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## **HOUSED by CHOICE, HOUSED by FORCE - Homes, Conflicts and Conflicting Interests**

January 21 – 22. 2016

Architecture\_MPS, University of Cyprus; Cyprus Institute

### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:**

State-led commodification and Insecure Tenure: A pattern of targeting vulnerable communities in Egypt

**2. Format:** Written Paper

*Written paper / verbal presentation / screening / short film / other – please specify*

**3. Author(s) Name:**

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**5. University or Company Affiliation:**

10 Tooba | Applied Research on the Built Environment

**6. Abstract (300 words):**

In the ambiguous legislative climate synonymous with authoritarianism, the Egyptian state has encouraged the commodification of land and property through a raft of different policies that have deregulated the market, driving up the prices in some places 16 fold over the last decade alone. State-led commodification in tandem with insecure tenure for most Egyptians has meant the exploitation of many communities by a plethora of government and quasi-government agencies that claim their land as their own.

Through three different tenure cases lodged by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, this paper will show how a pattern exists between state-led commodification and communities with insecure tenure. The case studies show the official use of direct methods of eviction such as eviction orders, sequestration decrees and the falsifying of contracts. In addition, un-official in-direct methods of forced-eviction have been used such as cutting off power and water supplies as well as intimidation and torture of some residents.

The paper will also show how many of the forced evictions have happened, or been attempted, for the prime purpose of real estate gain, rather than the seemingly social motives like “upgrading unsafe areas”, “the public good”, or because tenants have contravened their contracts.

## **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):**

Yahia Shawkat is co-founder of [10 Tooba | Applied Research on the Built Environment](#) where he currently directs the Built Environment Observatory which focuses on housing and urban policy analysis.

Yahia's work includes mapping [Parallel Urban Practice in Egypt](#), the infographic book; [Social Justice and the Built environment | A Map of Egypt \(Ar\)](#), and the [Right to Housing Initiative](#) documentaries. As housing rights officer at EIPR he produced a series of [housing policy notes](#) as well as research on the building collapse phenomena which claims over 200 lives a year and leaves hundreds more homeless.

Yahia has also consulted on housing and built environment policy for the watchdog [BIC](#), as well as [UN-Habitat](#), and has contributed articles to [Mada Masr](#), [MEI](#) and [Heinrich Boell](#), among others.

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