



WCED Pledges

Regional and international organizations

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1 Regional organizations

Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

Ms. Géraldine Mattioli-Zeltner, Representative of the Commissioner for Human Rights

To continue to play his role towards ending enforced disappearances, the Commissioner pledges, in the course of his 6-year mandate:

- To advocate for the 19 Council of Europe Member States that have not yet ratified the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance to do so;
- To pay specific attention to victims of enforced disappearances resulting from Russia's aggression of Ukraine (in particular civilians victims and children transferred to Russia) and to advocate for the strengthening of the mechanisms used to identify, trace and ensure the return of the missing;
- When they are threatened, to stand for human rights defenders who work on advancing the rights of victims of enforced disappearances in the Council of Europe;
- To raise, in relevant contexts, with authorities the execution of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights related to cases of enforced disappearances, some of which have been pending for a very long time.



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Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Mr. Constantinos Efstathiou (Cyprus/SOC), Representative of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

This important, lively, vivid global conference was called for by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe two years ago in order to express strong and unwavering support for the ratification of the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

In its resolution 2324 and recommendation 2223, adopted by a large majority in January 2022, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called on all member and observer States of the Council of Europe to ratify the Convention and adopt the necessary implementing legislation. It also invited the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers to promote ratification worldwide and to offer interested governments qualified technical assistance. In his reply, the Committee stressed the importance of the experience gathered by the Council of Europe in the process of supervising the implementation of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights in the unfortunately numerous cases concerning enforced disappearances.

As PACE's rapporteur on the execution of judgements, I will be pleased to join the collective effort needed in order to promote and facilitate the ratification of this important Convention, designed to expunge the curse of enforced disappearances once and for all. In this respect, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe can contribute, together with the European Court of Human Rights' jurisprudence, to the subject matter and to the implementation of the Court's judgements, which inevitably involve political and legal issues.

Nevertheless, we have also experienced weakness and challenges on this task. I am addressing you in my personal capacity also. I am an MP from Cyprus, and the issue of enforced disappearances is one of the most tragic consequences of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Near 2,000 persons out of a 600,000 population were reported missing from both communities of the island, following the invasion; the vast majority of whom concerned Greek Cypriots. The inter-State case no. 25781/94 and the Court's judgment illustrate this tragic situation.

24 years after the judgement nevertheless, the judgement has not been implemented. In 1981, a bi-communal committee was set up to investigate the fate of missing persons in Cyprus. I invite you to become acquainted with their significant work, which is remarkable, although deliberately hindered by technical obstacles. It may nevertheless serve as a model for our task.

Finally, from all we have heard, seen, read, all these years – and today – on enforced disappearances, one magic word can be reached as a conclusion, “accountability”: no matter who the perpetrator is, let us finish with impunity.



African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

Mr. Idrissa Sow, Commissioner and Chair of the Working Group on the Death Penalty, Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings and Enforced Disappearances in Africa

Original version (French)

En partant de la définition juridique de la disparition forcée, telle qu'elle apparaît de la convention, il ressort clairement que la caractéristique la plus pernicieuse de ce crime avilissant et perfide découle de l'implication de l'autorité publique dans la commission de l'infraction alors même qu'elle est censée assurer la protection de la victime.

Il est aujourd'hui acquis que la riposte la plus appropriée devra donc découler nécessairement d'une dynamique inclusive fondée sur la mutualisation des actions menées par les organes des traités, les organisations régionales, les États membres et les victimes.

D'une façon générale, l'impératif de protection des droits de l'Homme requiert une plus grande implication des acteurs à tous les niveaux mais également une fermeté accrue dans l'appréciation des atteintes aux valeurs fondamentales des sociétés démocratiques. Cette attitude vigilante doit, de notre point de vue, être plus prégnante dans le cadre de la prévention et de la protection de toutes les personnes contre les disparitions forcées.

Au demeurant, nous ne devons pas perdre de vue les progrès accomplis dans ce domaine depuis la déclaration de l'Assemblée générale des Nations unies qui dans sa résolution 47/133 du 18 décembre 1992 a pointé la nécessité pour les États de prendre les mesures les plus adéquates en vue de prévenir et d'éliminer les actes ou situations susceptibles de conduire à des disparitions forcées.

Dans cette perspective, il est heureux de constater qu'avec l'entrée en vigueur de la convention internationale, les disparitions forcées constituent désormais un crime au sens du droit pénal international et que leur prévention est consacrée par une norme impérative au regard du droit international coutumier.

En ce qui la concerne, la Commission africaine des droits de l'Homme et des peuples, à travers son Groupe de travail sur les disparitions forcées, que j'ai l'honneur de présider, s'est engagée dans un schéma de collaboration avec les organes de traités et en général avec tous les acteurs étatiques comme non étatiques œuvrant pour la mise en place d'une stratégie de riposte globale contre le phénomène des disparitions forcées.

Pour aider les États à s'aligner sur leurs obligations en la matière, notre commission s'est dotée depuis 2022 de lignes directrices destinées à orienter leurs législations vers une meilleure prise en charge du crime de disparition forcée.

L'effet positif de cette démarche est perceptible à travers le constat laissant apparaître qu'au cours de ces dernières années, de nombreux États africains ont pris des mesures importantes dans ce sens, notamment, en ratifiant la convention internationale et le statut de Rome créant la Cour pénale internationale.

Qu'il nous soit permis, pour conclure notre propos, de partager l'espoir que nous nourrissons de voir ce premier Congrès constituer l'occasion pour renforcer la coopération entre les différentes parties prenantes et peut être d'aboutir à l'élaboration d'un plan d'action concerté visant à accroître l'efficacité dans la lutte contre le crime de disparition forcée.



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English translation

From the legal definition of enforced disappearance, as it appears in the Convention, it is clear that the most pernicious characteristic of this debasing and perfidious crime stems from the involvement of the public authority in the commission of the offence, even though it is supposed to ensure the protection of the victim.

It is now accepted that the most appropriate response must therefore be the result of an inclusive dynamic based on the pooling of actions undertaken by treaty bodies, regional organizations, member states and victims.

Generally speaking, the imperative of protecting human rights requires greater involvement of actors at all levels, as well as greater firmness in the assessment of attacks on the fundamental values of democratic societies. In our view, this vigilant attitude must be more prevalent in the prevention and protection of all persons from enforced disappearance.

Moreover, we must not lose sight of the progress made in this field since the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly, which in its resolution 47/133 of December 18, 1992 highlighted the need for States to take the most appropriate measures to prevent and eliminate acts or situations likely to lead to enforced disappearance.

With this in mind, it is gratifying to note that, with the entry into force of the International Convention, enforced disappearance is now a crime under international criminal law, and that its prevention is enshrined as a peremptory norm under customary international law.

As far as it is concerned, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, through its Working Group on Enforced Disappearances, which I have the honor of chairing, is committed to working with treaty bodies and, in general, with all State and non-State actors involved in the implementation of a global response strategy against the phenomenon of enforced disappearances.

To help States meet their obligations in this area, since 2022 our Commission has been issuing guidelines designed to steer their legislation towards better management of the crime of enforced disappearance.

The positive effect of this approach can be seen in the fact that, in recent years, many African states have taken important steps in this direction, notably by ratifying the International Convention and the Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court.

Allow us to conclude by sharing our hope that this first Congress will provide an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between the various stakeholders, and perhaps lead to the development of a concerted action plan aimed at increasing effectiveness in the fight against the crime of enforced disappearance.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)

Ms. Andrea Pochak, Commissioner and Rapporteur on Memory, Truth and Justice

Original version (Spanish)

Desde la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos observamos tres preocupaciones urgentes:



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- Las desapariciones en el contexto del crimen organizado;
- La impunidad y las crecientes tendencias negacionistas;
- La necesidad de enfoques interseccionales para abordar este fenómeno.

Es indispensable redoblar los esfuerzos estatales para prevenir las desapariciones forzadas y garantizar memoria, verdad, justicia y reparación. El derecho internacional debe adaptarse a las nuevas formas de desaparición vinculadas a la criminalidad organizada.

Finalmente, quiero rendir un reconocimiento a las familias de las personas desaparecidas y a las organizaciones que las acompañan. Su coraje sigue siendo un faro de esperanza en la búsqueda de la verdad y la justicia, y en el fortalecimiento del Estado de derecho y las democracias. Por ello, la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, como hace 65 años, reafirma su compromiso de seguir acompañando a las víctimas, sus familiares y las organizaciones de derechos humanos para erradicar las desapariciones forzadas y garantizar memoria, verdad, justicia, y una verdadero “nunca más”.

English translation

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights observes three urgent preoccupations:

- Disappearances in the context of organized crime;
- Impunity and increasing negationist tendencies;
- Necessity of intersectional focus to approach the phenomenon.

It is essential to redouble State efforts to prevent enforced disappearances and to guarantee memory, truth, justice and reparation. International law must adapt to the new forms of disappearance linked to organized crime.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the families of the disappeared and the organizations that accompany them. Their courage remains a beacon of hope in the search for truth and justice, and in the strengthening of the rule of law and democracies. Therefore, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as it did 65 years ago, reaffirms its commitment to continue accompanying the victims, their families and human rights organizations to eradicate forced disappearances and guarantee memory, truth, justice, and a true “never again”.

2 International organizations

OHCHR Mexico

OHCHR Mexico pledges to:

1. Involve civil society, including victims in processes related to the domestication of the Convention
 - Provide technical assistance to the Mexican authorities to help harmonize legislation across Mexico. Offer our expertise to ensure that each state applies the Convention and adopts the General Law on Enforced Disappearance of Persons, Disappearance Committed by Individuals, and the National System for the Search of Persons. Our assistance is always based on the needs communicated to us by civil society and victims. Therefore, regarding the issue of disappearances, we also advocate for the



inclusion of victims and civil society organizations in the discussions when new laws or institutions are created, or when a new person is appointed to lead an institution.

- Indicators used to measure progress: Number of formal consultations or dialogues held with civil society organizations, victims, their families, and the NHRI on legislation related to enforced disappearances. Number of technical assistance documents provided to authorities (including legislators).
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026
2. Include a gender-based perspective and the rights of persons in vulnerable situations
- OHCHR Mexico supports the work of searching mothers and are working to strengthen protection mechanisms. We accompany them in the field to search for their loved ones. The goal is also to continue the coordination process with NGOs that focus on the protection of relatives of disappeared persons. At meetings with authorities, we consistently remind them to adopt a differentiated approach when the disappeared person is a woman or a member of a minority group, in order to increase the chances of finding the person.
 - Activities of the proposed Action Plan to which the pledges refer: 3.2 and 3.3
 - Indicators used to measure progress: Number of collaborative actions with NGOs working on the protection of relatives of disappeared persons, particularly women and minority groups.
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026
3. Provide and promote access to legal remedies at the national, regional and international levels
- Advocate for reforms or improvements in national legal frameworks to ensure that victims of human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, have effective access to legal remedies. Provide technical assistance to Mexican authorities. Promote the use of regional and international human rights mechanisms, such as those of the Inter-American Human Rights System or UN treaty bodies and special procedures, particularly the WGEID and the CED, to offer victims legal remedies when national avenues are inadequate or unavailable. Advocate for the recognition of victims' right to reparations, including legal remedies, compensation, and other forms of redress for human rights violations.
 - Indicators used to measure progress: Number of procedures in which OHCHR Mexico has intervened.
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026



4. Promote the importance of acknowledging the past and recognizing past injustices.
 - Continue to promote the two reports of the Truth Commission and efforts to bring about justice and clarify the truth about the period known as the 'Dirty War' by participating in discussions, forums, or dialogues. Continue working with Swisspeace and the Rule of Law Division of OHCHR to develop a Practical Guide on disappeared persons in dealing with past processes.
 - Activities of the proposed Action Plan to which the pledges refer: 7.1 and 7.2
 - Indicators used to measure progress: Number of public discussions, forums, or dialogues held focusing on acknowledging past injustices, particularly during the period of the so-called "Dirty War."
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026

5. Commemorate the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances on 30 August
 - Participate in the march with the collectives of relatives of disappeared persons on August 30, display messages as OHCHR Mexico, and provide support to victims throughout the day. Also, participate in events organized by civil society organizations, authorities, international actors, academics, or collectives in that context.
 - Indicators used to measure progress: Actions in which someone from the office participates, or actions organized by the office to commemorate this day.
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026

6. Build and strengthen the capacities of victims and civil society's organizations
 - Participate in events organized by civil society, collectives, or academics to explain international mechanisms. Provide training on how to file an urgent action before the CED, publish and distribute a leaflet outlining the differences between the work and responsibilities of the CED and the WGEID, and organize meetings with families of disappeared persons who need assistance in filing an urgent action or information about international instruments.
 - Activities of the proposed Action Plan to which the pledges refer: 5.1 and 5.2
 - Indicators used to measure progress: Number of specific trainings on international instruments and mechanisms provided by the office.
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026

7. Monitor, investigate, document, and report on cases of enforced disappearances



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- Accompany victims to case meetings with authorities, participate in the development of urgent actions, treaty body opinions, and judicial decisions at the national level.
 - Activities of the proposed Action Plan to which the pledges refer: 3.9, 5.4 and 5.8
 - Indicators used to measure progress: Number of accompanied cases or processes.
 - Resource implications: The actions will be carried out using financial, human, and material resources from the Disappearances Unit of OHCHR Mexico.
 - Expected timeframe within which the pledges will be realized: 30/11/2026