spokesperson  
138. Ishtar Society, Laurie Parsons  
139. Kelowna Women's Shelter, Karen Mason  
140. Lived Experience Circle of Winnipeg, Al Wiebe  
141. Lloydminster Metis Housing Group Inc.  
142. London Homeless Coalition, Charlotte Dingwall, Chair  
143. North Coast Transition Society, Christine White, Executive Director  
144. Parkdale Community Legal Services, Johanna Macdonald, Clinic Director  
145. Peel Alliance to End Homelessness, Ian Hanney  
146. Pivot Legal, Anna Cooper  
147. Quint Development Corporation, Len Usiskin  
148. Rainy River District Women’s Shelter of Hope, Donna Kroocmo, Executive Director  
149. Sistering, Patricia O’Connell  
150. Social Planning Toronto, Peter Clutterbuck  
151. South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society, Linda Sankey  
152. South Okanagan Women in Need Society, Veronica Mora  
153. Southwest Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee, Margaret MacPherson  
154. Springtide Resources, Leila Sarangi  
155. Street Health, Kapri Rabin, Executive Director and Joyce Rankin RN MN MBA, Clinical Manager  
156. Street Nurses Network, Roxie Danielson, RN, BScN  
157. Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group, Ann Batisse, Executive Director  
158. Together Against Poverty Society, Stephen Portman  
159. Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, Kira Heineck  
SIGNATORIES  
160. Toronto Disability Pride March, Melissa Graham  
161. Toronto Drop In Network, Susan Bender  
162. United Way Central and South Okanagan Similkameen, Reanne Amadio  
163. Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, Victoria McLaughlin  
164. Voices from the Street and Women Speak Out, Dawnmarie Harriot and Lubna Khalid  
165. Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director  
166. Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, Hamilton, Deirdre Pike and Katherine Kalinowski  
167. Women’s Resources of Kawartha Lakes, Lori Watson  
168. Woolwich Community Services, Kelly Christie  
169. Working for Change, Mike Creek  
170. YMCA Northern Alberta, Nick Parkinson  
171. YWCA Hamilton, Medora Uppal  
172. YWCA Toronto, Heather McGregor, CEO