

Home Demolition in Delhi: Thousands Rendered Homeless, Kathputli Artists' Colony Demolished, Death of Democracy!

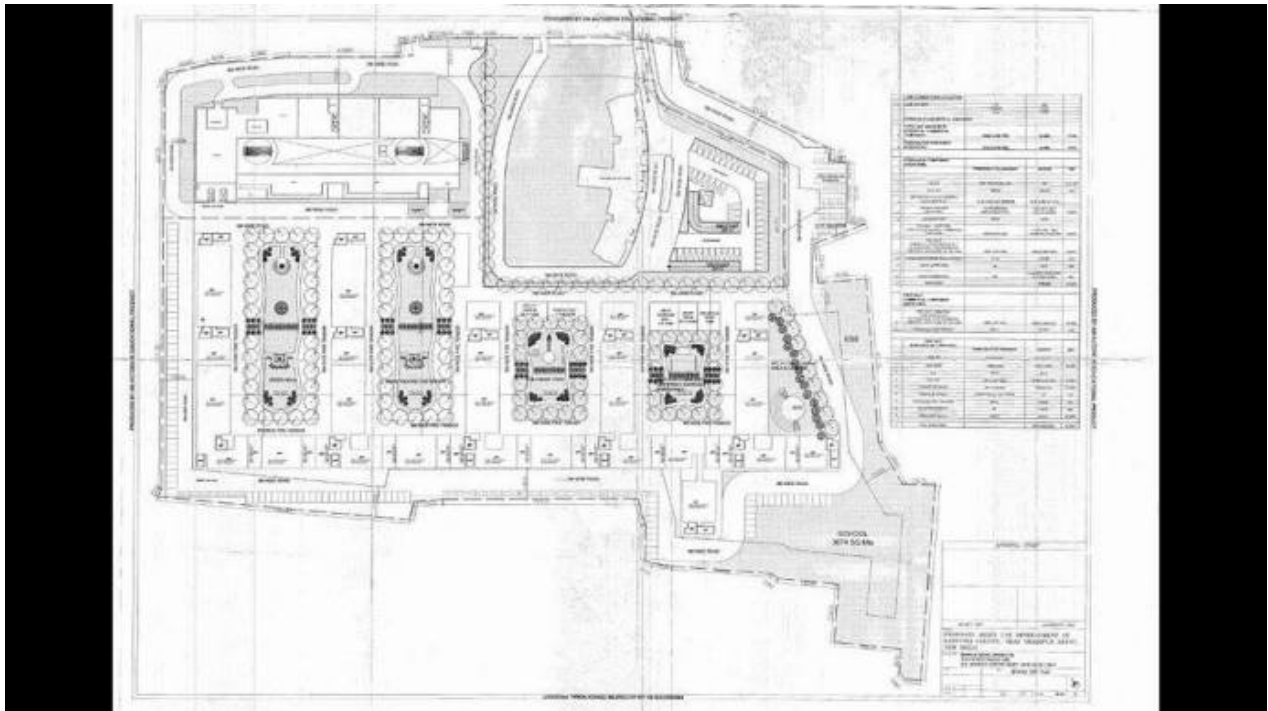
By [Ankit Jha](#)

Global Research, November 01, 2017

[Countercurrents](#) 31 October 2017

In the two days demolition drive by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in assistance with Delhi Police demolished more than 1000 houses at Kathputli Colony, in West Delhi on October 30th and October 31st 2017. During the demolition, Police lathicharged on the residents mercilessly and also shot some Tear gas on them. On the basis of a Public Notice served on October 25th to evict the place in 5 days, they carried out this drive. They demolished some 100 houses on day one with 5 Bulldozers on place and they came with greater force on next days to brutally demolishing the rest. The gross Human Rights Violation was done by Delhi Police in two days where they just behaved like they are meant to Peace and Tranquility but they have been brought by DDA to bring as much fear they can create through their Lathis and Abusive Languages. They beat anyone who tried to say a word, they pushed anyone, they grabbed the collars of anyone who resisted, be it man, woman or a child.

People from different communal groups living in the vicinity of each other for decades now. In the early 1970s, a handful of performers from Rajasthan settled in West Delhi's Shadipur region. Artists who were primarily puppeteers and musicians often moved throughout the capital to perform and over a period of time Shadipur became a convenient location for the same. Over time, they were joined by a variety of artists and people from states like *Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Orissa and Jharkhand* and together they formed a single settlement known as *Kathputli colony* (The term refers to string puppet theatre).



Raheja Plan

The Actual Case:

Kathputli Colony was planned for the In-Situ Slum Redevelopment under Rajiv Was Yojana in 2009 through Public Private Partnership where contract was given to Raheja Developers (Can also be read Builders at many places) for this at Rs 6.22 Crore. Raheja developed a plan of 170 Premium and 2800 EWS Flats for the area. People were happy with the project initially when the first survey was done. There were some 2631 eligible beneficiaries as per the first survey. To which the builders slyly added an Office Complex and Mall on his “share” of 35% of the land, while They were allotted only 18% in the contract. This then raised the height of the 2800 EWS flats to 15 stories. It enraged the residents as they didn’t want such a tall dwelling unit and such change in plan.

Secondly, The survey was done after the plan where Raheja developed a plan for 2800 families and families in Survey came out to 2631. It also raised the questions that how was it possible that Raheja with the numbers and planned the units for such exact families.

Thirdly, People were sent to the Transit Camp for a duration of 2 years by Force, by Greed or By Fear to Anand Parbat whereas many people refused to go and after a long struggle they go a High Court Order in their favour in March 2014 for a Resurvey where DDA accepted that there are more families than the last survey and they planned to shift them to Narela till the Project is completed. Narela is situated on the outskirts of Delhi and is more than 30 KMs from their current location which lacks the basic services for living.







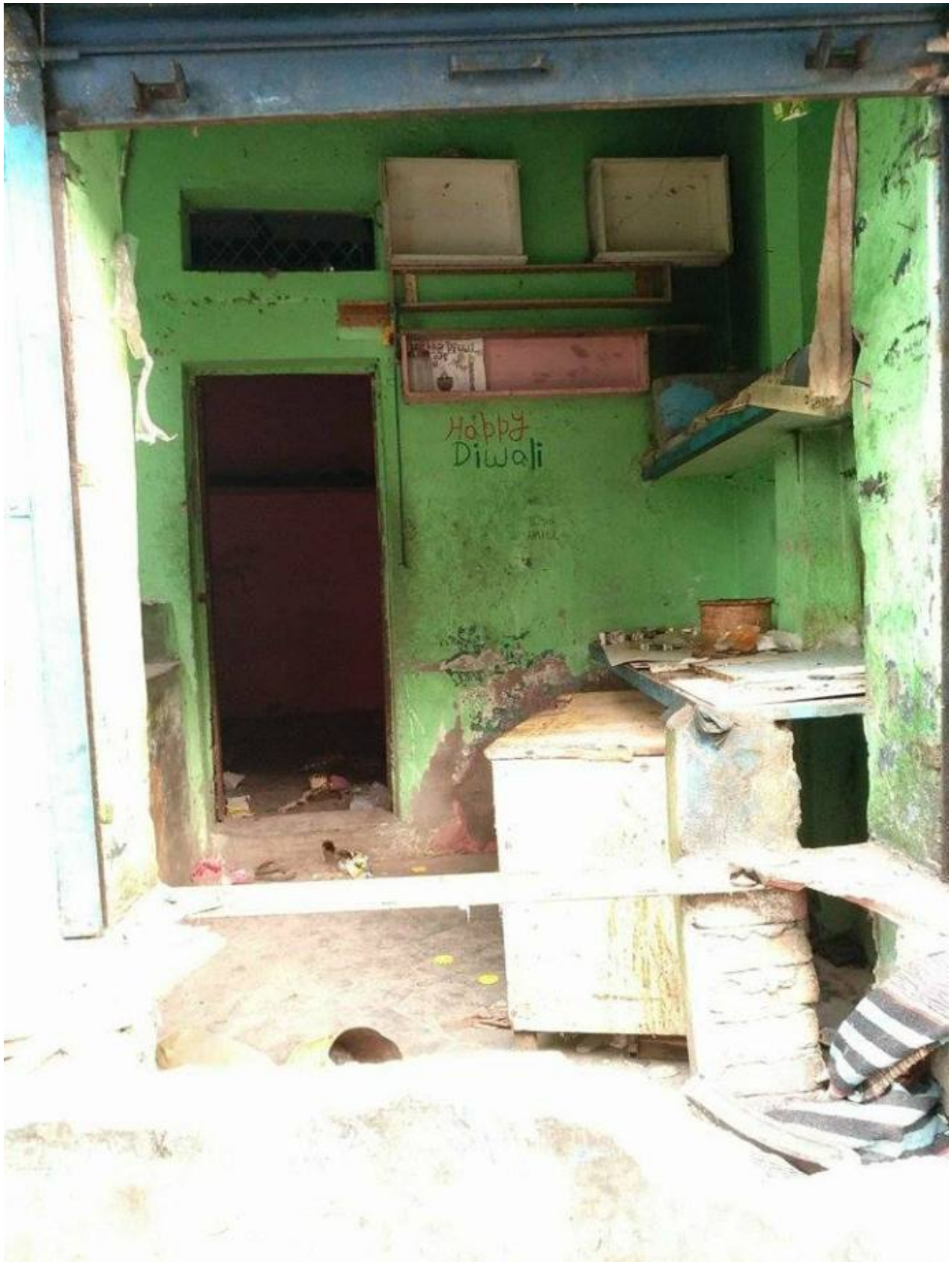














The Current Situation

As of now, after the two days of demolition just 50 or 60 houses have remained in Kathputli Colony till the article was finally drafted. The notice for this demolition was served on October 25th but people didn't know about it as there were no Public Announcement or Individual Notification done. People were forced out from their houses and anyone who refused to go were beaten by Police. By the afternoon all the nearby shops were closed, the entry and exit points were seized by Police. No one was allowed to enter in to the colony. Looking at such scary scenes, People were very scared. One elderly woman hung herself as her house was demolished. She is still critical in hospital, some social activists (Ex MP Annie Raja and others) were also thrashed and manhandled by Police.

One of the residents said that their children are missing from afternoon and they didn't return till late evening. A father in 60s was performing the post death rituals of his son when he was thrown out from his house and he was wandering with those stuff to perform the ritual. There are many such stories in the Colony from two days. Police didn't let people sleep in nights as they came every hour to ask them to leave or they will throw them. The Police from Ranjit Nagar Police Station were the main culprits here. They also open fired in night whose evidence (A Bullet) was produced by residents in the morning when I was interacting with them and they also brought it to the Press Conference organised by National Alliance for People's Movements and Delhi Solidarity Group. Other Organisations like Basti Bachao Sangharsh Smiti is also working with people to help them to face this hard time.

In a Public Interest Litigation filed for the case, High Court has ordered a Stay for ten days and has asked the SHO of Ranjit Nagar to maintain the Status Quo strictly. A bigger struggle

on the violation of Human Rights is still to be fought.

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