

# Bronx tenants plan to sue landlord over six month gas outage

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After enduring six months without gas for cooking and living with hundreds of violations, tenants at 1530 Sheridan Ave. in the [South Bronx](#) said Thursday they plan to file a lawsuit against their mega-landlord.

The private equity firm SG2 Properties bought 75 [Bronx](#) buildings in mixed condition, including the six-story building, for \$400 million in February 2007, but either is struggling or is choosing not to fix them.

Besides not providing cooking gas from December 2007 to June 2008, organizers say, SG2 also failed to fix more than 400 serious violations, including lack of heat, broken windows and sinks, and a defective elevator, said [Jack Doyle](#), executive director of New Settlement Apartments, which has been organizing the 40 mostly rent-stabilized tenants involved in the suit.

[Annie Owens](#), 68, who has lived at 1530 Sheridan Ave. for 11 years, said conditions are worse under SG2 ownership because the building's previously effective superintendent is no longer authorized to make requested repairs.

"The front door is always open. The intercom never works. Anyone is coming in and out of this building," said the mother of four and grandmother of eight.

"They have an alleyway from Sheridan to the next block, that's where they keep the garbage. It creates a lot of big rats, and they run around the house like they are paying rent," said Owens.

The [Urban Justice Center](#) has taken successful legal action for tenants at two other SG2 buildings - at 1749 Grand Concourse and 190 W. 170th St. - with SG2 making repairs within 10 months. Residents of 190 W. 170th St. received a three-month rent credit for having no cooking gas, said staff attorney [Garrett Wright](#).

In a statement, SG2 responded: "In 2007, we inherited thousands of dilapidated Bronx apartments that had suffered from decades of neglect by the prior landlords. In a short amount of time, we have invested approximately \$20 million to dramatically upgrade and modernize security, elevators, boilers and other systems in order to improve the overall security, comfort and quality of life of our residents. In the process and in cooperation with HPD, we have certified as corrected more than 7,500 violations throughout our Bronx portfolio."

But Wright said he expects conditions to worsen at the buildings as SG2 and other private equity firms do not meet their financial goals.

He said a number of private equity firms bought buildings knowing their condition and the rents, but were marketing the deals to investors based on unrealistic profit projections and rental turnover.

"When that's their business strategy, it makes sense they wouldn't be attentive to the existing tenants needs," Wright said.

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