



**ACHPR**  
African Commission on  
Human and Peoples' Rights



Inter-American  
Commission on  
Human Rights

## International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

**Victims of Enforced Disappearances require urgent responses and concerted action:  
Forthcoming World Congress offers unique opportunity, experts say**

30 August 2024

To mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Representatives of Indonesia and Thailand to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights call on all stakeholders to unite in the fight against enforced disappearances and to take part in the upcoming World Congress to work on concrete action plans to end this heinous crime. They issued the following joint statement today:

“We renew our solidarity with victims of enforced disappearance, that include any individual who has suffered harm as a direct result of this heinous crime, as well as organisations, human rights defenders and lawyers that support them. These dedicated parties work tirelessly, often in hostile and dangerous environments, to search for the disappeared, and to bring them home. Unfortunately, in many cases, their efforts are met with silence or with the rejection of their allegations. Despite their ongoing attempts to search for truth, justice and reparation, and even with the specialised national, regional and international frameworks in place, many victims of enforced disappearances still face unbearable challenges, and impunity prevails. All involved actors must join forces immediately to support them and ensure that the rights and obligations established in the regional and international treaties and other legal instruments, become a reality for all.

Practical experience shows that more progress can be achieved when all concerned work together. Clear commitments and action plans remain necessary, and the forthcoming World Congress on Enforced Disappearances, which will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 15 and 16 January 2025, is a crucial opportunity in this regard.

This first-ever [World Congress on Enforced Disappearances](#) is a multi-actor initiative that gathers States, victims and their representative organizations, and experts from the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Convention against Enforced Disappearances Initiative (CEDI). It is a unique platform to find actionable solutions to eliminate and prevent enforced disappearances, to promote the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances, and to strengthen cooperation to ensure that disappeared people and their relatives are at the core of any actions taken.

We welcome the consultation process conducted in advance of the Congress. This process allowed key actors in each region to share their experiences and make concrete recommendations for the World Congress and the resulting action plan. They called for activities in advocacy, awareness-raising, memorialisation, provision of support to victims, capacity-building development, and the coordination and network-building to share experiences and best practices. Other recommendations were made to raise awareness about the mandates of human rights mechanisms, and to strengthen the link and coordination between the work in the field and at regional and global levels.

The World Congress will allow us to identify and adopt concrete actions to address these concerns and pledge to implement them under our respective mandates. We encourage all actors involved in the fight against enforced disappearances to make the most of this event and to commit to concrete action.

Our everyday work unfortunately demonstrates that enforced disappearances remain a daily reality in many parts of the world, and that the victims usually do not find the answers they need. Supporting them must always be at the core of our work. On this International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, we reiterate our shared commitment to assisting victims worldwide and our call for collective action to end this scourge, once and for all.”

ENDS

*\*UN experts: Ms. Aua Baldé (Chair-Rapporteur), Ms. Gabriella Citroni (Vice-Chair); Ms. Grażyna Baranowska, and Ms. Ana-Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, of the [Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances](#); Mr. Juan Pablo Albán Alencastro (Rapporteur), Mr. Mohammed Ayat, Mr. Matar Diop (Vice Chair), Mr. Olivier de Frouville (Chair), Ms. Suela Janina, Mr. Fidelis Kanyongolo, Ms. Milica Kolakovic-Bojovic (Vice Chair), Ms. Barbara Lochbihler, Mr. Horacio Ravenna (Vice Chair), and Ms. Carmen Rosa Villa Quintana, of the [UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances](#).*

*\*\*Regional Human Rights Experts: [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#); Hon. Idrissa Sow (Chairperson), Working Group on Death Penalty, Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings, [African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights](#); Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum, Representative of Indonesia and Prof. Dr. Amara Pongsapich, Representative of Thailand of the [ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights](#); and Mr. Michael O' Flaherty, [Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe](#).*

*The Working Groups are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.*

*The Committee on Enforced Disappearances is one of the [United Nations Treaty Bodies](#). It gathers 10 independent experts in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Convention for the Protection of all Persons against enforced disappearances by States parties. These experts are persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights, nominated by States parties to the Convention. They serve in their personal capacity and are independent and impartial. To date, the Convention has been ratified by 75 member States.*

**\*\* Other human rights bodies:**

*Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe*

*The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe, mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 46 member states of the Organisation. Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Commissioner O'Flaherty took up office on [1 April 2024](#).*

*The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)*

*IACHR is a principal, autonomous body of the Organization of American States (OAS) deriving its mandate from the OAS Charter and the American Convention on Human Rights. The Inter-American Commission has a mandate to promote respect for and to defend human rights in the region and acts as a consultative body to the OAS in this area. The Commission is composed of seven independent members who are elected in an individual capacity by the OAS General Assembly and who do not represent their countries of origin or residence.*

*The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)*

*The African Charter established the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Commission was inaugurated on 2 November 1987 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Commission's Secretariat has subsequently been located in Banjul, The Gambia. In addition to performing any other tasks, which may be entrusted to it by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Commission is officially charged with three major functions: the protection of human and peoples' rights; the promotion of human and peoples' rights; the interpretation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.*

*ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)*

*AICHR was inaugurated by the ASEAN leaders on 23 October 2009, and was enhanced with the adoption of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) in November 2012. The AICHR is designed as an overarching institution with overall responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. The AICHR members are called Representatives, who are nominated by their respective Governments. Decision-making of the AICHR is based on consultation and consensus.*

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