

Press release | 15.04.2020

Corona pandemic

Homeless people need equal health care and additional housing

Press contact

Bettina Hildebrand
Spokesperson
Zimmerstraße 26/27
10969 Berlin
0049 30 259 359 - 14
hildebrand@institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de

www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de
Twitter: @DIMR_Berlin

Berlin – Concerning the situation of homeless people in Germany, the German Institute for Human Rights announces:

„In the face of the Corona pandemic the situation of homeless people in Germany has worsened. They have no opportunity to withdraw into the privacy of their own homes. Living in communal accommodation facilities, they often have inadequate access to showers or toilets. Homeless persons often suffer from multiple health issues. At the same time, their access to health care is virtually non-existent. In emergency shelters, many people live in very confined spaces.

In all measures to slow down the pandemic, special attention must be paid to persons in vulnerable situations. This means, as demanded by social organizations, providing homeless people with the same health care and infection control measures as well as providing additional housing and contact points for them in the public space. In view of the new contact restrictions in public spaces, it is also necessary to ensure that people living on the streets in a community are not punished for being homeless.

It is now crucial to prevent that people become homeless. Therefore, the protection against dismissal of tenants initiated by the Federal Government is to be welcomed. In addition, evictions should be suspended for the period of the pandemic.

The German Institute for Human Rights thus supports the current appeal of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha. On 18 March she called for special protection of homeless people during the Corona pandemic.”

FURTHER INFORMATIONEN

The German Institute for Human Rights has carried out a study on the municipal housing of homeless people in Germany. The Executive Summary in English:

Homelessness: Provision of Accommodation by Municipalities. In: Development of the human rights situation in Germany July 2018 - June 2019. Executive Summary. Berlin: German Institute for Human Rights, 2019.

<https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/publikationen/show/development-of-the-human-rights-situation-in-germany-july-2018-june-2019/>

“Housing, the front line defence against the COVID-19 outbreak,” says UN expert (Geneva, 18 March 2020)

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25727&LangID=E>