



Oral Statement at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: ID with SR on housing

Date: 16 March, 2022

Delivered by: Mr. Cormac Edward Mc Art

Mr. President,

The UK Government is failing to effectively address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Northern Ireland and their right to adequate housing.

Housing is a basic Human Right but Northern Ireland is in the midst of a housing and homelessness crisis.

As of 31 December 2021, there were 44,405 applicants on the Social Housing waiting list. On 31 December 2021, the number of Full Duty Applicants - a person who has passed all four statutory tests for homelessness and who has not yet been given a permanent social tenancy – stood at 23,634.

Over 6,000 people including 3,600 children are living in temporary accommodation. In some cases people are waiting several years to actually get a home.

Just under one third of people experiencing homelessness are families.

Between July 2020 and June 2021, almost 6,800 children were accepted as homeless by the NI Housing Executive.

We believe that everyone deserves a home, but current demand for housing outstrips supply. The lack of social housing alongside record rent costs in the private rental sector are contributing significantly to homelessness.

A report launched on March 1st2022 has revealed that 'Hidden homelessness' could now be affecting more than 110,000 people in Northern Ireland, with the pandemic and increasing cost of living pushing many vulnerable people into poverty.

VIVAT International and Edmund Rice International recommends that the government significantly increases investment in social housing and delivery of more affordable housing for all in Northern Ireland including the private rental sector; and work across government departments to focus on homelessness prevention rather than homelessness management.

Thank you.