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## EIL x UN-Habitat Roundtable Discussion on Positioning Urban Programs for Impact: The Old Rental Law in Egypt

This roundtable will bring together key stakeholders from the government to foster a collaborative and evidence-informed approach to implementing Egypt's landmark Law No. 164 of 2025, concerning rental agreements. The discussion aims to align efforts, identify potential challenges, and co-create actionable solutions to ensure the new legal framework translates into a fair, stable, and inclusive housing market for all Egyptians.

## Context

Egypt's housing sector stands at a critical juncture. The nation is experiencing rapid urbanization, with its urban population growing at a rate of [1.9%](#) annually, and over [43%](#) of Egyptians now reside in cities. This trend has placed immense pressure on urban infrastructure and services, leading to significant housing challenges. Key issues include a disconnect between housing supply and demand, a shortage of affordable housing for lower-income groups, and a large number of vacant or underutilized housing units. These challenges are central to [Egypt's Vision 2030](#) and its [National Housing Strategy](#), which aim to ensure that all citizens have the right to adequate housing.

## Background

In response to these long-standing issues, the Egyptian government enacted [Law No. 164 of 2025](#) (the "Old Rental Law"). This legislation represents a transformative shift away from the old rent control system, which had been in place for decades. These older laws had frozen rents and created strong tenant protections that, while providing housing stability, over time contributed to distortions in the housing market, disincentives for landlords to invest in maintenance, and a widening gap between formal and informal rental markets.

The new law introduces a transitional period to phase out old contracts, establishes market-aligned rental adjustments based on property classifications, and creates a fund to support tenants who may be affected by these changes. The law's objective is to strike a new balance between the rights of landlords and tenants, thereby encouraging investment in the housing stock and modernizing the rental market.

While the reforms aim to balance the rights of landlords and tenants, stimulate investment in the rental sector, and ensure a fairer and more transparent housing market, their implementation carries potential risks. These include the possible displacement of vulnerable households, increased pressure on informal settlements, and socioeconomic tensions if the implementation approach and mitigation measures are not carefully designed.

## Motivation

The successful implementation of such a comprehensive reform is a complex undertaking that extends beyond legislative action. It requires the coordinated effort of numerous stakeholders, including government ministries, local governorates, newly formed zonal committees, real estate developers, landlords, tenants, and civil society organizations. The potential for social and economic disruption during the transition period is significant, as the law will impact millions of tenants and landlords alike. Given the law's complexity and the high stakes involved, there is a risk of widespread legal disputes as both sides seek to understand and assert their rights under the new framework.

Therefore, a proactive, multi-stakeholder dialogue is essential to anticipate implementation bottlenecks, ensure procedural fairness, and build public trust. The [Egypt Impact Lab](#) and [J-PAL MENA](#), with its

mandate to promote evidence-based policymaking, and UN-Habitat, with its global expertise in [sustainable urban development and housing policy](#), are uniquely positioned to facilitate this crucial conversation. This roundtable is motivated by the need to build a shared understanding of the challenges and to collaboratively design an implementation roadmap that is both effective and equitable.

## Objectives

**The primary objectives of the roundtable discussion are to:**

- **Share Evidence and Best Practices:** To present relevant global and local evidence on effective rental market regulation, tenant protection schemes, compliance mechanisms, and strategies for enhancing civil servant capacity, drawing from the J-PAL evidence base and UN-Habitat's global experience.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** To create a network for stakeholders to candidly discuss potential implementation barriers—from administrative hurdles and information gaps to social friction—and to identify opportunities for innovation and partnership.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Strengthening coordination between government bodies and competent authorities is supported by a rigorous, evidence-driven framework for evaluating the law's impact on major outcome areas—tenant welfare and stability, market functioning and prices, landlord behavior and supply, equity and inclusion, informality and enforcement, and broader spillovers. By grounding this process in robust data and collaborative evaluation, the EIL/J-PAL MENA ensures a comprehensive understanding of both the economic and social ramifications of the law, paving the way for informed policy adjustments and sustained improvements in Egypt's rental housing sector.

## Expected Deliverables and Outcomes

**The roundtable is expected to produce the following tangible outcomes:**

- **A Stakeholder Action Map:** A document outlining the potential roles, responsibilities, and key actions required from each stakeholder group for the successful implementation of the law.
- **A Report on Priority Areas:** A summary report identifying the top 3-5 priority areas for immediate action, such as public awareness campaigns, capacity building for zonal committees, or the design of the tenant support fund. This would be highly relevant to the Egypt Impact Lab/ J-PAL MENA for determining which reform arms to evaluate for impact.
- **Design for Evaluation of the Rental Law:** With the support of key partners and UN-Habitat, the Egypt Impact Lab/J-PAL MENA will initiate discussions to identify potential areas and priority outcomes for evaluating the old rental law. These discussions aim to lay the groundwork for a possible evaluation framework that can inform evidence-based policy adjustments during the implementation process.

# Roundtable Details and Structure

This section outlines the proposed format, participants, and agenda for the roundtable discussion.

- **Participants**

The roundtable will be a closed, by-invitation-only event to ensure a focused and productive discussion among approximately 15-20 high-level government representatives.

- **Structure and Agenda (Half-Day Event)**

The roundtable will be structured into **three main sessions**, facilitated by senior staff from EIL/J-PAL MENA and UN-Habitat.

Duration	Session	Structure
9:30 - 10:00 AM	<b>Registration and Refreshments</b>	
10:00 - 11:30 AM	<b>Session 1: Setting the scene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Opening Remarks:</b> Welcome by representatives from NIGSD, EIL, UN-Habitat, and a high-level government official (e.g., from the Ministry of Housing).</li> <li>● <b>Presentations:</b> The Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities will deliver a presentation on the evolution of the old rental laws and the government’s efforts to regulate the relationship between landlords and tenants. In addition, the Egypt Impact Lab and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in Egypt will provide a brief overview of the potential impacts of amendments to the rental law, along with key recommendations and international best practices in rental housing policies.</li> <li>● <b>Stakeholders Introduction:</b> Each participating stakeholder will briefly introduce themselves and outline the role of their institution or authority in supporting or overseeing the implementation of the old rental law.</li> </ul>
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	<b>Session 2: Identifying Challenges and Co-creating Solutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This session will provide space for participants to share their institutions’ ongoing and planned efforts to enhance the implementation and impact of the old rental law. The discussion will also serve as a foundation for mapping key stakeholders and identifying potential areas for collaboration.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>The conversation will be structured around three thematic pillars:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>The Tenant Experience:</b> Exploring how to effectively design and deliver financial and legal support mechanisms that ensure housing stability and protect vulnerable tenants.</li> <li>○ <b>Ensuring Compliance and Transparency:</b> Discussing strategies to promote landlord compliance with registration and rent-setting regulations, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and enhance transparency across the system.</li> <li>○ <b>State Capacity and Implementation:</b> Examining how to empower zonal committees and relevant administrative bodies to perform their roles efficiently, fairly, and with adequate resources and oversight.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Participants will be invited to highlight their institutional mandates, current initiatives, and potential contributions under each theme, helping to inform a collective stakeholder mapping and identify opportunities for coordination and joint action.</li> </ul>
12:30 - 1:00 PM	Coffee break	
1:00 - 2:00 PM	<b>Session 3: Synthesis and Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Moderated Plenary Discussion:</b> A facilitated exchange to synthesize findings across themes, validate the emerging stakeholder map, and build consensus around a set of immediate priority actions and next steps toward effective implementation and monitoring of the old rental law. Experts shall list their priority recommendations to incorporate into our policy paper.</li> </ul>
2:00 - 2:15 PM	Concluding remarks and way forward	