



International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

First Conference of the States Parties

Geneva, 19 December 2016

Item 6 of the agenda

Joint statement of international Non-Governmental Organisations

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 2011, my Organisation, *Geneva for Human Rights* (GHR), attended all the sessions of the *Committee on Enforced Disappearances* and conducted three Expert Seminars with the Committee. Today, we have the honour to present a joint statement to your Conference in the name of eight international Non-Governmental Organisations, which have been involved in the promotion and protection of all persons from the crime of enforced disappearance.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the last years and decades, supporting the plight of the victims and their relatives, our eight international non-governmental Organisations have contributed to tackle in the United Nations, as well as in several regional organisations, the brutal policies and practices of enforced disappearances.

Several of our Organisations already facilitated the negotiations leading to the creation by the Commission on Human Rights of the *Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances* in 1980. Together with experts of the former Sub-Commission, most of us were actively involved in the elaboration and adoption of the 1992 *UN Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances*, and of the 2006 *International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*.

Today, jointly, we wish to welcome the historic decision of your first Conference of the States Parties to this Convention. We are the following Organisations:

- the *International Commission of Jurists* (ICJ),
- the *Churches' Commission on International Affairs* of the World Council of Churches (CCIA-WCC),
- the *International Federation of Human Rights* (FIDH),
- the *International Service for Human Rights* (ISHR),
- the *World Organisation Against Torture* (OMCT),
- the *International Federation of the Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture* (FIACAT),
- *TRIAL International*,
- and *Geneva for Human Rights* (GHR).

Our statement follows:

Mr. Chairman,

Our Organisations fully share both your Conference's positive evaluation of the *Committee on Enforced Disappearances*, and the assessment of your Conference that no other body could better implement this Convention, which entered into force on 23 December 2010.

The crime of enforced disappearance is an extremely complex phenomenon, with a large variety of facets. This specific crime is still widespread. It affects all the regions. The decision of the States Parties to the International Convention to continue entrusting the *Committee on Enforced Disappearances* with the monitoring of the Convention confirms the will of the States Parties to ensure seriousness, expertise and efficiency in the implementation of the Convention. This will no doubt further encourage so many victims in their difficult search for truth and justice.

Since its creation in November 2011, the *Committee on Enforced Disappearances* made the difference. During its first eleven sessions, the Committee elaborated and adopted its rules of procedures and working methods. It considered 18 States reports and adopted corresponding lists of issues and concluding observations. The lists of issues for three other States (to be considered next March) were also approved, as well as three reports on follow-up to concluding observations concerning eleven countries.

Another landmark achievement of the Committee concerns the requests for urgent actions (Art. 30 of the Convention). At the end of October 2016, the Committee had registered 348 urgent actions, out of the 435 requests received.

Today, our eight international Non-Governmental Organisations respectfully call on:

- all the States who signed the International Convention but did not ratify it yet to undertake the necessary steps to ratify the Convention,
- all the Member and Observer States of the United Nations to ratify the International Convention,
- all the States Parties to recognize the competence of the Committee on individual cases,
- all the States having received from the Committee a request for a visit to reply swiftly and positively,
- and the Secretary General and the High Commissioner for Human rights to allocate more human and financial resources to the work of the Committee.

We are looking forward strengthening our cooperation with this unique Group of experts, which has the capacity to address all the facets of the crime of enforced disappearance.

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