



Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item 10: General Debate
Date: 8 October 2024
Speaker: Catherine Morris

Oral Statement to the 57th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status, and endorsed by Peacemakers Trust, NGO without consultative status

Technical assistance towards universal ratification and implementation of the Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, with the endorsement of Peacemakers Trust, deplores that tens of thousands of enforced disappearances are reported in over 100 States,¹ including countries with Item 10 mandates or OHCHR offices.

Given the massive, global scope of this crime, it is deplorable that the *Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances*² has only 76 States Parties. This is despite urging by the Secretary General,³ Special Procedures,⁴ and regular consensus resolutions of the General Assembly.⁵

It is clear that many countries need technical assistance to build their capacity and willingness to ratify the Convention and to implement it in law, policy, and practice.

The crime of enforced disappearance, whether prolonged or temporary,⁶ often occurs in the context of arbitrary detention of human rights lawyers and defenders, journalists, and dissidents, including those who defend land and environmental rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights.⁷

We urge all Council members and observer States to ratify and implement the Convention, and to ensure that its definition of enforced disappearance in Article 2 is incorporated into forthcoming draft articles of the convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.

Finally, we urge all States to fulfil their UN financial obligations to end the liquidity crisis⁸ that has impeded Special Procedures and the OHCHR.

Thank you.

¹ Enforced or involuntary disappearance - Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, 26 July 2024, A/HRC/57/54, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/57/54>.

² *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-all-persons-enforced>.

³ Guterres calls for end to ‘atrocious crime’ of enforced disappearances, UN News, 30 August 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/08/1140217>.

⁴ A/HRC/57/54, supra note 1, para 51, 112; OHCHR, Victims of enforced disappearances need urgent responses and concerted action, forthcoming World Congress offers unique opportunity, experts say, International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances - 30 August 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/08/victims-enforced-disappearances-need-urgent-responses-and-concerted-action>

⁵ E.g. United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/78/207, 22 December 2023, <https://www.undocs.org/A/RES/78/207>.

⁶ WGEID, A/HRC/16/48/Add.3, 28 December 2010, <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/16/48/Add.3&Lang=E>, CED, WGEID, 30 August 2016, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2016/08/every-minute-counts-un-experts-raise-alarm-over-short-term-enforced>; Peacemakers Trust, LRWC, et al, 14 August 2023, https://www.lrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/PeacemakersTrust.Input_CED_WGEID_Short-Term.EID_15Aug2023.pdf, <https://www.lrwc.org/enforced-disappearances-every-minute-counts-joint-submission-to-two-un-bodies/>.

⁷ The Global Problem of Enforced Disappearances: “Outside All Protection of the Law,” Written statement submitted by Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, A/HRC/54/NGO/83, 23 January 2024, <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/HRC/54/NGO/83&Lang=E>. See the annex noting enforced disappearance in 17 countries at <https://www.lrwc.org/enforced-disappearances-outside-all-protection-of-the-law-hrc54/>. https://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/every_life_a_universe?