

Committee on the Rights of the Child

International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances – 2024

On the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Committee on the Rights of the Child calls on States to take action to uphold the rights of children subjected to enforced disappearances, to ensure the restoration of their identity and family ties.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, in Articles 7 and 8, explicitly recognizes the right to identity (including nationality, name, and family relations, closely related to the child's individuality and private life) and particularly the right to preserve and restore it. Enforced disappearances of children violate this right, as they often involve illegal acts aimed at concealing identity and often prevents the restoration of ties between missing children and their families.¹

Enforced disappearances of children continue to occur worldwide. While it is more common in dictatorial or authoritarian regimes and for political reasons, organized crime in various parts of the world increases the likelihood of children being subjected to enforced disappearances.

The effects of enforced disappearance can continue even after a child reaches adulthood. Furthermore, it has been recognized that the crime does not cease until the child has been located and, if their identity was altered, until it is restored.

The Committee urges States to develop effective policies and taking action to end the enforced disappearances of children and comprehensively address their effects. This includes creating a genetic database of the families of missing children and conducting DNA tests to confirm a child's identity when necessary. Bureaucratic hurdles that prevent access to documents must be removed, to facilitate the searching for and location of children who disappeared.

The Committee also recalls the [Joint Declaration on illegal international adoptions](#), which it approved in 2022 with other United Nations human rights protection mechanisms. It established that in cases of illegal inter-country adoptions in the context of enforced disappearances, States must ensure accountability of state and private entities that have facilitated such adoptions, and provide the necessary assistance to children, including those adopted in the past, to get to know their origins and to re-establish family ties where the victims request it.

On this International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, it is not enough to remember; States should strengthen their action. Silence and inaction in the face of this violation of rights perpetuates the suffering of the victims and normalizes impunity. We urge States to actively commit to locate every child subject to enforced disappearance and restore their identity and family connections.

30 August 2024

¹ WGEID, observación general sobre los niños y las desapariciones forzadas (2012).