



INTERNATIONAL COALITION

AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

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Statement of the International Coalition

Against Enforced Disappearances

International Week of the Disappeared

25-29 May 2015

Every last week of May, we commemorate the International Week of the Disappeared (IWD), a painful reminder that thousands of families still await information on the fate of their loved ones who have disappeared and thousands of disappeared persons are waiting to be freed from the unknown prisons where they are kept. The IWD was incepted by the Latin American Federation of Associations for Relatives of Disappeared-Detainees (FEDEFAM), which, in turn, was adopted by families of the disappeared across the world.

The International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICEAD) and its 53 member-organisations campaign for the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPED), the recognition of the competence of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the enactment of domestic laws criminalizing enforced disappearances. It is the most emblematic way to pay tribute to the disappeared and their families.

The ICPED was adopted on December 20, 2006 and came into force on December 23, 2010. It is paramount to acknowledge the advocacy and campaigning undertaken by associations of families of the disappeared, which resulted in this Convention that addresses the multiple violations of human rights that make up enforced disappearances. Each State party has the duty to ensure that enforced disappearance constitutes an offence under its criminal law, and to establish in its internal legislation that the widespread or systematic practice of enforced disappearance is a crime against humanity. The ICPED also protects the right not to be subjected to enforced disappearances, the right to know the truth and the right to justice and reparation.



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While we can only welcome the achievement that ICPED represents, enforced disappearances are still a glaring reality in certain regions of the world. A total of 43,250 cases across 88 States are still under active consideration by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, as stated in its 2014 report. As families fear retaliation, underreporting remains a major problem, and it is safe to assume that this figure only reflects a fraction of disappearances.

Worse, international NGOs have reported the worsening situation in several States – Mexico, Pakistan – and the UN WGEID pointed out that enforced disappearances amount to crimes against humanity in North Korea and Syria because of their widespread and systematic nature.

The Convention now counts 94 signatories and 46 State parties, which means 48 States have not implemented the Convention in their domestic legal systems, and effectively, individuals cannot avail themselves from the rights contained in the international instrument – right to an effective remedy, right to know the truth, right to reparation. This slow turn of signatures and ratifications pales in comparison with the 43,250 outstanding cases that rest with the UN WGEID.

Out of 94 signatories and 46 State parties, 14 Latin American States have ratified the Convention. Asia has a very slow turn of signatures. Notably, Cambodia is the only State Party in South East Asia. While thousands of disappearance cases have been reported in Pakistan, it has neither signed nor ratified the Convention. However, it is important to acknowledge that the Philippines had passed a landmark law criminalizing enforced disappearances, making it the first country in Asia to do so. In Europe, 22 States have signed the Convention and 14 States have ratified it. In North America, neither the United States nor Canada has signed the Convention. As to Africa, there are only 10 ratifications and 19 signatures. Overall, the recognition of the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) remains an issue. The CED monitors the implementation of the Convention by States Parties, and refusing to recognize its competence jeopardizes the effective implementation of the Convention.



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On the occasion of this year's International Week of the Disappeared, ICAED and its 53 member-organizations are now calling on Governments who have not yet signed and ratified the Convention and who have not yet enacted domestic legislation to do so without further delay.

SIGN AND RATIFY THE CONVENTION NOW!

RECOGNIZE THE COMPETENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES!

ENACT DOMESTIC LAWS CRIMINALIZING ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES!

STOP ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES NOW!

TRUTH AND JUSTICE TO ALL THE DISAPPEARED PERSONS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY!

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Focal Person

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