

Barcelona Declaration GMTU Edit

During the last few days, Tenant Unions and other initiatives on housing justice from around the world have gathered in Barcelona to share their experiences and knowledge fighting landlordism, as well as hopes and wishes for a different future. Despite the diverse socio-political landscapes of our home countries, we recognize our shared battle against a common adversary: an oppressive capitalism characterized by its patriarchal, colonial, racist, and classist dimensions. This system marginalizes our communities and poses an existential threat to life in its relentless pursuit of profit.

Only by rejecting the divisive and disempowering stranglehold of hierarchical power structures, through the mutual self-organisation of members led, grass roots unions for renters; the homeless; and the precariously housed, and liberated from the constraints of bureaucratic, centralist, and paternalistic advocacy perspectives, can we generate a truly democratic mass movement, with the potential to build the power we need to change our housing system, and the world.

This declaration is a call on tenants worldwide to join their closest union in their neighborhood or town or to create new unions where they do not exist to put an end to tenant exploitation and the commodification of a basic right such as housing.

The signatory unions agree to create a follow-up committee consisting of a permanent space of cooperation and communication between tenant unions from different countries. The committee will be formed by one representative from each union. One of the first tasks of the follow-up committee will be to curate the outcomes of this first International Gathering and extend them to other organizations who could not participate in the meeting but are our allies in defending the right to housing. The aim of the follow-up committee will be to work towards the consolidation of the cooperation between tenants' unions worldwide and walk towards a second International Gathering.

Aware of the exclusive participation of organizations coming from the Global North, we commit to working towards the inclusion of organizations from the Global South, both in Latin America and in Africa or Asia. Only when all voices are present will we be able to talk about true internationalism.

Those present are called forth to think of joint strategies to end the capitalist exploitation of the working class. For the decommodification of housing! To free life from capitalist, racial, patriarchal and rentier oppression! Onward to building global tenant solidarity!

Barcelona, 6th April 2024