

# Durban landlord-tenant relations tense-OCR

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IT TOOK the tenants in the United States of America several decades to eventually get the courts to recognize a “just cause” for eviction.

In recent months, tenants in Durban and suburbs were given notice to vacate or had moved out because of such notices.

In some instances, their landlords provided reasons that could be challenged, but the tenants were not in a position to do so.

The Organisation of Civic Rights alone was approached by approximately 140 families from several buildings in March and April of this year.

A large number of the 700 individuals are children (30%) and refugees and foreign nationals (55%). Most are diligent rent payers and relocating means tremendous hardship.

If the landlord realises that his tenants are refusing to vacate their dwellings and are willing to challenge the eviction procedure, they are illegally locked out.

In a traumatic situation last weekend, a tenant was assaulted by unknown gun wielding thugs, his shirt covered in blood but the police were unable to do anything.

In fact, a week ago, three tenants whose flat was padlocked, were informed by the police that they should go back to their country.

While it may be argued that landlords in a free market economic system can do as they please with their “investments”, the fact that they provide accommodation to families and individuals, they share the government’s responsibility.

Displacing tenants, especially families, by replacing them with students or other tenants does not help stabilise the “market”.

Such unscrupulous landlords must be exposed, named and shamed; they tarnish the good work of law abiding landlords who are often compassionate and caring.

They empower unscrupulous tenants by such iniquitous behaviour.

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