

Prachi Vidwans - Why The World Needs To Get Ready For The Next Generation Of Slums



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transitions.foreignpolicy.com. August 2014. People who live in slums don't have easy lives to begin with. Lately, though, politicians have been doing their best to make matters even more complicated. A few weeks ago the Venezuelan government started evicting Caracas's infamous 45-story slum, the "Tower of David," relocating residents to government housing outside the city. In early July, a few weeks earlier, a thousand slum dwellers in Islamabad found themselves confronting riot police as they tried to protest the Pakistani government's plans to evict them from their homes ("katchi adabi" settlements). Around the same time, a local government in India approved plans to build the first of 10,000 new "transit accommodations" for displaced slum dwellers. That followed Bombay's brutal anti-slum drive in May, when authorities bulldozed more than 100 family homes, forcing over 600 residents onto the streets.

If it seems like conflict over slums is mounting, that's because it is: The urbanization of the world is accelerating. In 1950, just 29 percent of the world's population lived in cities; back then, that was roughly 742 million people. Today, more than half of the world's people — more than 3.5 billion — are citydwellers. That may sound like a dramatic shift, but you ain't seen nothing yet. Roughly 70 million people move into cities every year, and the vast majority of them usually end up in illegal or informal urban settlements. According to U.N. estimates, by 2050, a third of the world's population will live not just in cities, but

in slums.

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