

CHEYENNE APARTMENTS

Human rights charges sought against controversial landlord

The London Urban Alliance on Race Relations is filing a complaint of discrimination and harassment.

By Don Collins
The London Free Press

Landlord Elijah Elieff was under pressure on two fronts Monday.

As health inspectors took another look at his two Cheyenne Avenue apartment buildings, the London Urban Alliance on Race Relations was moving to initiate charges of discrimination and harassment.

Alliance secretary and resource officer Lorna Martin is filing a complaint with the Southwestern Ontario office of the human rights commission in London and is asking city council's committee on race relations to do the same.

"It is hoped that immigrant people coming to our city are not forced to live in filth because owners (of apartment buildings) believe them to be no better than pigs," Martin said in a letter being sent to Mayor Tom Gosnell. "We hope that the City of London will act swiftly and decisively in cleaning up both the buildings and the attitudes."

DELIVERED TODAY: The complaint to the commission and the letter to Gosnell were to be delivered after tenants of 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave. saw them at a Monday night meeting.

Rev. Susan Eagle, a community worker with the United Church East London Outreach, said a few of the 24 Cambodian and Vietnamese residents attending the meeting also intend to lay complaints against Elieff with the commission today. And the tenants will be seeking support action from other city organizations.

The complaint against Elieff is based on remarks he made in a London Free Press interview in which he described his tenants as "pigs" from a "jungle."

Elieff told a reporter his tenants were mainly responsible for the poor condition of his two 20-unit apartment blocks in the city's east. The comment came a day after his company was fined \$6,000. It was the second conviction in less than a year for not completing building repairs ordered by the city in May, 1987.

The tenants have complained about cockroaches, as well as ap-



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Walter Lonc, right, a public health inspector with the Middlesex-London district health unit, listens as Bill Clark of 95 Cheyenne Ave. outlines problems in the kitchen of his unit.



Ken Brown, a public health inspector with the Middlesex-London district health unit, checks the exterior of 105 Cheyenne Ave. on Monday morning.

pliances and plumbing fixtures they say don't work properly. There also have been complaints of a lack of heat.

As Middlesex-London district health unit inspectors checked the units Monday, tenant Bill Clark, 22, of 95 Cheyenne pointed to a refrigerator freezer that he said doesn't function because of a missing door. "We can't keep meat in the freezer. We have to throw it away all the time."

COCKROACHES, MAGGOTS: He also said his hot water has to be shut off in the kitchen because of a leak, that kitchen cupboard doors won't close and that cockroaches and maggots have been found in his apartment.

Peter Parkinghouse, assistant director of the health unit's environmental division, said inspectors were checking to see if deficiencies found in September still existed. The information will go to a building standards hearing today at city hall.

Meanwhile, the complaint the alliance is filing with the human rights commission claims comments attributed to Elieff were "publicly made in direct contravention of the Human Rights Code, 1981."

It asks the commission to act "upon its own initiative" and charge Elieff with discrimination and harassment.

Elieff refused comment.