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# SOCIALIST POLICIES CAN END THE HOUSING CRISIS

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- For a mass public house building programme on public land. Take over vacant land and end land hoarding by developers and vulture funds
- Rent controls now - set at affordable level by democratic committees of tenants, workers and trade unions
- Bring into public ownership the major construction companies, banks and property developers under democratic working-class control
- Build a new mass party for working-class people to fight for these and other socialist policies



Militant Left is part of the worldwide socialist organisation the Committee for a Workers' International. We fight for socialist change and against global capitalist oppression. See [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

# Fight the housing crisis with socialist policies

It should be apparent to everyone by now that this government will not take the necessary steps to tackle the housing crisis. This week's Dáil vote on declaring a housing emergency makes that crystal clear.

The last three governments have each allowed the crisis to worsen every year. All of their high profile plans to tackle the crisis have achieved nothing of substance.

As a result, open confrontation with the government over housing is approaching rapidly. Housing has brutally exposed how Irish capitalist governments act directly against the interests of the working class majority. Year after year, they refuse to implement the basic policies that we all know could end this crisis quickly.

All the while, we see record homelessness, now almost 11,000 people, including 3300 children. Hundreds of thousands of young adults who cannot afford to rent or buy their own homes are forced to live with their parents.

Tens of thousands of students cannot find affordable accommodation and have to choose between long commutes, deferring courses or dropping out altogether. Education unions this week warned of the severe damage this crisis is doing to the provision of education at all levels.

Rents in Dublin, as the last Daft.ie report shows, are above EUR 2,000 per month in every part of the city and county – among the highest in the world. Average monthly rents across the country as a whole are EUR 1,688. Over a

third of those living in rental accommodation experienced forced deprivation in 2022, according to the Central Statistics Office.

Greedy landlords with the full backing of the State and media are gleefully using this crisis to gouge even more profit out of their portfolios and condemn tens of thousands of workers to homelessness, overcrowding or emigration.

## **workers' movement must take the lead**

The workers' movement - the trade unions and working-class communities – must fight for urgent action on housing, including fighting for a mass public house building programme on public land at affordable rents.

How else can the housing crisis be solved other than building affordable homes for all? This should be done in conjunction with immediate steps to refurbish all currently vacant and derelict local authority houses, take over derelict sites and convert them to housing as well as a ban on land hoarding by developers and an end to the bulk buying of houses and housing estates by vulture funds. Building publicly owned and affordable student accommodation is also essential to assist with the cost of living crisis facing young people.

The introduction of rent controls is also vital. Rents should be capped at affordable levels and decided upon by democratically elected committees of tenants, workers and trade unions.

It's also clear that the big constructions companies, the vulture funds, land developers, the banks

and big financiers who have made a killing from housing speculation must be brought in to democratic public ownership. No longer can our lives be at the whim of profit-hungry capitalists. The trade union movement should set the date for a mass demonstration to demand these policies and others are implemented immediately to tackle the housing emergency.

## **danger of division**

Events in East Wall this week show the potentially enormous dangers posed by leaving this crisis to rumble on with no decisive intervention. The far Right and fascists are clearly determined and organising to hijack housing as a wedge issue to push their agenda of racism and division.

We in the labour movement must mobilise our forces to push for the action – including strikes - and policies that can end this crisis. There is absolutely no doubt that the working class majority will rally to the labour movement if we move to take decisive action.

## **capitalism to blame**

The current crisis is just another example of capitalism working as normal. Ultimately, the only way to end deep social crises, like the one we are experiencing in housing, is to take that power, ownership and control of wealth and capital out of the hands of the tiny capitalist class through democratic public ownership and control.

A socialist plan would remove profiteering and greed from the provision of housing and focus instead on human need. That's why we need to build a new party for the working class and the trade unions to fight for these and other essential socialist policies.

[www.militant-left.org](http://www.militant-left.org)

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