

Union Argentina de Inquilinos declares

Mourning day on October 1st, 2007

Instituted by the International Union of Tenants in Stockholm Sweden and representing 54 countries, the International Day of Tenants is celebrated annually on the first Monday of October.

This event finds Argentinean tenants under an unjustifiable and unjustified situation of abuse and aggravation, both personal and collective, as a result of which they have decided to declare October 1 a day of mourning.

These conditions of submission and exploitation remain ignored by the public agenda in the mist of an electoral process in which the human rights of millions of Argentineans are systemically and publicly violated.

The Catholic Church, asked by the tenants, has favorably taken the proposal of establishing a day of prayer imploring help from the Holy Providence to diminish their suffering.

Many of those who used to live from financial investments up until the crisis of 2001 and that found themselves in a market without financial institutions, bonds or stocks and who had available cash, bought real estate, undervalued due to the currency devaluation and utilizing them as reserves. This massive approach resulted in an overvaluation of real estate, that quickly recovered and surpassed previous estimated value in dollars.

Since 2005, these real estate owners tried to get, by renting the overvalued property, an income that these tenants, wage workers or retired, cannot pay as their own income did not revalue at the same rate.

Owners put pressure to get even higher return over their investment, resulting in a spike in rent levels, which have quickly surpassed the inflation rate.

This is how 2006 finished with rent levels 33% higher than the median of prices.

Governmental reports, trying to disguise the inflation rate, admit however an increase of 2.5 times the median of prices during 2007. Reality shows higher increases in all fronts.

Tenants who cannot afford this level of prices need to move out, with the same income, to smaller places, further away and of poorer quality. They many times also view themselves forced to face the owner's expenses such as maintenance and repairs of homes in poor conditions.

Leases are valid for 2 years which forces to a systemic move of a population that becomes nomad and whose low income pockets end up living in the lowest of conditions.

The unmeasured appetite of goods is greed and when done exploiting the needs of those affected, it is usury. It is generating the humiliation of living conditions of one fourth of the population, which is being submitted to an unacceptable exploitation that violates such essential human rights as the right to a home. Without a roof, there is no life!

Radames Marini

President

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