



GENEVA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS Global Training

GENEVE POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME
Formation Internationale

GHR Contribution to the Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances

Geneva, 29 June 2017

(1) Geneva for Human Rights – Global Training (GHR)

Our objectives

Geneva for Human Rights – Global Training (GHR) is a **training organization**. Through training, study and protection, we aim to **bridge** the gaps between the international decisions and recommendations and the realities. We want to **empower** all those involved in human rights promotion and protection. Our *Global Training Department (GTP)* conducts each year dozens of Courses and Seminars in Geneva and in the regions. Our *Department of Human Rights Policy Studies (HPS)* supports these training activities by monitoring and analyzing UN human rights meetings.

Our Global Training Department

Defenders in the regions find it difficult to follow the UN negotiations and the trends in the HR-Council, the special procedures, the treaty bodies, and the action of OHCHR. Our Courses have to bridge these information gaps, to meet the needs and priorities of these defenders, and to enable them to adapt their work to these new realities. Our Global Training Department has three Programmes: on the Human Rights Council (PRE), on Implementation in the Countries (INP) and for Specific Stakeholders (TSS).

Programme 'Participation in the Human Rights Council' (PRE)

Entitled: '**Participation of the Regions in the Human Rights Council**', the Programme aims at full participation of defenders from the regions in the work of the HR-Council and its mechanisms, and at the effective use of human rights special procedures. It has a variety of Courses and Seminars in Geneva and in the regions.

At each ordinary session of the Human Rights Council (hereafter '*HR-Council*') GHR conducts its Geneva Courses. These are **advanced** Courses for defenders from the regions. Aim is to train trainers in the use of UN human rights mechanisms and procedures.

During each session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), GHR offers briefings and orientation for national NGO coalitions, most recently NGOs and networks from Australia, Singapore, Paraguay, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, India, Morocco, Tunisia, Philippines, and Indonesia.

GHR Programme 'Implementation Now !' (INP)

GHR has a special programme to promote the implementation of human rights in specific countries through training, mediation, advisory services and teaching strategies. GHR conducts Courses and Seminars in countries (Mexico, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Timor Leste, (West) Papua, Burundi, Tunisia, Botswana and Morocco) on the implementation of all UN recommendations (thematic procedures, treaty bodies, UPR, UN agencies). The programme also contains specific projects, such as the study project on the strengthening of domestic protection mechanisms, and the project on enforced disappearances.

(2) GHR project on Enforced Disappearance

For GHR, the fight against the crime of enforced disappearances has always been a priority. Several GHR members were actively involved in the creation in 1980 of the first UN mechanism on this crime, the *Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*

(WGEID) and in the drafting of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992).

GHR also participated in the negotiations on the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICED), which was adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2006.

With the Convention entering into force on 23 December 2010, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) became the most recent treaty monitoring body. GHR monitored all the eleven sessions of the CED and realized in 2012, 2013 and 2014 three Experts Meetings with both the CED and the WGEID.

Since the creation of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, GHR realized four Experts Meetings with the Committee and the Working Group of the Human Rights Council on Enforced Disappearances. The Seminars have been realized in our 'Cycle Nicolas Joffré', named from our former Human Rights Policy Studies Coordinator, who passed over after a long illness. GHR first Expert Seminar took place on 1 November 2012 during the simultaneous sessions of the Committee (3rd session) and of the Working Group (98th session). Aim was to intensify the cooperation between both mechanisms with active civil society participation. The Seminar discussed and compared the mandates, working methods and rules of procedures, and it focused on the complementarity and cooperation between the two mechanisms.

The 2nd Seminar was on 7 November 2013. Theme was 'the pivotal role of the CED in the treaty bodies and in the thematic procedures'. Co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of France and Argentina, it aimed at promoting a system-wide coherence of both doctrine and action on enforced disappearances (decisions on individual cases, General Comments).

The 3rd Expert Seminar of 17 September 2014 assessed how the Committee, the Working Group, and other mechanisms dealt with a variety of communications regarding enforced disappearances: communications on individual cases, on obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration (Working Group), on allegations of a widespread practice in the country (CED).

(3) Conference of the States Parties to the ICED

For 2016, it was decided that, instead of conducting another Expert Seminar, our project would focus on the preparation of the first Conference of the States Parties to the ICED. The Conference took place in Geneva on 19 December.

Its theme was to decide on the future of the Committee: as provided for in Article 27 of the Convention, after the first period of activities, the States Parties had to evaluate the functioning of the CED to decide whether the CED would continue to monitor the Convention, or whether the monitoring of the Convention would be transferred to another body.

GHR initiatives

GHR worked closely with Argentina and France, who co-chaired the Conference. Meetings took place with the Delegations of both countries in Geneva and during the International Conference of the University of Paris-2 (7-8 November).

Our HPS Department prepared a Memorandum for NGOs with a list of activities of the CED so far, information on the on-going negotiations in Geneva, and a call to associations of relatives and other human rights organisations to prepare statements for the Conference.

Through social media, the Memorandum was widely distributed to all NGOs concerned. Together with the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), a preparatory meeting was convened for NGOs (13 December). And the co-Chairs proposed to include in the rules of procedures a provision that NGOs could make oral statements.

Proceedings of the Conference

Opened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the Conference decided to continue to entrust the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to monitor the Convention.

After this decision, GHR read a joint statement of eight international NGOs, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the Churches' Commission on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches (CCIA-WCC), the FIDH, the ISHR, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the International Federation of the Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT), TRIAL International, and GHR.

GHR was also authorized to read out several statements prepared by organisations from the regions who could not come to Geneva, including the '*Madres de Plaza de Mayo*'.

At the end of the Conference, GHR agreed to prepare a next Expert Seminar with the CED and the WGEID in March 2017.

(4) GHR Expert Seminar of March 2017

Following the first Conference of the States Parties of 19 December 2016, the General Assembly held a High-level Plenary meeting devoted to enforced disappearance (New York, 17 February 2017). With the confirmation of the mandate of the CED and the goals adopted at the UN Assembly High-Level Meeting, GHR and the *Geneva Centre for Security Policy* (GCSP) convened a Workshop, which took place on Wednesday 15 March 2017, from 13:30 to 16:30 in the GCSP, Maison de la Paix, Geneva.

Aim of the Workshop was to offer a platform for reflection on ways to strengthen the prevention of and protection from the crime of enforced disappearance.

Proceedings of the Seminar

It was opened with the statements of the two co-sponsors, the Ambassador of Argentina, the Ambassador of France, and GCSP Representative. Most of the CED members were present.

After the key-note address of Mr. Santiago Corcurea Cabezut (Chairman of the CED and former Chairman of the WGEID), three experts introduced the discussion: Mr. Ibrahim Salama (Head Treaty Bodies Branch, *OHCHR*), Mr. Emmanuel Decaux (member CED) and Mr. Olivier de Frouville (member Human Rights Committee).

Participants discussed the relations between the CED and other treaty bodies regarding enforced disappearance; the place of the CED in the UN process of treaty bodies strengthening; the need for a substantial increase in the financial and human resources for the Secretariat of both the CED and the WGEID: and the strategies to double the number of ratifications of the International Convention, in particular: strengthening the Group of friends to the Convention; involvement of the academic world; strengthening NGOs networks and coalitions at national, regional and international levels; establishing a NGO Group to the Convention to work together with the CED and the Group of Friends of the Convention.

It was decided to prepare an Expert Meeting on Enforced Disappearances in September 2017 during the simultaneous sessions of the WGEID and the CED.

(5) GHR Comments

1. The entry into force of the Convention on Enforced Disappearance has been welcomed by thousands of relatives and defenders. States and NGOs concerned unanimously assessed that the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) worked effectively and constituted the best mechanism to promote the implementation of the Convention. After the Conference of States Parties, doubling the number of ratification is a necessary priority.
2. As an organisation promoting joint initiatives to strengthen UN human rights mechanisms and procedures, GHR is aware that the coalitions supporting the CED are currently too weak to make a difference. Coalitions and networks of relatives and NGOs have to be revitalized.
3. The aim of rapidly increasing the number of ratifications offers relatives and NGOs a unique opportunity to start again campaigning at national, regional and international levels, and, by doing so, supporting more strongly the CED.

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