



Report to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (UN CED)
for the period of July 2016 – June 2017

Prepared by:
the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)

I. Background:

The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances is a federation of 14 member organizations working directly on the issue of enforced disappearances in ten different South Asian and South-East Asian countries, namely, Bangladesh, Kashmir (India), Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Thailand, and Timor-Leste. It also has an individual member in Laos and 2 in Geneva.

AFAD and its member-organizations hold various activities in the reporting period, which aimed at lobbying and raising awareness towards the issue of enforced disappearances and the importance of signing and ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED). These activities and events took place through the whole year, however, in the reporting period particular attention was given to the commemoration of the International Day of the Disappeared (IDD) on 30th August, and to the Human Rights Day, on December 10. The International Week of the Disappeared – on the last week of May 2017 – also constituted an important occasion to promote the Convention and its ratification.

Moreover, in May 2017 three countries where AFAD has presence were scheduled to be subjected to the UPR process, AFAD's activities focused also on lobbying in the UN in Geneva through submission of stakeholder reports, organization of side events, meeting with diplomats and State representatives and with other UN procedures. These countries included the Philippines, India and Indonesia.

In the Philippines, AFAD continued visiting Embassies, such as the German Embassy and the EU Delegation, raising the issue of ED and asking for support in the lobby work for signing and ratification of the Convention. Moreover, two more universities were visited in the reporting period and a film showing was carried out in Bicol.

AFAD member-organizations also engaged with State representatives at the national level, to lobby for the ratification of the Convention. Moreover, they cooperated with other human rights organizations located in the country to jointly organize events. They also wrote joint submissions for the UPR, thus calling on the international community to recommend their country to adopt a series of measures, between which the ratification of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances. In addition, member organizations regularly document and submit cases of ED to the UN WGEID. [See link of the Stakeholder Report of AFAD and FIND. http://www.afad-online.org/resources/reports/340-tears-without-tombs-enforced-disappearance-in-the-philippines](http://www.afad-online.org/resources/reports/340-tears-without-tombs-enforced-disappearance-in-the-philippines)

Last, but not least, AFAD Chairperson, Khurram Parvez was arrested in September 2016 and detained for 76 days in Kashmir. The lobbying efforts related to his release also helped in highlighting the issue of enforced disappearances in Asia and the importance of instruments such as the Convention on ED in recognizing the work done by associations of victims of ED. Most importantly, solidarity actions in Asia and other regions pressured the Indian government to release Khurram Parvez.

II. Example of activities carried out, which are related to the Convention on ED

Conferences, Seminars and Public Events

Different public events have been organized by AFAD member organizations, on various occasions, such as:

- a) International Day of the Disappeared 2016
 - In Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines a press conference in each of these countries was held, to highlight the issue of ED and the need for the Convention.
 - Candle-lightings and concerts have been organized in Nepal and Timor-Leste.
 - Public discussions with families of disappeared, human rights lawyers and other partner organizations took place in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
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- b) Rallies, press conferences and public discussions have been organized during the Human Rights Week 2016 and on other national occasions by various countries, such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.
These activities served as venues for AFAD member organizations to publicly urge governments to ratify the Convention and enact domestic laws criminalizing enforced disappearances.
- c) For the International Week of the Disappeared 2017, rallies, press conferences and public demonstrations have been organized in various countries. AFAD Secretary General, together with the Chairperson of its member organization in the Philippines, FIND, were interviewed by Radio Veritas Asia. On this occasion, they stressed the importance of the Convention on ED – despite the existence of a national law. To culminate the week, a kite flying was held by families of the disappeared to symbolize the ideals of the disappeared persons which have to be soared to greater heights. It was joined by many civil society organizations.

Releasing of Public Statements

AFAD issued various statements during the reference period, particularly for:

- Torture Survivors' Day
- Anniversary of the adoption by UN HRC of the Convention on ED
- International Day of the Disappeared,
- 67 Anniversary of the UDHR,
- 5th Anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention
- International Week of the Disappeared in May 2017.

Moreover, its member-organizations have been issuing and sharing public statements on those occasions, as well as for other national and international recurrences, calling on their governments to sign and ratify the Convention.

Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and AFAD website are also daily used to raise issues related to enforced disappearances and the Convention.

AFAD also released, in June 2017 the new issue of its annual publication, The Voice. [See link: http://www.afad-online.org/resources/the-voice/363-april-2017-issue-the-voice](http://www.afad-online.org/resources/the-voice/363-april-2017-issue-the-voice)

AFAD Activities in relation to the UPR

In the reporting period, AFAD and its member organizations submitted their Stakeholder Reports to the UN HRC, in view of the 3rd cycle of the UPR in May 2017.

Aside from drafting and submitting the report, AFAD has engaged in lobbying at national and international level by organizing diplomatic briefings in Manila, holding side events and attending the UPR Pre-Session in Geneva, as well as hosting a press conference after the review.

In this respect, AFAD Secretary General and other AFAD representatives have been lobbying diplomats and State representatives in Geneva, in order to convince them to recommend the signing and ratification of the Convention to the States under review.

AFAD Activities at regional level

- In June 2016, AFAD conducted a lobby visit to Dili, Timor-Leste. During the visit, AFAD representatives met with the Director of Bilateral Affairs in the MFA, the Philippine Embassy in Dili, the Ombudsman Office and other local NGOs, in order to promote and raise awareness on the Convention on Enforced Disappearances
- In October 2016, AFAD representatives visited Sri Lanka, where they met with different local CSOs working on the issue of enforced disappearances. As Sri Lanka is already a State Party to the CED, AFAD representatives shared inputs and best practices on the implementation of the Convention and on for its then draft national laws criminalizing ED.
- In February 2017, a delegation of AFAD representatives visited South Korea, on the occasion of the WGEID Session held in Seoul. This visit provided a chance to update the WGEID on the status of ED in AFAD's countries and it also constituted an opportunity to follow-up institutions that had already been approached in the past in relation to the signing and ratification of the CED. In particular, AFAD

met with representatives of the National Assembly, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Human Rights Commission.

Signed by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Khurram Parvez', written in a cursive style.

KHURRAM PARVEZ
Chairperson