

Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances concludes its 129th session

Santiago, 10 February 2023

The [United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances](#) (WGEID) concluded its 129th session, which took place between 6 and 10 February in Santiago, Chile.

During the session, the Working Group examined 486 reported cases of enforced disappearances it had transmitted under its urgent action procedure since 28 September 2022, concerning Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam.

It also reviewed 364 cases, including newly reported cases outside the urgent procedure and updated information on previously transmitted cases concerning Argentina, Armenia, Bhutan, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, El Salvador, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

In the spirit of its humanitarian mandate, the Working Group continued to document and discuss acts tantamount to enforced disappearances perpetrated by non-state actors exercising government-like functions or *de facto* control over territory and population. In this context, the Working Group decided to transmit four cases to *de facto* authorities in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Palestine (State of) and Yemen.

The Working Group also reviewed responses from various Governments to prompt intervention letters, general allegations and urgent appeals. It adopted new general allegations, discussed its planned visits - notably to Honduras (20-29 March 2023) – as well as potential ones, and follow-up reports on previous country visits to Kirghizstan and Tajikistan. The experts also held discussions on a number of projects, including the forthcoming thematic report on new technologies and enforced disappearance, and adopted a revised version of its methods of work. The Working Group also continued studying the subject of enforced disappearance and elections.

The experts also met with relatives of disappeared persons, non-governmental organizations, State representatives and other stakeholders, both from Chile, the region and elsewhere.

As the session took place in Chile, the Working Group met in particular with several family members and associations of families of disappeared persons from Chile. The Working Group expresses gratitude for their testimonies and reiterates its solidarity with victims of enforced disappearance and their families. The Working Group listened to, and carefully registered their concerns, especially regarding the lack of tangible results vis-à-vis the passing of time, bearing in mind the advanced age of many of the family members. In this context, the Working Group stresses the crucial importance that the search for the truth, and in particular the establishment of the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared persons, is recognised and undertaken as an immediate priority.

In this respect, the Working Group appreciates the meeting held during the session with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights and other concerned authorities in the context of the

technical cooperation it is providing to Chile in relation to the project to design a national plan for the search for victims of enforced disappearance during the dictatorship.

The session coincided with the 50th anniversary of the coup in Chile, which will be commemorated in September 2023. During the session, the Working Group had the opportunity to conduct an official visit to the Museum of Memory and Human Rights and also visit Londres 38, a former secret detention center.

The Working Group will hold its 130th session from 8 to 12 May 2023 in Geneva.

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*The [Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances](#) is comprised of five independent experts from all regions of the world. The Chair-Rapporteur is **Ms. Aua Baldé** (Guinea-Bissau); and the Vice-Chair is **Ms. Gabriella Citroni** (Italy); other members are **Ms. Grażyna Baranowska** (Poland), **Mr. Luciano Hazan** (Argentina) and **Ms. Angkhana Neelapaijit** (Thailand).*

The Working Group was established by the then UN Commission on Human Rights in 1980 to assist families in determining the fate and whereabouts of disappeared relatives. It endeavours to establish a channel of communication between the families and the Governments concerned, to ensure that individual cases are investigated, with the objective of clarifying the whereabouts of persons who, having disappeared, are placed outside the protection of the law. It also provides assistance in the implementation by States of the [UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance](#).

The Working Groups are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. They are not UN staff and are independent from any government or organization. They serve in their individual capacity and do not receive a salary for their work.

Learn [how to submit a case](#) to the Working Group.

Learn [more about the work](#) of the Working Group.

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