



16 October 2017 – *The world's poor are at disproportionate risk of torture, arrest, early death and domestic violence, but their civil and political rights are being airbrushed out of the picture,* [UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty](#)

*Philip Alston has warned in a hard-hitting statement to mark* [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#) *on 17 October:*

“If you are a victim of torture, the chances are significant that you are also poor. The same applies if you are a woman or a child who is a victim of domestic abuse.”

As a poor individual, you are more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for crimes and, if you are, you are less likely to be able to afford a lawyer. The poor experience additional barriers when they want to vote and often have virtually no influence on political decision-making.

Airbrushing the civil and political rights of the poor out of the picture has taken several forms.

Firstly, human rights organizations have assumed that poverty can be explained exclusively by various forms of discrimination. But the use of a surrogate lens is clearly inadequate for capturing the very specific consequences of the varied forms of discrimination, oppression, stigma and violence experienced by many of the poor on a daily basis.

Secondly, virtually all governments, UN human rights bodies, and human rights organizations have ignored the fact that key provisions in all major human rights treaties prohibit discrimination of any kind on grounds of *social origin, property, birth or other status*.

The result is that discrimination based on socio-economic class is hardly ever part of any analysis.



The UN Special Rapporteur calls for a new approach by the human rights community, the development community and governments that gives due attention to how often, and how exactly, the civil and political rights of the poor are violated.

“It is for everyone involved to determine how that goal can best be achieved, but a key starting point is to begin collecting data.

All of us who advocate for people’s human rights to be respected, whether from within the UN system or any other group or organisation, must be part of painting the poor back into the

picture, closing the knowledge gap and rededicating ourselves to the search for solutions to their disproportionate suffering.”

Concerned about the world we live in? Then **STAND UP for someone’s rights today** #Standup4humanrights and visit the web page at

<http://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/>