

Saturday September 17 2011 - The Fifth Annual Women's March for Housing

A poem by Rolf Auer

August 20, 2011

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS / 1948

PREAMBLE (subsection):

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

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Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, *housing* and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (*italics mine*)

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(Canada ratified this Universal Human Rights Protection in 1948, but never wrote that law guaranteeing housing for everyone into its own Constitution. As a result, Canada is now one of the few industrialized countries to *not* have a national social housing program.)

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Perhaps the good news is that  
armed insurrection hasn't happened yet;  
some might argue otherwise.

Definitely, however, *here IS* some good news:  
instead, on Saturday, September 17, 2011  
beginning at 1:30 pm there will occur  
The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Women's March for Housing  
starting at Columbia and Cordova Streets  
near the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre  
in the Downtown Eastside (DTEs).  
(The March will be followed by a block party  
starting at 4:00 pm.)

So far, on Facebook  
293 are recorded as attending  
with another possible 185.

In 1993, the Canadian federal government  
cancelled its national social housing program  
and therefore homelessness in Canada  
has been on the rise ever since.

In 2009, Misoon Kothari—  
then UN Special Rapporteur on Housing—  
recommended that Canada enact  
federal and provincial laws  
guaranteeing housing.  
This never happened.

People aren't asking for pity.  
They are asking for a basic human right:  
the right to adequate housing.  
Canada is one of the richest countries  
in the world; it can afford  
to guarantee housing for all its citizens  
if it were to—for example—  
cut its massive military budget  
by an appropriate amount  
and channel that money  
into providing housing for ALL Canadians.

The DTES Annual Women's March for Housing  
isn't about pity or freebies or handouts—  
it's about the Canadian government  
doing right by its citizens.

So, please join the March!  
Be not afraid! Resist!