

## Miloon Kothari

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## Experience

### January 2016 – Present

#### Independent Expert on Human Rights and Social Policy

- Based in New Delhi, India my current work involves fact-finding, training and research on the UN's human rights and development system; occasional teaching in academic institutions across the world; consultancies with UN agencies, national human rights institutions and governments; academic and field research and writing; conducting human rights impact assessments and devising compensation measures; playing an advisory role for a number of national and international civil society organisations; delivering keynote addresses at conferences and participating in panel discussions on a range of topics related to human rights, democracy and development.

### July 2021 – Present

Commissioner with the [\*UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel\*](#), United Nations Human Rights Council

### February 2021 – Present (Spring Semesters 2021 and 2022)

#### Visiting Professor, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

- I am teaching a course on 'Development, Displacement, Human Rights' for students in the Interdisciplinary Masters programme at the Graduate Institute. The course, while focussing on development based displacement also covers conflict, disaster and climate related displacement:  
<https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/academic-departments/development-displacement-human-rights>

### April 2015 - Present

#### President of UPR-Info

- UPR-Info is the world's leading independent organisation that seeks to promote and strengthen the UPR by raising awareness, providing capacity-building tools, and bridging the different actors of the UPR process to ensure the universal advancement of human rights: <https://www.upr-info.org/en>.

### September 2014 – December 2015

Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

### September 2013 – June 2014

Dr. Martin Luther King Visiting Scholar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- In addition to initiating several graduate courses on human rights, I was involved in the development of the MIT Displacement Research Action Network and continue my role there as Senior Advisor: <http://mitdisplacement.org/>

**October 1998 – May 2013**

**Executive-Director**

**Housing and Land Rights Network India (HLRN)**

- HLRN is an Indian public trust that promotes the practical realisation of adequate housing, land and access to civic services for vulnerable communities in South Asia. The work involves education, advocacy, training programs, fact-finding, research and publications: [www.hlrn.org.in](http://www.hlrn.org.in)

**January 2009 – present**

**Founding Member and Former Convenor (2009-2013)**

**Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR)**

- WGHR is an umbrella alliance of 15 Indian national human rights organisations and independent experts with the aim of ensuring better coordination and collective work amongst civil society organisations and other actors seeking to engage with the human rights framework, including the UN system for the promotion and protection of human rights. The WGHR has developed a particular expertise in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process at the UN Human Rights Council. For the advocacy, research and publication activities see: [www.wghr.org](http://www.wghr.org)

**July 2012 – Present**

**Member and Former Convenor (2012-2015)**

**Independent Task Force towards a SAARC regional mechanism on human rights**

- The Independent task force was established in 2012 to explore the possibility of a regional mechanism on human rights at the SAARC level. Members of the task force include Chairpersons of National Human Rights Commissions and former UN Special Rapporteurs.

**September 2000- April 2008**

**UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing**

**UN Commission on Human Rights, UN Human Rights Council**

- The mandate involved reporting annually to the UN Human Rights Council on the status throughout the world of the realisation of the rights related to adequate housing. In addition, the mandate requires action by the Rapporteur to promote cooperation among and assistance to Governments in their efforts to secure these rights; apply a gender perspective in the work; develop regular dialogue and collaboration with Governments, relevant UN bodies, specialised agencies, NGO's and international financial institutions. The Rapporteur is also expected to undertake country missions. *The work included the preparation of three*

*reports, for the UN Commission on Human Rights, on Women's rights to housing and land.*

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/HousingIndex.aspx>

**April 1998 –September 2001**

**Coordinator, International Committee on Human Rights in Trade and Investment (INCHRITI)**

- An alliance of seven international, regional and national human rights institutions and civil society networks that came together to conduct rigorous research and mobilisation (including education, documentation and monitoring), such that the full spectrum of local human rights impacts caused by the international investment, finance and trade system can be disaggregated, analysed and documented.

**1993- May 2002**

**Convener, Housing and Land Rights Committee (HLRC)**

- The HLRC is an integral part of Habitat International Coalition (HIC) - a global organisation that works with academic and professional bodies (Architects, Engineers, and lawyers), research institutions, and civil society on a range of issues around human settlements and sustainable development, housing and land rights, environment, poverty and living conditions, women's rights to land and property, community finance, children's rights and forced evictions. The work involved coordination of human rights activities with members of HIC from 45 countries.

## **Consultancies**

The following is a selective list of consultancies with UN agencies, research organisations, governments, international and national civil society organisations on the UN human rights system and a range of other issues.

- **Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, India**, December 2020 – Present (Senior Policy Advisor (Consultant) on Integration of Human Rights in UN Programming)
- **Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR)**, Geneva, February 2020 – March 2021 (Preparation of a global study on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) good practices)
- **Geneva Human Rights Platform** (Preparation of panel on Housing, Health and the response to Covid-19 at the annual conference of GHRP ‘Connectivity between regional and international human rights mechanisms’)
- **International Centre Interbilim**, Bishkek Regional Forum of Central Asian Countries with support from the **Open Society and the Soros Foundation** (Expert review of legislations on evictions, displacement, resettlement and rehabilitation from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and expert comments at the regional forum)
- **UN Habitat and Geneva Cities Hub**, May 2020 (Preparation of background papers and overall report for three Expert Group Meetings on Cities, Urbanisation and Human Rights)
- **Commonwealth Secretariat**, August-September 2019 (Assisting States to prepare their common core document for UN Treaty Bodies)

- **Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law**, August-September 2019 (Preparation of research brief, for the **Academy Platform on Treaty Body Review 2020**, on lessons learnt from the UPR mid-term reports for follow-up work of UN Treaty Bodies)
- **UNICEF**, India, September 2018 (Principal trainer for UNICEF national staff on linking the Universal Periodic Review with programme activities in India.)
- **Barcelona City Council** (Presentations at the City Council and various fora on enhancing the right to housing approach for their urban policies)
- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, Vietnam, 5-9 March, 2018 (Principal trainer at national civil society consultation on the UN's Universal Periodic Review)
- **Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR)**, Geneva, November 2017 – February 2018 (Preparation of Asia regional study on the right to take part in political affairs)
- **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**, Barcelona, 2017 (Preparation of background paper for the international expert workshop on the UCLG 2018 Global Observatory on Local Government and Decentralisation (GOLD) Report.)
- **International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Geneva**, 2017 (Preparation of Concept Paper towards a monitoring tool to assess impacts of development based displacement)
- **Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law**, May 2017 (Professor at the training on the international human rights system organised by the Academy for Assistant Professors and Lecturers from seven countries (Vietnam, Iran, China and Indonesia).)
- **Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF)**, Oslo, 2017 (Principal trainer on the UN's UPR with grassroots organisations in Karnataka, India)
- **UPR Info**, 2016-2018, A number of trainings on the UPR in Thailand, India and Myanmar.
- **UN Women, 2015, Preparation of background paper on Women's rights to housing and land for the State of the World's Women 2015 Report.**
- **UNDP**, Bangladesh, 2012 (Principal Trainer to assist the Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission to prepare its UPR report).

## Education

**Pratt Institute**, School of Architecture and Planning

Brooklyn, New York

Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch., 1983; Professional post-graduate degree)

Concentration: Architecture, urban and regional planning and law

**Columbia University**, Columbia College

New York

Bachelor of Arts (B.A., 1979)

Major: Architecture, social and living conditions of poor communities

**Maharaja Sayajirao University**, School of Architecture

Baroda, India

Completed three years of five-year B.Arch. program

July 1973-May 1976

## Honorary Degree

Doctor of Laws (LL. D), honoris causa, by the Simon Fraser University, 2017:

Citation available at:

<http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/ceremonies/Convocation/HDRs/honorary-degrees/2017%20Citation%20Final%20-%20For%20Web%20-%20Millon%20Kothari.pdf>

## Training, Teaching and Research Experience

- Policy issues, impacts and solutions for those living in poverty, including extreme poverty
- The UN Human Rights System, including the work of UN Special Rapporteurs, the Treaty Bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
- Justiciability and economic, social and cultural human rights
- The indivisibility of all human rights
- Housing discrimination and ghettoisation
- Displacement, forced evictions and resettlement
- The morphological approach to city and urban planning
- Human rights impact assessments and development of compensation measures
- Ethnic conflict and its impact on human rights
- The challenges and internal conflicts facing civil society
- *Women and economic, social and cultural rights*
- Children and economic, social and cultural rights
- Global, regional and national urbanisation policies
- Counter-terrorism laws and policies and impact on human rights
- International human rights system and civil society
- Human Rights Defenders, development and human rights
- Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights
- Indicators, benchmarks and human rights
- The impact of economic globalisation including structural adjustment on human rights and environment
- The Contribution of delegates from Southern countries to the UDHR
- The Universality of Human Rights
- International Cooperation and Human Rights
- Multilateralism, human rights and the UN
- SDG's and human rights
- Climate change and human rights

## Publications

In addition to the 13 country and thematic reports prepared as Special Rapporteur, I have written over 70 publications (articles, books, chapters in books, monographs, conference papers) on areas such as housing and land rights, forced evictions, poverty and development, globalisation and impact on human rights and environment, health and human rights, **women's rights to housing and land**, rural housing and natural resources, relevance of the MDG's, indicators and housing rights, civil society and human rights, trade, investment and human rights, urbanisation and housing rights and the right to water and sanitation. In addition to these personal publications I have also played a major role in writing, compiling and editing institutional publications (Training manuals, fact-finding reports, UN alternate reports, policy papers) with HLRC and the International Committee on human rights in trade and investment and national institutions. I also wrote, from 1994 to 1998, a regular column (quarterly) for the leading international human rights journal, **Human Rights Tribune**. I have also written publications for National Human Rights Institutions, including for the Indian National Human Rights Commission. Some recent publications include:

- “The Human Right to Adequate Housing and Land: Guaranteeing the dignity to dwell” in **Critical Issues on Human Rights and Development**, Editors Stephen P. Marks and Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Edgar Elgar Publishing (Forthcoming 2021)
- “Multilateral Institutions and Development-based Displacement: A Comparative Analysis of Involuntary Resettlement Policies” in **The Other Side of the Development: Displacement, Involuntary Settlement and Rehabilitation**. Routledge (Forthcoming 2021)
- “Addressing poverty at its base: The housing and land rights approach” in **Research Handbook on Human Rights and Poverty**, Martha F. Davis, Morten Kjaerum, Amanda Lyons (Eds.) Edward Elgar Publishing (2021)
- “The Human Right to Adequate Housing and the New Human Right to Land: Congruent Entitlements” in **The Cambridge Handbook on New Human Rights: Recognition, Novelty, Rhetoric**. Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- “Human Rights” in **Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary**, AuthorsUpFront and Columbia University Press, 2019.
- “**The Universal Periodic Review Mid-Term Reporting Process: Lessons for the UN Treaty Bodies**” Research Brief, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, 2019.
- “The sameness of human rights online and offline”, in **Human Rights, Digital Society and the Law: A Research Companion**, Editor Mart Susi, Routledge, 2019
- “India’s Contribution to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, **Journal of the Indian National Human Rights Commission**, Volume 17, 2018
- “ESC Rights: The Need for a courageous, uncompromising approach” **Human Rights Council @ 10**, Human Rights Monitor Special Edition, International Service for Human Rights, Geneva, 2017.
- “**The Global Crisis of Displacement and Evictions: A Housing and Land Rights Response**”, Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, New York, 2015.
- “**Women and the Right to Adequate Housing**”, paper prepared for the **UN Women State of the World’s Women Report, 2015**
- “From Commission to the Council: Evolution of UN Charter Bodies”, in **Handbook of International Human Rights Law**, Editor Dinah Shelton, Oxford University Press, 2013
- “A Human Rights’ Perspective for the Right to the City”, in **Urban Policies and the Right to the City in India: Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship**, UNESCO, 2011
- “**The 2010 Commonwealth Games: Whose Wealth? Whose Commons?** Housing and Land Rights Network (with Shivani Chaudhry and Shalini Mishra, 2010)
- “**The Human Right to Adequate Housing and Land**”, Indian National Human Rights Commission, 2006
- “Privatising human rights – the impact of globalisation on adequate housing, water and sanitation” **Social Watch Report 2004**
- “The Human Right to Adequate Housing: India’s Commitment and the Struggle Towards Realisation”, **Journal of the NHRC**, National Human Rights Commission, Volume 2, 2003.
- “Globalisation, Social Action and Human Rights” in **Development and Social Action**, Oxfam GB, 1999
- "Homelessness and the Right to Adequate Housing: Confronting Exclusion, Sustaining Change" in **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 50 Years and Beyond**, Baywood Publishers, New York on behalf of the United Nations, 1998
- "The global struggle for the right to a place to live", in **Development in Practice**, Vol. 7 Number 1, Oxfam (UK and Ireland), Oxford, 1997. Republished in **Development and Rights**, Ed. Deborah Eade, Oxfam, 1998

- **Planned Segregation: Riots, Evictions and Dispossession in Jogeshwari East, Mumbai/Bombay**, (with Nasreen Contractor) YUVA, 1996

## **Expert Meetings**

in addition to numerous Expert meetings that I have participated in as Special Rapporteur, I presented papers or oral statements at numerous expert meetings. A very select list:

- **Panellist at the day of general discussion, General Comment on Land Rights, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2019)**
- **Panellist at the UN Human Rights Council's Social Forum (2018)**
- **International Expert Meeting of the Academic Platform on Treaty Body Review 2020, Oslo (October 2018)**
- **Co-coordinator of the Asian Regional Conference of the Academic Platform on Treaty Body Review 2020, New Delhi (October, 2017)**
- **Panellist at the first session of the UN Human Rights Council's Working Group on drafting a declaration on the rights of peasants and other rural workers, Geneva (July 2013)**
- **UN expert meeting on transitional justice and economic, social and cultural rights (May 2009)**
- **UN expert meeting on counter-terrorism measures and economic, social and cultural rights (January 2009)**
- **Intersessional Dialogue on Poverty and Human Rights at the UN Commission on Human Rights, (Geneva 2000)**
- **Expert symposium (UNDP, UNHCHR and the government of Norway) on human rights and human development, (Oslo 1998)**
- **Expert meeting (UNICEF) on Children's rights and Habitat II (New York 1996)**
- **Expert meeting (UNICEF) on global indicators on Children's rights (Geneva 1996)**
- **UN expert meeting on the indicators on economic, social and cultural rights (Geneva 1993)**

## **Standard-Setting Expert Meetings**

- **Expert meeting to draft Principles on Extra-Territorial Obligations, Maastricht 2011**
- **UN Expert Consultation on the draft Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, Geneva, May 2011**
- **UN Expert Meeting to finalise draft Guiding Principles on Foreign Debt and Human Rights, Geneva, November 2011**
- **UN Expert Meeting to draft the Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development based Displacement and Evictions, Berlin, 2007**
- **Expert meeting to draft guidelines on violations of economic, social and cultural rights (The Maastricht Guidelines), Maastricht 1997**
- **UN expert meeting on drafting principles on human rights and the environment, Geneva 1995**

## Teaching Experience

The following is a selective list of academic institutions in different parts of the world where I have taught or delivered lectures and seminars on human rights.

- **Visiting Professor**, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva (February to June 2022).
- **Professor** and coordinator for the Executive Course on the Universal Periodic Review at the Geneva Academy for Humanitarian and Human Rights Law (2019, 2020 and 2021).
- **Professor** at the Geneva Academy for Humanitarian and Human Rights Law and the Norwegian Centre of Human Rights for trainings, for Professors and Lecturers from around the world, on the Universal Periodic Review (2018, 2019 and 2020)
- **Professor** for the Summer Semester at the Venice Academy of Human Rights (2015 and 2017)
- **Distinguished Visiting Scholar** with (MIT) Program on Human Rights and Justice (2014-15).
- **Dr. Martin Luther King Visiting Scholar** at the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (2013-2014)
- **Visiting Professor** at ETSAB, Barcelona School of Architecture, Polytechnic University of Catalonia (2008).
- **Professor at the International Institute of Human Rights**, Strasbourg, France (1994) – Special Course on Poverty and Human Rights.
- Selected Lectures and Seminars at academic institutions in Canada, Colombia, Germany, India, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States: **Cornell University, Delhi University, National Law University India, Indian Academy of Administration, Kwa-Zulu Natal University, University of Melbourne, Lancaster University, University of London, New York University Law School, George Washington University Law School, Harvard University, University of British Columbia, Venice Academy of Human Rights, Columbia University, University of Toronto, Chulalongkorn University, University of London, University of Barcelona, Nordic Centre for Public Health, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, University of Arizona, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Geneva Academy for Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, South Asia University**

## Advisory Positions/Memberships

The following is a select list of current and past affiliations as Board member and trustee of numerous organisations. I have also been called on to be a jury member of a number of public hearings and human rights tribunals on issues such as violence against women, AIDS and violence; the human rights impact of the Tsunami and the human rights impact of forced evictions and homelessness on women and children

- **President, UPR Info, Geneva** (2015-present)



- **Advisory Board Member, Geneva Human Rights Platform (2020-present)**
- **Advisory Board Member, Norwegian Fund for Human Rights (2018-present)**
- **Board Member, Centre on Economic and Social Rights (CESR), New York, USA (2016-present)**
- **Trustee, Housing and Land Rights Network (2013-present)**
- **Member of the Executive Committee, Urban Rights Forum – for the Homeless, New Delhi, India (2008-present)**
- **Member of the Executive Committee, HAQ, Centre for Child Rights, India(1999-Present)**
- **Member, India International Centre (2007-Present)**
- **Trustee, Oxfam India (2006-2012)**
- **Editorial Adviser for the international journal, Development in Practice, Oxfam (1997-2010)**
- **Editorial Adviser for the international journal, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (2001-2011)**
- **Member of the Advisory Committee, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Project, AAAS and HURIDOCs (1996 – 1999)**
- **Board Member, Habitat International Coalition (1994-1999)**

### Member of Expert Bodies

- **Member, Drafting Group, The Maastricht Principles on the Rights of Future Generations, Maastricht University. (2021-Present)**
- **Member, The Global Policy Network Experts Roster for Rapid Response (GPN/ExpRes), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), (2019-Present).**
- **Member, International Review Committee for Taiwan’s compliance with the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2016-Present).**
- **Member of the Brookings Institute Expert Advisory Group to the Global study on the impact of the work of UN Special Rapporteurs. (2009-2011)**
- **Member of the Scientific Council, World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) Project linking violence and economic, social and cultural rights (2005 –2010)**
- **Member of the Leadership Council, The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, UNAIDS (2005- 2011)**
- **Member of the Steering Group to oversee the drafting of the Manual for law and policy makers on protecting internally displaced persons (2006-2008)**