

Human Rights Centre Clinic

Right to Housing Unit

Partner: [UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing](#)

About

The Right to Housing Unit (RHU) is an opportunity for students to engage directly with the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. The RHU is led by [Dr Koldo Casla](#), Senior Lecturer at Essex Law School and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing since May 2026. The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing is the only mechanism of the international human rights system devoted entirely to the promotion and protection of the right to adequate housing. The right to housing is enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and multiple other treaties under the UN and the regional human rights systems.

As part of the Human Rights Centre Clinic, the RHU team will work directly with Dr Casla on real cases concerning the right to housing submitted to the United Nations. This includes conducting background research in relation to thematic reports or country reports, and analysing evidence brought to the attention of the Special Rapporteur by individuals and groups. This can include, for example, cases of forced evictions, legislative initiatives that may amount to unjustifiable retrogression, discriminatory practices, examples of financialisation of housing leading to exclusion, or the systematic destruction of homes in armed conflict.

Project overview

The [Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing](#) is a UN Special Procedure mandate established in 2000 entrusted with the task of promoting the progressive realisation of the right to housing globally, identifying good practices and viable solutions, as well as challenges and obstacles in the fulfilment of this right. UN Special Procedure mandate-holders receive and deal with individual complaints from citizens from all over the world, and carry out official country visits/missions to monitor compliance with the internationally recognised right to adequate housing on the ground.

Through the RHU, students are able to contribute directly to the Special Rapporteur's mandate by working on real cases and thematic research. By participating in the RHU, students will develop exceptional skills regarding the assessment and redress of human rights violations. Specifically, you will obtain extensive knowledge of the law and key UN human rights institutions. You will form strong research and writing skills, developing the ability to analyse, process, and summarise legal texts, as well as gaining an understanding of the requirements of confidentiality. You will develop a holistic understanding of housing from a broad set of perspectives, including Law, Sociology, Public Health, and Economics.

Project output

RHU students will be assigned tasks in conjunction with casework. These tasks will include:

- Receiving specialised training on key legal and human rights concepts related to the right to housing.
- Reviewing and analysing individual complaints, as well as government responses thereto.
- Researching novel issues regarding housing-related human rights violations, and discussing potential approaches and solutions to these situations.
- Preparing briefings on countries of particular interest in relation to housing, and briefings of thematic issues.
- Adhering to non-disclosure obligations.

The RHU team's research will contribute to UN statements and policies and help generate strategies by governments and civil society in ensuring the right to adequate housing.

The team will also write a blogpost of around 1,000 words.

Timeline

Phase 1: November – December 2026:

- Learning about human rights, with a particular emphasis on the right to housing.
- Possibly in teams of two or three, reviewing and analysing individual complaints of breaches of the right to housing.
- Selecting thematic issues to research.

Phase 2: January – March 2027:

- Deepening analysis skills regarding individual cases brought to the UN Special Rapporteur.
- Conducting research on thematic issues and receiving feedback on research and writing.

Phase 3: April – May 2027:

- Conducting final rounds of casework.
- Finalising thematic research.
- Drafting a blogpost on the RHU and its activities.

Initial reading

- Website of the UN Special Rapporteur: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-housing>
- Stuart Wilson, "[Chapter 10: The right to adequate housing](#)". In: *Research Handbook on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as Human Rights* (Edward Elgar, 2020).
- Jessie Hohmann, *Housing and Human Rights* (Edward Elgar, 2026), chapter 1, an introduction to housing as a human right.
- Koldo Casla, [The Social Right to Property: Social Function and Human Rights](#) (Edward Elgar, 2026), particularly chapters 2 (on IHRL), 5 (on the social right to property) and 6 (on its relationship with the right to housing).
- Alvina Hoffmann, [The plural professional: How UN human rights experts construct their independence](#), *Review of International Studies*. 2026, 52(1), pp. 167-187.

Focal point

- Dr Koldo Casla, Senior Lecturer Essex Law School and UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, koldo.casla@essex.ac.uk