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hi aaron, here is the statement i'll be giving tommorrow.

The Anti-Poverty Committee has made a commitment to hold accountable the municipal, provincial and federal government for their perpetuation of the housing crisis and their contribution to the increasing number of homeless in this country.

The Woodward's Squat has given the issues of homelessness and the housing crisis greater public attention in BC. The same has been true in Quebec with the Quebec City Squat and in Ontario with the Toronto Pope Squat. Housing is an important issue for all people, not just the homeless. Housing is important to seniors, disabled people, working people, families, women, immigrants – I could go on. Housing and the fear of homelessness is something not just affecting people in Vancouver, not just people in BC and not just people in Canada. The housing crisis is an international issue.

Today, October 26th, we are placing this issue on a national stage. All across the country we are making demands for social housing to all levels of government. People have shown that they are willing to fight for social housing and that they are willing to use direct action in this fight. The movement for social housing has incredible momentum and it is expanding.

In Toronto, Halifax and Montreal there are buildings being taken as we speak. Squats are being opened; housing is being created. We will wait no longer. An ultimatum has been issued nationally: if buildings that are abandoned are not immediately converted into social housing they will be taken as social housing. Give It or Guard It: the government can either spend money creating housing for the people or they can spend money guarding these buildings from the people.

In solidarity with the eastern squats, the Anti-Poverty Committee is announcing the addresses of vacant buildings owned by the City of Vancouver and province of British Columbia. We are exposing the crime of leaving buildings vacant while hundreds sleep on the streets. And we are demanding a solution; build social housing. If the government does not act first, these buildings will be opened and filled with people by any means necessary.

Our demands in reference to this crisis are as follows:

1. The Federal and Provincial Governments must begin funding social housing immediately and build over 2000 units of housing a year in B.C.
2. The City must develop an anti-vacancy by-law to seize and convert privately owned abandoned buildings and property into social housing.
3. The Province and the City must develop rent controls to ensure that no one pays over thirty percent of their income to housing.
4. The Province must re-open all closed Residential Tenancy Offices and make no changes to the Residential Tenancy Act that would diminish the rights of renters.
5. Develop the Woodward's building into social housing immediately and respect the rest of the demands of the Woodward's Social Housing Coalition.

In addition to the vacant properties and buildings, we are including on our list buildings that are currently considered social housing, yet have major vacancies. These buildings must be filled. We will not tolerate vacancies in current social housing complexes. If renovations and upgrades need to be done, they must be done immediately. We refuse to tolerate governmental neglect. We will expand this fight until our demands are met and we will expand this fight until we win.