



Bulldozer Justice | Uttar Pradesh | 14 Sep 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court of India \(SC\)](#) criticized the practice of "**bulldozer justice**," highlighting that demolishing properties based on criminal allegations against individuals or their family members violates the [rule of law](#).

Key Points

- "Bulldozer justice" refers to the practice of [demolishing the property](#) of individuals suspected of criminal activities or involvement in riots using bulldozers, often without adhering to [due legal process](#).
 - This practice has been reported in several Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam, and Maharashtra.
 - Demolitions are often **justified under municipal laws** for encroachment or **unauthorized construction**.
- This practice bypasses [due process requirements](#) outlined in Supreme Court judgments such as ***Sudama Singh & Ors. vs Government of Delhi*** and ***Ajay Maken & Ors vs Union of India***.
- The SC has recently condemned this practice, emphasizing that demolishing properties based on accusations [violates the rule of law](#) and [due process of law](#).
 - The SC has invited suggestions from the parties concerned to frame appropriate pan-India guidelines on extra-legal demolitions.
- An analysis has identified that **procedural guidelines** should be incorporated into **relevant legislation and rules**, structured in a phased manner with multiple checkpoints at each stage to ensure **all necessary steps are followed** before taking any adverse or irreversible actions.
 - **Pre-Demolition Phase:**
 - **Burden of Proof:** Shift the burden of proof to the authorities to justify demolition and displacement, ensuring protection of human rights.
 - **Notice and Publicity:** Provide a reasoned notice with information about land records and resettlement plans, and give ample time for affected individuals to respond.
 - **Independent Review:** An independent committee with judicial and civil society representatives should review proposed demolitions, particularly in neighborhoods.
 - **Engagement and Planning:** Engage affected individuals in discussions about alternative housing and compensation, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. Allow a minimum of one month between notice and demolition.
 - **During Demolition:**
 - **Minimization of Force:** Avoid the use of physical force and heavy machinery such as bulldozers.
 - **Official Presence:** Ensure the presence of government officials not involved in the demolition to oversee the process.
 - **Scheduled Timing:** Demolition times should be pre-decided to prevent surprise actions.
 - **Post-Demolition (Rehabilitation):**
 - **Rehabilitation:** Provide adequate temporary or permanent housing solutions to ensure no one is left homeless.
 - **Grievance Redressal:** Establish a speedy grievance redress mechanism for affected individuals to challenge demolition decisions.
 - **Remedies:** Ensure remedies such as compensation, restitution, and possible return

to original homes.

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