

Angry Tenants Sue Largest Landlord In Bronx

SG2 Properties Faces Suit For Allegedly Depriving Residents Of Heat, Gas, Security For Months

By JOSH LANDIS, CBS 2 HD News

NEW YORK (CBS) —

A building full of angry tenants is rising up. Residents are demanding rent rebates from the largest landlord in the Bronx because they say it's been breaking the law.

Broken windows, leaky ceilings, holes in walls. Tenants in the SG2 Properties apartment buildings say those are just the beginning of problems they're dealing with. They tell CBS 2 that complaining does no good — they get no response.

"Nothing at all. You call them on the telephone and they do not answer," says Huldah Wallace, one of the angry tenants.

Wallace and 44 of her neighbors hope they get answers now that they've sued SG2 Properties, accusing them of violating more than 60 housing codes.

Heat was allegedly unreliable. And when the gas supply went off for six months?

"Tenants were told that, provided with hotplates as a poor substitute for lack of cooking gas," says Urban Justice Center Attorney Garrett Wright.

The suit alleges that two of the most basic requirements of a New York City apartment are non-existent: the intercom buzzer doesn't work and the front door has no lock.

Joanna Vasquez says she was left with practically nothing to keep her and her two children warm.

"I have to put clothes on them, I have to bundle them up cause they'll be really, really cold in here," she says.

A lawyer there said it might be part of a cold-hearted calculation.

"Tenant advocates and tenants wonder whether this is actually part of a strategy on their part to drive out rent-stabilized tenants and then raise the rents significantly," says Wright.

But the tenants say they're not interested in moving. They just want the living conditions they're entitled to by law.

SG2 Properties says it hasn't reviewed the lawsuit, but the company says it has already spent \$500,000 on repairs since it bought the building in 2007.