



INTERNATIONAL COALITION AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

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Report to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (UN CED)

For the period of June 2015 – July 2016

I. About the Organization

The International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED) is a coalition of 56 civil society organizations from all regions of the world. It is primarily headed by a Steering Committee composed of regional and sub-regional organizations of families of the disappeared. The functioning of the Steering Committee, however, is facilitated by a Focal Point. Presently, the Asian Federation Against Enforced Disappearances (AFAD) functions as the Focal Point. Individually, these civil society organizations work on a wide range of human rights issues. Collectively, ICAED focuses on the eradication of the phenomenon of enforced disappearance through its mandate to campaign for the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the recognition of the competence of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

II. Activities Conducted for the Convention

I. Public Events, Seminars, and Conferences

ICAED and its member-organizations conducted several public events in relation to promoting the Convention to a wide range of audiences – from governments, civil society organizations, and to other stakeholders.

1. **Side Event on Enforced Disappearances in Asia and the Imperative of the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance** – The conference was held in Palais des Nations on 17 September 2015. Key resource persons included Mr. Kimio Yakusiji of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (UN CED), the Argentine Ambassador Mr. Alberto Pedro D’Alotto, and representatives from AFAD. The side event was in partnership with ICAED member Nonviolence International.

2. **Participation of the Focal Person to the Conference on Enforced Disappearance in Warsaw, Poland** – The Focal Person of ICAED, Ms. Mary Aileen Bacalso, was invited to be one of the resource speakers in a conference organized by Belarusian member-organizations We Remember-Belarus and Charter ’97 in September 2015.

3. **Side Event on the 10th anniversary of the Convention** - In March, 2016, the ICAED Focal Person, Mary Aileen D. Bacalso delivered a speech in a side event organized by the UN CED in cooperation with the Governments of France, Morocco, Argentina and Japan. She spoke on the impact of the Convention in the lives of families of the disappeared.

II. Information Dissemination

1. **Primer on the Convention** – ICAED launched a comprehensive Primer on the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances for both governments

and NGOs. The primers were initially distributed to the networks of ICAED during the 30th Session of the UN Human Rights Council and it was also sent electronically to ICAED members. The Primer may also be downloaded from the website of ICAED.

(http://www.icaed.org/uploads/media/Primer_on_the_Convention_NGOs.pdf)

The Primer has been translated to Spanish and currently being translated French and will then be electronically distributed.

2. Practical Guide on the Committee on Enforced Disappearance – In December 2015, Justice and Peace Netherlands and ICAED member Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) have published a practical guide for relatives of disappeared persons and NGOs: The Committee on Enforced Disappearances - Addendum to the Manual Using Law against Enforced Disappearances. The Addendum provides a clear overview of the working methods of the Committee that monitors the UN Convention on Enforced Disappearances.

(http://www.nhc.nl/news/news_2015/New_publication_Practical_Guide_on_the_Committee_on_Enforced_Disappearances.html?id=713)

3. The Abduction and Trial of Jestina Mukoko: The Fight for Human Rights in Zimbabwe – In April 2016, Zimbabwe Peace Project National Director Ms. Jestina Mukoko published a book about her disappearance and torture in the hand of government agents in 2008. The book aims to retell the existing human rights violations in Africa. The book will soon be available online.

III. Traditionally-commemorated Activities

1. International Week of the Disappeared (May 2015 and May 2016) – ICAED members from across the globe conducted simultaneous activities during the commemoration of the International Week of the Disappeared (IWD) in 2015 and 2016. Through the ICAED focal point, the Coalition also released its official statement in relation to the commemoration. The statement is available in English, Spanish, French, and Russian, and can be viewed either through the ICAED website homepage, or through the link below.

(http://icaed.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IWD_Statement_of_the_ICAED_English_.pdf)

With the support and dissemination of the ICAED Steering Committee member Zimbabwe Peace Project, the IWD statement of May 2016 was also featured in a news article in Zimbabwe.

(<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/05/26/come-legislation-enforced-disappearances/>)

2. International Day of the Disappeared 2015 – ICAED members in Asia and some Latin American countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala and El Salvador, Uruguay commemorated synchronized events during the traditionally commemorated activities on August 30. ICAED statements translated to Spanish, Russian and French were distributed during this occasion.

3. Statement on the 5th Anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Enforced Disappearance – ICAED recognizes the important day in which the Convention on Enforced

Disappearance came into force. Statement was also distributed in three versions, English, Spanish and French during the anniversary of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances on 23 December 2015.

IV. Other Communications

1. **Thank You Letters** – ICAED commended countries who have manifested support to the Convention – be it active lobbying, actual signing, ratification, and recognition of the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. Recently, ICAED commended the Government of Sri Lanka for signing, ratifying, and recognizing the competence of the CED on May 26, 2016.

(https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-16&chapter=4&lang=en)

2. **Lobby Letters** – On June 23, 2015, ICAED wrote a letter to Dominican Republic President Danilo Medina to take necessary action to include in its National Human Rights Plan, the signing and ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the recognition of the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the enactment of a distinct domestic law that criminalizes enforced disappearances.

More recently, ICAED also supported the initiatives of the local and regional organizations to convince outgoing Philippine President Benigno Aquino III to sign the Convention. The Coalition sent a letter to the President Aquino to once and for all sign the Convention before the latter steps down from office on June 30, 2016.

Moreover, the Coalition also wrote a lobby letter to the Government of Peru urging the latter to recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. After the recognition of Peru of the Competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the ICAED also wrote a letter to the President of Peru regarding the need for a promulgation of a law on the search for disappeared persons.