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**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances****Communications transmitted, cases examined, observations made and other activities conducted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances\*****131st session (18–27 September 2023)****I. Communications**

1. Between 13 May and 27 September 2023, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances decided to transmit 410 cases under its urgent procedure, to Algeria (1), Bahrain (2), China (1), Egypt (2), Jordan (1),<sup>1</sup> Kenya (1), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Malaysia (5), Pakistan (8), the Philippines (2), the Russian Federation (365), Saudi Arabia (2), Tajikistan (1), the United Arab Emirates (13) and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (6).

2. The Working Group also decided to transmit 15 cases tantamount to enforced disappearance under its urgent and standard procedures, to the de facto authorities in Afghanistan (1) and Libya (5) and in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic (9).<sup>2</sup>

3. At its 131st session, held in Geneva from 18 to 27 September 2023, the Working Group decided to transmit 89 newly reported cases of enforced disappearance, to Azerbaijan (4), Chile (1), China (1), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (24), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2), Egypt (2), Indonesia (10), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (3), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Libya (2), Morocco (2), Panama (1), Saudi Arabia (3) and the Syrian Arab Republic (33).

4. The Working Group clarified 32 cases, concerning Bahrain (2), Egypt (2), El Salvador (1), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Mexico (1), Pakistan (1), the Russian Federation (15), Qatar (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Thailand (1) and Uzbekistan (4), and from the de facto authorities in Libya (2). A total of 6 cases were clarified on the basis of information provided by Governments, concerning Mexico (1), Qatar (1) and Uzbekistan (4), and 26 cases were clarified on the basis of information provided by the sources, concerning Bahrain (2), Egypt (2), El Salvador (1), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Pakistan (1), the Russian Federation (15), Saudi Arabia (1) and Thailand (1) and the de facto authorities in Libya (2).

5. Between 13 May and 27 September 2023, the Working Group transmitted 42 communications jointly with other special procedure mechanisms. The communications

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\* The annexes to the present document are reproduced as received, in the languages of submission only.

<sup>1</sup> Counted under the statistics of the United Arab Emirates.

<sup>2</sup> The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to the de facto authorities in Afghanistan and Libya and in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic do not in any way imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any territory, city or area or of its authorities.



included 16 joint urgent appeals, sent to Algeria (1), Belarus (1), Ethiopia (1), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (3), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Malaysia (1), Saudi Arabia (2), South Africa (1), the Sudan (1), the United Arab Emirates (1) and the United States of America (3). Twenty joint allegation letters were sent, to Argentina (1), China (2), Egypt (1), Greece (1), India (2), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Mexico (2), Nepal (1), the Russian Federation (1), Sao Tome and Principe (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Sri Lanka (2), Tunisia (1), the United Arab Emirates (1), Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (1) and Yemen (1), and six other joint letters were sent to "other actors".<sup>3</sup>

6. At the session, the Working Group reviewed and adopted three general allegations: one concerning Egypt, one concerning both Morocco and Spain and one concerning Pakistan (see annex II).

7. The full list of press releases and statements issued by the Working Group during the reporting period is contained in annex III.

## II. Other activities

8. At its fifty-fourth session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 54/14, by which it extended the mandate of the Working Group for three more years.

9. The Working Group re-elected the Chair-Rapporteur, Aua Baldé (Guinea-Bissau), and the Vice-Chair, Gabriela Citroni (Italy), for one year.

10. The session coincided with the presentation to the Human Rights Council of the Working Group's annual report,<sup>4</sup> its reports on the country visits to Honduras<sup>5</sup> and Uruguay<sup>6</sup> and the report its thematic study on new technologies and enforced disappearances.<sup>7</sup> On 27 September 2023, the Working Group held a public event to present its thematic study on new technologies and enforced disappearances.

11. Also at the fifty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group participated as a panellist in the annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Council, which had as the theme "Revisiting gender parity and its contributions to the integration of gender into the work of international human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms".

12. The Working Group participated in a public event to commemorate the first anniversary of the joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions,<sup>8</sup> at which testimonies of victims and State experiences were shared.

13. At its 131st session, the Working Group held discussions on its past, and potential future, country visits, and expressed concern about the lack of positive replies by several States to requests it had sent. Working Group members prepared for the working visit to the judicial and human rights organs of the African Union and other subregional bodies, including by sending out a call for input.<sup>9</sup> Regarding past country visits, the Working Group decided that in 2024 it would issue follow-up reports on its visits to Kyrgyzstan (25–30 June 2019)<sup>10</sup> and to Tajikistan (1–5 July 2019).<sup>11</sup> Cognizant of the prevailing circumstances in the country, the Working Group confirmed its decision not to issue a follow-up report on its visit

<sup>3</sup> OTH 73/2023, OTH 97/2023, OTH 98/2023, OTH 100/2023, OTH 101/2023 and OTH 110/2023. All communications, and replies thereto, mentioned in the present report are available from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>.

<sup>4</sup> [A/HRC/54/22](#).

<sup>5</sup> [A/HRC/54/22/Add.2](#).

<sup>6</sup> [A/HRC/54/22/Add.1](#).

<sup>7</sup> [A/HRC/54/22/Add.5](#).

<sup>8</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Committee on Enforced Disappearances marks first anniversary of the joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions", press release, 21 September 2023.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/call-contributions-preparation-visit-working-group-enforced-or-involuntary-0>.

<sup>10</sup> See [A/HRC/45/13/Add.2](#).

<sup>11</sup> See [A/HRC/45/13/Add.1](#).

to Ukraine (11–20 June 2018)<sup>12</sup> for the time being, reaffirming nonetheless that the Working Group would continue to remain actively engaged and closely monitor the matter.

14. In July 2023, the Working Group and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances issued a joint call for input for the forthcoming joint statement on the notion of so-called “short-term” enforced disappearance, for which 61 contributions were received from States, members of academia, civil society organizations and individual contributors. In further consultations on the subject, on 25 September 2023, the members of the Working Group and of the Committee, together with representatives of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee against Torture, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, took part in an informal discussion hosted and coordinated by the Treaty Body Members’ Platform of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

15. To continue enhancing cooperation with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Working Group held its annual joint meeting, at which ongoing and future projects were discussed, including the drafting of joint analysis on the notion of so-called “short-term” enforced disappearance.

16. At its 131st session, the Working Group held meetings with representatives of the Governments of Algeria, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Japan, Lithuania, Panama, Portugal, Switzerland, Thailand and Türkiye. The Working Group also met with relatives of disappeared persons from several countries, human rights defenders, lawyers, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and the national human rights institution working on the issue in Ecuador (Office of the Ombudsman). Furthermore, the Working Group held meetings with the unit for the search for persons deemed as missing in the context of and due to the armed conflict of Colombia, and with representatives of the Convention against Enforced Disappearances Initiative. With regard to the latter, the Working Group reiterated its support for the organization of a world congress on enforced disappearances, to be held in 2024.

17. The Working Group held a meeting with representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Indonesia.

18. At its 131st session, the Working Group held an expert consultation on its forthcoming thematic study on elections and enforced disappearance, with a view to publishing a call for inputs in December 2023. The consultation gathered experts from academic institutions, international organizations and civil society organizations working on elections in different regions of the world.

19. At the same session, the Working Group decided on the topic of its next thematic report (2025), which will be focused on enforced disappearances of environmental and land rights defenders.

20. A list of other activities conducted by the Working Group during the reporting period is contained in annex IV.

21. The Working Group will hold its 132nd session in Geneva from 29 January to 2 February 2024.

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<sup>12</sup> See [A/HRC/42/40/Add.2](#).

### **III. Information concerning enforced disappearances in States reviewed by the Working Group during the session**

#### **Algeria**

##### **Urgent procedure**

22. On 4 September 2023, the Working Group transmitted under its urgent procedure the case of Abdel Abdelmalek, a former police officer who was reportedly abducted on 19 August 2023 by members of the local police brigade of Tébessa, Algeria.

##### **Joint urgent appeal**

23. On 9 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal regarding allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment of Saeed Bakhouché, following his transfer on 20 April 2023 from the detention centre in the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay to Algeria.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Argentina**

##### **Application of the six-month rule**

24. On 1 March 2023, the Government provided information on four outstanding cases, on the basis of which the Working Group decided to apply the six-month rule. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of one of the cases was forwarded to the Government of Uruguay.

##### **Joint allegation letter and reply**

25. On 10 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the issue of granting a portion of the land previously used by the former Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada to the Club Atlético River Plate Asociación Civil. Multiple testimonies have linked this land to the system of extermination and enforced disappearance in place during the last military dictatorship. Moreover, the land concession occurred without sufficient consultation with either the victims or civil society.<sup>14</sup>

26. On 11 September 2023, the Government of Argentina provided a reply<sup>15</sup> to the joint allegation letter.

#### **Azerbaijan**

##### **Standard procedure**

27. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted four cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) Hrant Verdian, an Armenian national, born in 1953, serving with the Armenian armed forces, who disappeared on 29 June 1992 after being captured by Azerbaijani soldiers in the village of Gozlu, Kalbajar District;

(b) Artour Haroutiounian, an Armenian national, born in 1970, serving with the Armenian armed forces, who disappeared on 4 September 1993 after being captured by Azerbaijani soldiers in Gubadli;

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<sup>13</sup> DZA 4/2023.

<sup>14</sup> ARG 3/2023.

<sup>15</sup> See reply to ARG 3/2023.

(c) Boris Hairoumian, an Armenian national, born in 1938, who disappeared on 30 April 1991 after being abducted by Azerbaijani and Russian forces in the town of Chaykend, Goygol District, Azerbaijan;

(d) Yervand Geghamian, an Armenian national, born in 1967, serving with the Armenian armed forces, who disappeared on 4 September 1993, after being captured by Azerbaijani soldiers in Gubadli.

28. In accordance with the Working Group's procedure, copies of all these cases were transmitted to the Government of Armenia.

## **Bahrain**

### **Urgent procedure**

29. On 24 May 2023, the Working Group transmitted two cases under its urgent procedure, concerning Husain Marzooq and Mohamed Ramadhan, who were allegedly transferred from their cells at Jau prison to an unknown location following a raid in the prison that escalated into violence on 14 May 2023.

### **Clarification based on information from sources**

30. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify the cases of Husain Marzooq and Mohamed Ramadhan, who were reportedly returned to their cell in Jau prison.

### **Information from the Government**

31. On 7 August 2023, the Government transmitted information on the two above-mentioned cases, which had been clarified by sources on 24 May 2023.

## **Bangladesh**

### **Information from sources**

32. The Working Group considered the information provided by sources regarding five outstanding cases, but deemed the information insufficient to clarify the cases.

## **Belarus**

### **Joint urgent appeal**

33. On 25 May 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter in follow-up to the cases of Siarhei Tsikhanouski, Viktor Babaryka and Maksim Znak. The letter was based on new information received, including allegations of their incommunicado detention, denial of visits by family members, lawyers and independent physicians, and denial of communication and correspondence, as well as reported concerns about cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or torture that are alleged to be endangering their health and life and about a threat of enforced disappearance.<sup>16</sup>

## **Bolivia (Plurinational State of)**

### **Information from the Government**

34. The Working Group considered the reply of the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, dated 3 July 2023, regarding 26 cases of alleged enforced disappearance, and determined the information insufficient to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the persons concerned.

<sup>16</sup> BLR 4/2023.

**Application of the six-month rule**

35. On 3 July 2023, the Government provided information on two outstanding cases, on the basis of which the Working Group decided to apply the six-month rule, in accordance with its methods of work.

**Chile****Standard procedure**

36. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Víctor Manuel González Millones, detained in 1984, allegedly by police agents in the Province of San Felipe de Aconcagua, near the border with Argentina.

**Information from the Government**

37. The Working Group considered the reply of the Government of Chile, dated 22 August 2023, regarding two cases of alleged enforced disappearances, and deemed the information insufficient to clarify the cases.

**China****Urgent procedure**

38. On 6 September 2023, under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Kussyman Rakymuly, an ethnic Kazakh former imam arbitrarily detained on 21 April 2023 by local police officers and believed to be deprived of his liberty in a “re-education indoctrination camp” in Jimsar County, Chanji Hui Autonomous Prefecture.

**Standard procedure**

39. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Baihetiyaer Sadier, a nutritionist, who was allegedly abducted on 22 October 2022 in his home in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous Region, by the Chinese security police.

**Information from sources**

40. Sources provided information on five outstanding cases, but it was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

**Joint allegation letters and replies**

41. On 18 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the alleged arbitrary detention, in China, of at least 2,000 individuals from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, among whom approximately 70 per cent are women, and their risk of return to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

42. On 26 June 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the arrest and alleged prolonged arbitrary detention of two Tibetan Buddhist monks, Rachung Gendun and Sonam Gyatso, as well as the alleged arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of Tibetan Buddhists Lotse, Karma Samdup, Zumkar and Youdon, which appear to be related to the legitimate exercise of their rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, freedom of opinion and expression and cultural rights.

43. On 31 August and 13 September 2023, the Government of China provided replies to the joint allegation letters.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See replies to CHN 8/2023 and CHN 9/2023.

## Democratic People's Republic of Korea

### Standard procedure

44. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted four newly reported cases to the Government, concerning:

- (a) An individual who was allegedly arbitrarily detained in 2015 in China and forcibly transferred to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- (b) An individual who was allegedly abducted in 2000 in Ryanggang Province by a State agent;
- (c) An individual who was allegedly abducted in 1990 in Ryanggang Province by a State agent;
- (d) An individual who was allegedly abducted in 2016 in Ryanggang Province by a State agent.

45. The Working Group also transmitted 20 newly reported cases, concerning Shin Bonghyeon, Park Janghee, Shin Sunam, Park Suhong, Shin Gwanyeong, Shin Dongsun, Song Deokseop, Junmo Yeom, Yoon Inwon, Yu Jeok, Oh Heon-shik, Ahn Jongbok, An Ho-cheol, An Jong-mo, Baek Beom-gi, Ahn Bong-yeol, Cha Myeong-sang, Ahn Chansoo, Kim Dae-yeong and Lee Byeong-deok, who were allegedly abducted in the context of the Korean War (1950–1953). In relation to these cases, the Working Group reiterated that, under international law, the State's obligations to investigate and search for the disappeared person are of a continuing nature.

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

### Standard procedure

46. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group decided to transmit two newly reported cases to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, concerning:

- (a) Juvéna Nshimiyama Biseruka, a humanitarian worker who was allegedly abducted on 29 August 2022 from his residence in Kinshasa by State agents;
- (b) Djeskain Bitilon, a lieutenant colonel in the Congolese army, who was allegedly abducted on 31 August 2022 in Gombe, Kinshasa, by State agents.

## Ecuador

### Information from the Government

47. The Working Group considered the replies of the Government of Ecuador, dated 18 and 30 August 2023, regarding five cases of alleged enforced disappearance, and determined the replies insufficient to clarify the cases.

## Egypt

### Urgent procedure

48. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted two cases to the Government, concerning:

- (a) Moaaz al-Sharqawy, arrested on 11 May 2023 from his place of residence by armed officers believed to be National Security Agency agents;
- (b) Youssef Mohamed Sobhi al-Sunaiti, arrested on 22 May 2023 from his place of residence by State Security agents.

### **Standard procedure**

49. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted two newly reported cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) Mohamed El Tantawi Hassan Hassan Ibrahim, arrested on 5 February 2019 by officers dressed in civilian clothes, believed to be State security agents;

(b) Essam Gharib Mahran Khalil, arrested from his home on 26 December 2021 by national security forces.

### **Clarification based on information from sources**

50. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify two cases, concerning Mostafa Mohamed el Sayed Hussein and Moaaz al-Sharqawy, who are reportedly in prison.

### **Application of the six-month rule**

51. The Government provided information on three outstanding cases. Based on that information, the Working Group decided to apply the six-month rule in accordance with its methods of work.

### **General allegation**

52. The Working Group received information from credible sources concerning alleged violations and obstacles encountered in Egypt in the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The allegations refer to the systemic nature of enforced disappearance, which affects in particular human rights defenders and political opposition figures. The information received suggests that, often, after several days, weeks or months, the disappeared reappear when they must be presented to the State prosecution. The Working Group has also been informed of several instances in which persons reappeared and subsequently were forcibly disappeared again. The Working Group expressed its concern about an allegation that the rights and guarantees of persons deprived of their liberty are being systematically eroded. In particular, information on the detention of such persons and on their places of detention, including with regard to transfers, is not provided promptly and accurately to the detainee's family members, counsel or any other persons with a legitimate interest (see annex II).

### **Joint allegation letter**

53. On 12 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the alleged violation of due process and fair trial rights of 20 persons in proceedings before the First Terrorism Circuit Court and the Emergency State Security Court (Third Terrorism Circuit Court), the alleged enforced disappearance of those persons for various periods and alleged torture in some of those cases.<sup>18</sup>

## **El Salvador**

### **Clarification based on information from sources**

54. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify, in accordance with its methods of work, the case of Flor Verónica Cerón de Montes, who is reportedly at liberty.

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<sup>18</sup> EGY 3/2023.



## Equatorial Guinea

### Information from the Government

55. The Working Group considered a reply of the Government of Equatorial Guinea, dated 31 July 2023, concerning three cases, but the reply was deemed insufficient to clarify the cases.

## Ethiopia

### Joint urgent appeal

56. On 7 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning alleged arbitrary detention and collective expulsion of hundreds of Eritreans from Ethiopia, in violation of the non-refoulement principle, which exposed them to the risk of being subjected to serious human rights violations, including torture, enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention.<sup>19</sup>

## Greece

### Joint allegation letter

57. On 16 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the death of at least 82, and disappearance of up to 600, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers following the sinking of a fishing boat off the coast of Greece on 14 June 2023.<sup>20</sup>

## India

### Application of the six-month rule

58. The Government of India provided information on one outstanding case, concerning Amritpal Singh, who is reportedly in detention. On the basis of that information, the Working Group decided to apply the six-month rule in accordance with its methods of work.

### Joint allegation letter

59. On 5 June 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the arrest and detention of Kashmiri human rights defenders Irfan Mehraj and Khurram Parvez and their ongoing persecution, which would appear to suggest a grave conflation of their legitimate human rights work with terrorism.<sup>21</sup>

## Indonesia

### Standard procedure

60. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted 10 cases to the Government, concerning:

- (a) An individual who was stopped at a cafeteria in North Aceh Regency by three individuals dressed in civilian clothes in 1990;
- (b) An individual who was abducted from his home on 14 November 2000;

<sup>19</sup> ETH 3/2023.

<sup>20</sup> GRC 3/2023.

<sup>21</sup> IND 4/2023.

- (c) An individual who was reportedly abducted in the village of Pante Pisang, Peusangan District, Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, on 10 April 2002;
- (d) An individual who was abducted from his home in June 2003;
- (e) An individual who was shot in the leg and subsequently apprehended while walking on the street on 11 September 2003;
- (f) An individual who was allegedly arrested by the army in the village of Pante Jaloh, Sawang District, North Aceh Regency, on 23 September 2003;
- (g) An individual who was allegedly apprehended in a coffee shop in North Aceh Regency on 25 September 2003;
- (h) An individual who was arrested by the army in North Aceh Regency in November 2003;
- (i) An individual who was allegedly abducted as part of a military operation in North Aceh Regency on 21 October 2004;
- (j) An individual who was allegedly abducted while in a coffee shop in North Aceh Regency on 4 October 2022.

## **Iran (Islamic Republic of)**

### **Standard procedure**

61. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted three cases to the Government, concerning:

- (a) Davood Khorrami, who was arrested between August and September of 1982 in a shop in Mahabab by officers, and imprisoned in Mahabab prison, where he was last seen in November 1981;
- (b) Omar Ahmadi, who was arrested on 1 May 1981 in Saqqez, imprisoned for a period of 18 months and last seen in 1983;
- (c) Karim Haji Mirzaee, who was arrested on 6 April 1983 in Sanandaj by officers believed to belong to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

### **Application of the six-month rule**

62. The Government provided information on one outstanding case. On the basis of that information the Working Group decided to apply the six-month rule in accordance with its methods of work.

### **Joint urgent appeal and reply**

63. On 19 May 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal letter concerning Toomaj Salehi, an Iranian musician who was violently arrested and is being detained for supporting peaceful protests, as well as for raising his voice through protest songs. Mr. Salehi is facing multiple charges, including “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*), a capital offence under strict interpretation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of Islamic law, and is therefore facing the death penalty. He is also charged with spreading propaganda against the Government, the formation and management of illegal groups with the aim of undermining national security, collaboration with a hostile Government and spreading lies and inciting violence through cyberspace.<sup>22</sup>

64. On 31 July 2023, the Government replied to the joint urgent appeal letter sent on 19 May 2023.<sup>23</sup>

65. On 16 May 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning Jamshid Sharmahd, aged 68, a

<sup>22</sup> IRN 6/2023.

<sup>23</sup> See reply to IRN 6/2023.

German-Iranian software engineer and journalist based in the United States who was kidnapped, forcibly disappeared and detained by the Iranian authorities in Dubai in July 2020 and is now at risk of execution after being sentenced to death for “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*) following an unfair trial. Throughout his time in detention, Mr. Sharmahd has not had access to a lawyer of his choice. Also, the Iranian authorities have denied consular access to Mr. Sharmahd, despite his German nationality.<sup>24</sup>

66. On 11 July 2023, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran replied to the joint allegation letter sent on 16 May 2023.<sup>25</sup>

67. On 20 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the case of Abbas Kourkouri, also known as Mojahed Kourkouri, who was arrested on 20 December 2022 and subjected to enforced disappearance until April 2023. Mr. Kourkouri is accused of killing a child in the context of the nationwide protests in Izeh, Khuzestan Province and is now at risk of imminent execution.<sup>26</sup>

68. On 5 September 2023, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran replied to the joint allegation letter sent on 20 July 2023.<sup>27</sup>

## **Jordan**

### **Urgent procedure**

69. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Halife Abdulrahman Abdullah, who was arrested on 7 May 2023 at Queen Alia International Airport in Jordan, during a visit to Amman, and reportedly extradited to the United Arab Emirates.

### **Information from sources**

70. Sources provided information on one outstanding case, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the case.

### **Observation**

71. The Working Group decided to transfer one case from the statistics of Jordan to those of the United Arab Emirates.

## **Kenya**

### **Urgent procedure**

72. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Yusuf Gasana Ahmed, who was abducted on 30 May 2023 from his home by persons believed to be State agents.

## **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

### **Urgent procedure**

73. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Lu Siwei, a lawyer and human rights defender from Sichuan Province, China, who was detained by the Lao police in Vientiane. The case was later clarified on the basis of information from sources.

<sup>24</sup> IRN 7/2023.

<sup>25</sup> See reply to IRN 7/2023.

<sup>26</sup> IRN 13/2023.

<sup>27</sup> See reply to IRN 13/2023.

74. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of China and the United States.

#### **Clarification based on information from sources**

75. The Working Group decided to clarify the case of Mr. Lu on the basis of information received from sources on 29 October 2023 that Mr. Lu had been released on bail.

#### **Standard procedure**

76. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Phetphouthone Philachanh, who was allegedly arrested on 14 November 2019 by representatives of Lao People's Democratic Republic law enforcement while at an automated teller machine in Vientiane. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Government of Thailand.

#### **Joint urgent appeal**

77. On 3 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning the detention Mr. Lu and the related imminent risk of his deportation to China, where there are substantial grounds to believe that he would be in danger of being subjected to human rights violations, including enforced disappearance.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Joint allegation letter**

78. On 13 September 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning arbitrary and incommunicado detention, enforced disappearance, violation of fair trial, intimidation and extrajudicial rendition in relation to eight human rights defenders who are part of the "Free Laos" movement.<sup>29</sup>

### **Lebanon**

#### **Information from sources**

79. Sources provided information on one outstanding case, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the case.

### **Libya**

#### **Standard procedure**

80. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted two cases to the Government, concerning the following individuals:

(a) Aboubakr Abraheem Aboubakr al-Khazmi, who was arrested on 7 September 2021 by members of the combined forces of Misrata and detained in prison in Misrata; he was last seen at the Misrata prison in December 2022;

(b) Embarek Ibrahim Aboubakr al-Khazmi, who was arrested on 7 September 2021 by members of the combined forces of Misrata and detained in prison in Misrata; he was last seen at the Misrata prison in December 2022.

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<sup>28</sup> LAO 1/2023.

<sup>29</sup> LAO 3/2023.

## Malaysia

### Urgent procedure

81. On 21 July 2023, Working Group transmitted five cases to the Government of Malaysia under its urgent procedure, concerning human rights defender Thu Zar Maung, her husband, Saw Than Tin Win, and their children, including two minors, all of whom were allegedly abducted from their residence in Kuala Lumpur on 4 July 2023.

### Information from the Government

82. The Working Group considered the information sent by the Government on 31 July 2023 and 27 September 2023 and determined it insufficient to clarify the fate and whereabouts of Ms. Maung and her family.

### Joint urgent appeal and reply

83. On 21 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal on the above-mentioned case of the alleged disappearance of Ms. Maung and her family members.<sup>30</sup>

84. On 31 July and 27 September 2023, the Government of Malaysia provided replies<sup>31</sup> to the joint urgent appeal.

## Mexico

### Clarification

85. On the basis of information previously provided by the Government of Mexico, the Working Group decided to clarify one case following the expiry of the period prescribed by the six-month rule.<sup>32</sup> The case concerns Diego Alonso Hernández Leyva; Mr. Hernández Leyva's remains were identified and his family was informed.

### Information from the Government

86. The Working Group received replies from the Government of Mexico, dated 12 May, 18 August and 13 September 2023, regarding 83 cases of enforced disappearance, but the information provided was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

### Joint allegation letters

87. On 25 and 26 July 2023, the Working Group transmitted, together with other special procedure mechanisms, two joint allegation letters, concerning attacks against Teresa Magueyal, a human rights defender and searching mother, who was shot and killed in Guanajuato, Mexico,<sup>33</sup> and Araceli Rodríguez Nava, also a human rights defenders and searching mother,<sup>34</sup> who was physically attacked and threatened in Guerrero, Mexico. The Government provided responses to the joint allegation letters on 25<sup>35</sup> and 28<sup>36</sup> September 2023.

<sup>30</sup> MYS 1/2023.

<sup>31</sup> See replies to MYS 1/2023.

<sup>32</sup> [A/HRC/WGEID/129/1](#), para. 59.

<sup>33</sup> MEX 6/2023.

<sup>34</sup> MEX 5/2023.

<sup>35</sup> See reply to MEX 5/2023.

<sup>36</sup> See reply to MEX 6/2023.

## Morocco

### Standard procedure

88. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted two cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) Mohamed Bouhoute Saidi, a tailor who was reportedly abducted in 1956 in Tangier, Morocco, by three unknown persons, and was last seen late in 1958 during his transfer to Ghafsay prison in Sefrou Province, Morocco;

(b) Ben Allal el-Marini, who was allegedly abducted in May 1956 in Dar el-Kabdani, Nador Province, by three or four unidentified individuals travelling in a black car.

### General allegation

89. The Working Group received information from credible sources concerning alleged violations and obstacles encountered in Morocco and Spain in the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The allegations refer to the disappearances of migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, in the context of collective expulsion operations towards Morocco carried out on 24 June 2022 at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla, both enclaves under Spanish jurisdiction. The allegations are also focused on the absence of effective preventive measures to guarantee respect for the principle of non-refoulement and to search for the victims, to investigate and punish those responsible and to ensure that the families of the victims have access to information, can be associated with the search and investigation processes, and obtain adequate psychosocial support and reparation for the harm suffered. To date, the fate and whereabouts of 70 migrants who disappeared on 24 June 2022 are still unknown. In view of the tragic earthquake that struck Morocco on the night of 8 September 2023, the serious loss of life and property and the emergency situation, the Working Group expressed its most sincere solidarity and, with regard to the response to the above questions, provided the Government of Morocco with a 120-day deadline (see annex II).

## Nepal

### Joint allegation letter

90. On 9 June 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the bill, registered in Parliament on 19 March 2023, for the amendment of the Act on the Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons, Truth and Reconciliation, 2071 (2014), as the bill appears to be inconsistent with the obligations of Nepal to investigate the gross human rights violations committed during the 1996–2006 internal armed conflict.<sup>37</sup>

91. On 7 August 2023, the Government of Nepal provided a reply to the joint allegation letter.<sup>38</sup>

## Pakistan

### Urgent procedure

92. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted eight cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) An individual who was allegedly abducted in May 2023 in Rawalpindi by State agents;

(b) An individual who was allegedly abducted in April 2023 near his residence in Punjab Province by Pakistani military State agents;

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<sup>37</sup> NPL 1/2023.

<sup>38</sup> See reply to NPL 1/2023.

(c) An individual who was allegedly abducted in July 2023 from his residence in Balochistan Province, presumably by State agents;

(d) An individual who was allegedly abducted in August 2023 in Faisalabad by State agents;

(e) Sami Abraham, a journalist, news anchor, and then-president of BOL News in Pakistan, who was allegedly abducted on 23 May 2023 along 7th Road in the G6 Sector of Islamabad, presumably by Pakistani State agents;

(f) Murad Akbar, who was allegedly abducted in May 2023 from his residence in Islamabad by several members of the Pakistani police and military forces;

(g) Muhammad Javaid, a graduate of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, who was allegedly abducted on 4 May 2023 in Khuzdar, Balochistan, presumably by Pakistani State agents;

(h) Muhammad Raheem, who was allegedly abducted on 17 May 2023 in Lahore, near the Bahira Town suburb, by members of the Pakistani counter-terrorism department.

### **Application of the six-month rule**

93. On the basis of information provided by the Government of Pakistan, the Working Group decided to apply the six-month rule to the cases of Irfan Basarat Basarat Hussain Siddiqui and Lalmar Khan, who were reportedly deceased; Bakhat Sha Zeb Nill, Gulzar Ahmed, Syed Zaman Shah Nil, Hikmat Ullah Nil, Fayaz Ali Nill, Nisar Ahmed Panhwar, Abdul Rehman Khan and two other individuals, who are reportedly at liberty; and Shafi Ullah, Jawed Mohammad, Saif Ullah, Ikhlq Ahmed, Zaheer Zaheer Ahmed, Muhammad Imran Razeeq Nil, Sarmad Ali Raza, Salam Khan and Raza Ullah, who are reportedly in detention.

### **Information from the Government**

94. On 27 April, 18 May and 2 August 2023, the Government transmitted information concerning 68 outstanding cases, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

### **Clarification based on information from sources**

95. On the basis of information provided by the source, the Working Group decided to clarify the case of Faheem Jan Nil, who is at liberty.

### **General allegation**

96. The Working Group received information from credible sources concerning alleged violations and obstacles encountered in Pakistan in the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Amid an increasing number of cases of reported enforced disappearances perpetrated by, or with the participation of, the police, military, intelligence agencies and paramilitary forces, new legislative measures have been introduced by the Government that have allegedly compounded the situation. The Working Group also raised concern about reports concerning cases of threats and reprisals against, and harassment of, families of disappeared persons and human rights defenders, including civil society organizations and lawyers who work on issues related to enforced disappearance (see annex II).

## **Panama**

### **Standard procedure**

97. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted one case to the Government, concerning Alcibíades Bethancourt Aparicio, who was arrested on 16 February 1971 by the Panamanian army.

## Peru

### Information from the Government

98. On 18 August 2023, the Government of Peru transmitted information concerning 2,361 outstanding cases of enforced disappearance under the review of the Working Group, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

## Philippines

### Urgent procedure

99. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted two cases to the Government, concerning Dexter Capuyan and Gene Roz Jamil de Jesus, who were forcibly disappeared on 28 April 2023 while travelling from the SM City Taytay shopping mall to the Golden City Subdivision, in Taytay, Rizal Province, Luzon Region in the Philippines.

## Qatar

### Clarification

100. On the basis of information previously provided by the Government, the Working Group decided to clarify one case, following the expiry of the period prescribed by the six-month rule.<sup>39</sup> The case concerns Muneeb Ahmad Sofi, who has reportedly been deported and is at liberty.

## Russian Federation

### Urgent procedure

101. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted to the Government 365 cases of enforced disappearance perpetrated by Russian forces, concerning:

(a) Idris Arsamikov, a citizen of the Russian Federation, who disappeared on 16 February 2023 after being arrested by police agents in the Domodedovo airport in Moscow, and subsequently transferred to Grozny, Chechnya, Russian Federation;

(b) Oleksandr Koval, Oleksii Morozov, Yurii Liakh, Ivan Drozd, Artur Baranets, Denys Derevianchuk, Oleksii Yashchenko, Yurii Hrybonos, Volodymyr Vorovchenko, Bohdan Baranovskyi, Anton Kartavytskyi, Serhii Akhmetov, Dmytro Khrulenko, Yurii Zahura, Mykola Narusevych, Valerii Kuksa, Dmytro Bohaievskyi, Oleksandr Chyrkov, Denys Batrov, Serhii Diachok, Taras Pavlenko, Volodymyr Pavlenko, Oleksandr Nesterenko, Roman Shulha, Oleksandr Kurdin, Severin Molodiano, Maksym Kolesnikov, Artem Yesypenko, Anton Miroshnychenko, Vasyl Berdii, Volodymyr Busliuk, Oleksandr Shenderenko, Ruslan Serikpaiev, Oleksandr Safonov, Leonid Vietoshkin (Vetoshkin), Volodymyr Pestov (Piestov), Serhii Savranskyi, Oleksandr Kanchura, Vladyslav Khrapiichuk, Dmytro Soboliev, Mykola Zaiets, Viacheslav Likhtanskyi, Mykhailo Shchaviuk, Valerii Kashuba, Mykola Petrov, Dmytro Nechyporuk, Yevhen Bondar, Kostiantyn Stakhniuk, Andrii Chubak, Yonas Machulaitis, Andrii Shcherban, Andrii Naumenko, Maksym Saponiuk, Oleksandr Demchenko, Serhii Firmaniuk, Valerii Fontosh (Fontash), Serhii Bachevskyi, Oleksii Hazniuk, Vitalii Chepurmenko, Oleh Solokha, Oleksandr Moskaliuk, Oleh Meliukhin, Volodymyr Tsyhanok, Volodymyr Prymak and Serhii Kononenko, citizens of Ukraine who disappeared between 24 February and 23 March 2022 in the context of combat engagement with Russian armed forces in Kyiv Province or in the territory of Kyiv Province occupied by the Russian Federation at that time;

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<sup>39</sup> A/HRC/WGEID/129/1, para. 76.



(c) Volodymyr Palamarchuk, a citizen of Ukraine, who disappeared on 26 February 2022 in the territory of Chernihiv Province, which was at that time occupied by the Russian Federation;

(d) Oleksandr Bolvanovych, Andrii Harkusha, Oleksandr Herasymenko, Yurii Kripak, Illia Lykhozhon, Illia Zakharov, Myroslav Kucher, Heorhii Kirdelov, Andrii Kravets, Vitalii Shcherbina, Kyrylo Ivanishyn, Serhii Skriaha, Stepan Dzhehalo, Mykola Sydorovych, Kyrylo Smirnov, Vitalii Ishchenko and Pavlo Nykolyshyn, citizens of Ukraine who disappeared between 1 April and 31 July 2022 after combat engagement with Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups in Donetsk Province;

(e) Yevhen Kachai, a citizen of Ukraine who disappeared after combat engagement with Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups on 2 July 2022 in Dnipropetrovsk Province;

(f) Roman Sanin, Oleksandr Bocharnikov, Vitalii Bulchenko, Serhii Kroitor, Andrii Novikov, Oleh Nechytailo, Serhii Krasnokutskyi, Oleksandr Tarusyn, Yehor Zhyrovkin, Serhii Udovichenko, Valerii Hryshko, Viktor Topenko, Yurii Kyrylenko, Oleksandr Prokofiev, Oleksandr Ohorodniichuk, Oleksandr Orekhov, Andrii Pavliuk, Vladlen Yeroshenko, Oleh Yefimenko, Volodymyr Zbukar, Denys Lytvynov, Vladyslav Naumenko, Vadym Zamkovyi, Vadym Kriukov, Andrii Khovkhun, Kostiantyn Stalnov, Oleh Zubko, Oleksandr Uper, Yaroslav Selifanov, Vladyslav Yermoshkin, Vitalii Feleniuk, Viktor Proshchyn, Oleksandr Fedorov, Dmytro Pylyponko, Artem Pylypenko, Oleksandr Vasylenko, Volodymyr Oriekhov, Maksym Radiievskyi, Dmytro Kharchenko, Vitalii Yakovets, Maksym Petrenko, Serhii Kyrykovych, Yevhen Knyshov, Yurii Zemliachenko, Rodion Nomyrovskiy, Pavlo Orlov, Pavlo Krotinov, Yevhen Chynkov, Kyrylo Yatsenko, Vitalii Starodub, Andrii Huriev, Anatolii Hanhan, Yurii Moroz, Nataliia Kolisnyk, Viktor Fediai, Pavlo Balakhtar, Oleksandr Palka and Serhii Tarasov, citizens of Ukraine who disappeared between 24 February 2022 and 15 January 2023 in the context of combat engagement with Russian armed forces in Kharkiv Province or in the territory of Kharkiv Province occupied by the Russian Federation at that time;

(g) Anatolii Lysak, Artem Humeniuk, Vitalii Shcherbak, Dmytro Izhanych, Serhii Rymarchuk, Yurii Karpinskyi, Mykola Savchenko, Oleksandr Tymko, Oleksandr Kruchynenko, Serii Aleksieienko, Viktor Vysotskyi, Oleksandr Novatskyi, Oleksandr Dzhum, Serhii Heidt, Kostiantyn Reznik, Viktor Humeniuk, Mykhailo Karenyi, Yevhen Volotin, Inna Usachova, Roman Tretiakov, Artem Fartushnyi, Artem Baranov, Yevhen Pryshliak, Mykhailo Artemiev, Yevhenii Klymchuk, Oleksandr Tkachuk, Mykola Harbar, Dmytro Pyrohov, Roman Harnychar, Mykhalo Maltsev, Yurii Azarko, Vitalii Bulhaz, Oleh Dobrovolskyi, Vadym Voloshchak, Yurii Dzekh, Serhii Nekhorosh, Vitalii Pochkai, Oleh Betsa, Oleh Shakula, Oleksandr Kereksha, Yevhenii Kosov, Roman Lahunov, Valerii Kharaim, Dmytro Dubovyk, Anatolii Zubrytskyi, Mykhailo Kozlov, Oleksandr Kostiuchenko, Oleh Dashchenko, Viacheslav Hryhoriev, Andrii Lozovytskyi, Volodymyr Sorochan, Mykola Baryliuk, Oleksandr Hurzhii, Yurii Liashok, Oleksandr Skladanovskyi, Serhii Stelmakhov, Serhii Tatarchuk, Vitalii Timoshchuk, Yurii Domanchuk, Viktor Adonka and Volodymyr Reul, citizens of Ukraine who disappeared between 18 March 2022 and 22 June 2023 in the context of combat engagement with Russian armed forces in Kherson Province or in the territory of Kherson Province occupied by the Russian Federation at that time;

(h) Mariano García Calatayud, a citizen of Spain residing in Kherson, who disappeared on 19 March 2022 after being abducted by Russian forces near his home in Kherson, occupied by the Russian Federation at that time;

(i) Vitalii Balyberdin, Ihor Kravets, Oleksandr Saiushkin, Oleksandr Kuzmenko, Ihor Levchenko, Artur Slonytskyi, Andrii Teplyi, Taras Timchyi, Kostiantyn Lytvynov, Viktor Rohozian, Vitalii Bezsmertnyi, Vladyslav Khalin, Oleh Koniev, Yevhen Yakovets, Yurii Ilkiv, Andrii Lysetskyi, Oleh Turchak, Yurii Kapleta, Markiiian Morozevych, Mykhailo Makarevych, Mykola Kuryliak, Dmytro Protsyk, Mykola Trukhan, Maksym Yurchenko, Borys Yemelianov, Ruslan Frankovych, Anton Pedchenko, Andrii Shlomenko, Oleh Lemekha, Mykhailo Dudych, Yevhen Holubtsov, Yevhen Dudko, Serhii Ushakov, Mykola Yermakov, Ivan Liubas, Andrii Karmanov, Volodymyr Kotsun, Viktor Lozhka, Andrii

Afanasiev, Yurii Anton, Ihor Bodriaha, Vadym Bondarenko, Serhii Fesenko, Bohdan Konokhov, Serhii Medvediev, Ruslan Vereta, Vladyslav Didur, Mykola Komarov, Ivan Lovhushchenko, Yurii Mudryi, Andrii Nepomenko, Oleksandr Nikolenko, Yurii Panasiuk, Viktor Pertsuikh, Serhii Sadovskyi, Oleksii Peredatko, Roman Stupnitskyi, Oleh Mykoliv, Vitalii Petrychko, Yevhen Hulyi, Oleh Chornohorets, Serhii Otchenashenko, Oleh Popivniak, Andrii Krukov, Dmytro Mezhenyskyi, Ihor Kostiuhenko, Feliks Dadyka, Oleksandr Krasii, Nazarii Melnyk, Vasyl Mialkovskyi, Maksym Boichuk, Volodymyr Dmytruk, Andrii Kruchok, Roman Shumskyi, Andrii Kravchuk, Serhii Tavizhan, Radion Hryhoriak, Oleh Pyrih, Ihor Yatsyk, Volodymyr Marchuk, Andrii Ozernyi, Artem Hladush, Vitalii Barabash, Maksym Vecherkovskyi, Oleh Hryshyn, Mykola Minko, Serhii Korniienko, Yaroslav Elmuratov, Bohdan Prykhodko, Valentyn Stanovych, Andrii Tiurin, Serhii Voloshchuk, Ruslan Povkh, Oleksandr Ubozhenko, Mykhailo Nahorni, Andrii Dmytriv, Volodymyr Felyk, Dmytro Babets, Yurii Lisovskyi, Denys Nedbalskyi, Bohdan Nikolenko, Denys Shyian, Petro Zakharov, Andrii Yarostiuk, Filip Strusevych, Yurii Biriuk, Serhii Denysenko, Volodymyr Fedoriak, Serhii Overchenko, Maksym Kravchenko, Oleksandr Karpik, Dmytro Lukianiuk, Mykyta Lytvynenko, Serhii Martyniuk, Vladyslav Yurkuts, Denys Pylypenko, Oleksii Yefymenko, Ruslan Halko, Dmytro Kasianchuk, Yurii Myronenko, Andrii Barsukov, Andrii Boiarynov, Yurii Bun, Ruslan Kovalenko, Oleksandr Koltsov, Serhii Moiseienko, Volodymyr Motyka, Ruslan Panchenko, Valerii Povod, Ivan Romaniuk, Yurii Stankevych, Ihor Yevsieiev, Ihor Zamoroz, Oleksandr Tronevych, Andrii Vinnyskyi, Maksym Bryzhatyi, Mykhailo Pozniak, Oleh Fedyk, Yevhen Kachurin, Eduard Nazarii, Ihor Nianchenko, Fedir Dubliak, Oleksandr Kolosov, Nazarii Kravchuk, Volodymyr Lukashuk, Andrii Matviiv, Oleksii Mazur, Viktor Onopriienko, Ivan Rudyk, Ihor Senko, Stepan Yasnynskyi, Yevhenii Kotsar, Mykola Vakh, Vasyl Pryshchepa, Vitalii Shevchuk, Denys Zaiets, Medjit Abdulhafarov, Maksym Holovko, Dmytro Zubets and Taras Karbach, citizens of Ukraine who disappeared between 25 February 2022 and 15 June 2023 in the context of combat engagement with Russian armed forces in Luhansk Province or in the territory of Luhansk Province occupied by the Russian Federation at that time.

102. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, copies of 364 cases were communicated to the Government of Ukraine, copies of 65 cases were sent to the Government of Belarus and a copy of one case was sent to the Government of Spain.

#### **Clarification based on information from sources**

103. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify the cases of Anton Lishchynskyi, Pavlo Artiukhov, Ivan Pankin, Ihor Khrystozevych, Mykyta Chernov, Yevhen Chekhivskyi, Ihor Dubyk, Pavlo Horban, Denys Tymchenko, Dmytro Lomonosov, Volodymyr Hasenko, Vladyslav Kazmiruk, Vladyslav Solonchuk, Andrii Ahurbash and Ruslan Otroshchenko, who had reportedly been released from captivity and are at liberty.

#### **Information from sources**

104. Sources provided information on 114 outstanding cases, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

#### **Information from other States concerned**

105. On 23 June, 12 July, 1 and 23 August and 5 September 2023, the Government of Ukraine provided information concerning 412 outstanding cases registered under the records of the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, the information was considered insufficient to clarify those cases.

106. On 5 September 2023, the Government of Spain provided information concerning one case registered under the records of the Russian Federation. The Working Group considered the information, but it was insufficient to clarify the case.

107. The Working Group examined the updated information transmitted by the Government of Ukraine on 1 August 2023, concerning the cases of Andrii Soskida, Artur Vorona, Viacheslav Horban, Anzhelika Tankovska, Oleksandr Bezruchko and Oleksandr Kornieiev and decided to apply the six-month rule in accordance with its methods of work.

### **Joint allegation letter**

108. On 12 June 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning allegations of widespread use of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance perpetrated by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups in Ukraine in the context of the ongoing armed attack by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

## **Sao Tome and Principe**

### **Joint allegation letter and reply**

109. On 31 May 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment inflicted on five civilians, four of whom reportedly died in custody on 25 November 2022.<sup>41</sup>

110. On 10 June 2023 the Government of Sao Tome and Principe replied to the joint allegation letter sent on 31 May 2023.<sup>42</sup>

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **Urgent procedure**

111. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted two cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) Hafiz Muhammad Umar, who was last seen on 20 April 2023 and is believed to have been arrested;

(b) Abdulrab Mansoor Moqbel Ahmed Geham, who was arrested on 12 April 2023 at the Wadi'ah border crossing by Saudi security authorities; the case was subsequently clarified on the basis of information from sources.

112. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of the case of Hafiz Mohammad Umar was forwarded to the Government of Pakistan; in the case of Abdulrab Mansoor Moqbel Ahmed Geham, a copy was forwarded to the Government of Yemen.

### **Standard procedure**

113. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted three cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) Reda Hussein, who was reportedly arrested on 7 March 2023, at approximately 9 a.m. local time, allegedly by agents of the Saudi security forces;

(b) Samera Abdullah Hamood al-Huri, who was reportedly abducted on 17 April 2022 in Riyadh by officers believed to belong to the intelligence service authorities;

(c) Ahmed Mahmood al-Halili, who was reportedly abducted on 17 April 2022 by officers believed to belong to the Saudi Arabian intelligence services.

114. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of the case of Reda Hussein was forwarded to the Government of Lebanon.

### **Clarification based on information from sources**

115. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify the case of Abdulrab Mansoor Moqbel Ahmed Geham, who is reportedly imprisoned in Abha prison.

<sup>40</sup> RUS 8/2023.

<sup>41</sup> STP 1/2023.

<sup>42</sup> See reply to STP 1/2023.

**Information from sources**

116. Sources provided information on two outstanding cases, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

**Application of the six-month rule**

117. On 30 June 2023, the Government transmitted information concerning one case, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the case.

**Joint urgent appeals and replies**

118. On 10 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning the alleged forcible repatriation of Ghassan Abdallah Ghazi al-Sharbi, who was cleared for release and transferred from the detention facility at the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay to Saudi Arabia on 8 March 2023. The special procedures expressed deep concern that Mr. al-Sharbi had been repatriated against his will and had since been subjected to enforced disappearance, held in secret, incommunicado detention and subjected to torture and ill-treatment.<sup>43</sup>

119. On 5 October 2023, the Government of Saudi Arabia replied to the joint urgent appeal sent on 10 August 2023.<sup>44</sup>

120. On 15 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning the arrest and alleged enforced disappearance of Reda Hussein, a national of Lebanon, on 7 March 2023, while he was on the way to his workplace, reportedly by agents of Saudi security forces.<sup>45</sup>

121. On 9 October 2023, the Government of Saudi Arabia replied to the joint urgent appeal sent on 15 August 2023.<sup>46</sup>

122. On 25 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning the alleged insufficiency and inadequacy of the mechanisms implemented by the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to provide redress and full and effective reparation to victims of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed by the coalition during the armed conflict in Yemen, in line with the scale and severity of the harm done; and to effectively investigate the violations and establish the respective responsibilities.<sup>47</sup>

123. On 27 October 2023, the Government of Saudi Arabia replied to the joint urgent appeal sent on 15 August 2023.<sup>48</sup>

**Spain****Information from the Government**

124. The Working Group considered the reply of the Government of Spain, dated 31 July 2023, regarding six cases of enforced disappearance. The Working Group considered the information provided regarding these cases, but it was insufficient to clarify the cases. The Working Group decided to copy France as a concerned country in one of the cases.

**General allegation**

125. The Working Group received information from credible sources concerning alleged violations and obstacles encountered in Morocco and Spain in the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The allegations

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<sup>43</sup> SAU 5/2023.

<sup>44</sup> See reply to SAU 5/2023.

<sup>45</sup> SAU 7/2023.

<sup>46</sup> See reply to SAU 7/2023.

<sup>47</sup> SAU 6/2023.

<sup>48</sup> See reply to SAU 6/2023.

refer to the disappearances of migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, in the context of collective expulsion operations towards Morocco carried out on 24 June 2022 at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla, both enclaves under Spanish jurisdiction. The allegations are also focused on the absence of effective preventive measures to guarantee respect for the principle of non-refoulement and to search for the victims, to investigate and punish those responsible and to ensure that the families of the victims have access to information, can be associated with the search and investigation processes, and obtain adequate psychosocial support and reparation for the harm suffered. To date, the fate and whereabouts of 70 migrants who disappeared on 24 June 2022 are still unknown (see annex II).

## South Africa

### Joint urgent appeal

126. On 12 May 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning five South African nationals arbitrarily detained in the Rawj camp in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. The allegations included reference to one of the detainees, a 14-year-old boy, who was at serious risk of being forcibly separated from his family and transferred to another detention centre, where he would be at risk of being disappeared and held in incommunicado detention in life-threatening conditions.

## Sri Lanka

### Information from sources

127. Sources provided information on one outstanding case, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the case.

### Joint allegation letters and reply

128. On 13 September 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, a letter of allegation concerning aspects of a bill establishing a truth and reconciliation commission that appear at odds with international standards, and alleged insufficient consultation with victims and civil society.<sup>49</sup>

129. On 14 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, a letter of allegation concerning the discovery of a mass grave at Kokuthoduvai in Mullaittivu on 29 June 2023 and related concerns regarding its preservation and exhumation, and respect for and identification of the mortal remains contained therein, in line with international standards.<sup>50</sup>

130. On 2 October 2023, the Government of Sri Lanka provided a reply to the allegation letter.<sup>51</sup>

## Sudan

### Joint urgent appeal

131. On 28 June 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning the arrest and alleged enforced disappearance for 12 days of a human rights defender, Alaa-eldin Awad Mohamed Nogoud, and the arrest and continued enforced disappearance of a political activist, Mohamed Ali Abdallah al-Jazouli.

<sup>49</sup> LKA 7/2023.

<sup>50</sup> LKA 6/2023.

<sup>51</sup> See reply to LKA 6/2023.

## **Syrian Arab Republic**

### **Standard procedure**

132. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted 33 cases to the Government (see annex I).

## **Tajikistan**

### **Urgent procedure**

133. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted to the Government one case of enforced disappearance perpetrated by agents of the International Criminal Police Organization and the Police of Tajikistan on 16 September 2023 in Dushanbe.

## **Thailand**

### **Clarification based on information from sources**

134. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify the case of Duong Van Thai, who is reportedly detained in Hanoi. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Government of Viet Nam.

## **Tunisia**

### **Information from the Government**

135. On 24 August 2023, the Government of Tunisia provided a reply concerning two outstanding cases; the information was considered insufficient to clarify the cases.

### **Joint allegation letter**

136. On 17 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, a letter of allegation concerning the strategic and comprehensive partnership framework between the Government of Tunisia and the European Union, which could constitute a violation of the principle of non-refoulement and the human rights of migrants, including children.<sup>52</sup>

## **United Arab Emirates**

### **Urgent procedure**

137. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted 13 cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) Halife Abdulrahman Abdullah, who was arrested on 7 May 2023 at Queen Alia International Airport in Jordan, during a visit to Amman. The case was transferred from the statistics of Jordan to those of the United Arab Emirates. In accordance with its methods of work, the Working Group transmitted a copy of the case to the Governments of Jordan and Türkiye;

(b) Rashed Omran Ali Obeid al-Shamsi, Khalid Mohammed Abdallah al-Shiba al-Nuaimi, Ibrahim Ismail Ibrahim al-Yasi, Mohammed Ali Saleh al-Mansori, Foad Mohammed Abdallah Hassan Alhmadi, Foad Mohammed Abdallah Hassan Alhmadi, Mohammed Abdullah al-Roken, Sultan Bin Kayed al-Qasimi, Husain Mouneif al-Jabri, Hasan Mouneif al-Jabri and Abdulsalam Mohamed Derwish al-Marzooqi, who were last seen at Al-Razeen prison and were last in contact with the outside world on 12 June 2023.

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<sup>52</sup> See TUN 5/2023.

(c) Hadeef Rashed Abdallah Nasser al-Awois, who was last seen at Al-Razeen prison; his last contact with the outside world was on 18 June 2023.

#### **Information from the Government**

138. On 22 June 2023, the Government transmitted information concerning one outstanding case, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the case.

#### **Information from other concerned States**

139. On 22 September 2023, the Government of Türkiye transmitted information concerning one outstanding case registered under the records of the United Arab Emirates, but the information was considered insufficient to clarify the case.

#### **Joint urgent appeal**

140. On 4 September 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning Ravil Mingazov, who has been arbitrarily detained in the absence of a fair trial, in highly concerning detention conditions, and subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, since his resettlement in the United Arab Emirates in 2017 from the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay. At the time, Mr. Mingazov was at renewed risk of imminent forced repatriation to his country of origin, the Russian Federation, where there are substantial grounds to believe that he will again be subjected to torture and other serious violations of his human rights and in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance.<sup>53</sup>

#### **Joint allegation letter and reply**

141. On 25 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the alleged insufficiency and inadequacy of the mechanisms implemented by the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to provide redress and full and effective reparation to victims of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed by the coalition during the armed conflict in Yemen, in line with the scale and severity of the harm done; and to effectively investigate the violations and establish the respective responsibilities.<sup>54</sup>

142. On 24 October 2023, the Government of the United Arab Emirates replied to the joint allegation letter sent on 25 August 2023.<sup>55</sup>

### **United States of America**

#### **Joint urgent appeals and replies**

143. On 9 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning the alleged arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment of Saeed Bakhouché, who was cleared for release and transferred from the detention facility at the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay to Algeria on 20 April 2023. The Working Group expressed concern about the risk of human rights violations, including enforced disappearance, in the event of refolement.<sup>56</sup>

144. On 10 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal on the alleged forcible repatriation of Ghassan Abdallah Ghazi al-Sharbi from the detention facility at the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay to Saudi Arabia on 8 March 2023. The Working Group expressed concern

<sup>53</sup> ARE 3/2023.

<sup>54</sup> ARE 2/2023.

<sup>55</sup> See reply to ARE 2/2023.

<sup>56</sup> USA 19/2023.

about reports that since the repatriation Mr. Al-Sharbi has been subjected to human rights violations, including enforced disappearance.<sup>57</sup>

145. On 4 September 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an urgent appeal concerning information received about Ravil Mingazov, who was allegedly arbitrarily detained following his transfer to the United Arab Emirates in 2017 from the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay. The Working Group expressed concern about the risk of human rights violations, including enforced disappearance, in the event of Mr. Mingazov's refoulement to the Russian Federation.<sup>58</sup>

146. On 9 October 2023,<sup>59</sup> The Government of the United States replied to the joint allegation letters of 9 and 10 August 2023; on 27 October 2023,<sup>60</sup> it responded to the joint allegation letter of 4 September 2023.

## **Uzbekistan**

### **Clarification**

147. On the basis of information provided by the Government, the Working Group decided to clarify four cases, concerning Oralbay Dosnazarov, Esimkan Kanaatov, Tabiskan Kanaatov and Dauletkeldi Nadirbaev, who are reportedly in detention, following the expiry of the period prescribed by the six-month rule.<sup>61</sup>

## **Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)**

### **Urgent procedure**

148. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted six cases to the Government, concerning:

(a) An individual who was detained on 15 August 2023 on a road in La Pedrera, in Táchira State, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, by the Bolivarian National Guard. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Government of Peru;

(b) Five members of the same family, including two persons under the age of 18, abducted on 15 July 2023 by officers in civilian clothes believed to belong to law enforcement agencies.

### **Joint allegation letter**

149. On 11 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, allegations received in relation to the enforced disappearance and death of Douglas Efrén Escalante Medina on 28 November 2016, and the deaths in State custody of Víctor Eduardo Colina Maestre, on 17 April 2019, Hebert Giovanni Escobar Gandica, on 25 September 2019, and Yohani Manuel Sarlangue Flórez, on 8 January 2021, who reportedly died as a result of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment allegedly perpetrated by officials of the Bureau for Scientific, Criminal and Forensic Investigations, the Bolivarian National Guard and the Directorate of the Criminal Investigation Service.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> USA 20/2023.

<sup>58</sup> USA 22/2023.

<sup>59</sup> See reply to USA 19/2023 and USA 20/2023.

<sup>60</sup> See reply to USA 22/2023.

<sup>61</sup> [A/HRC/WGEID/129/1](#), para. 101.

<sup>62</sup> VEN 1/2023.



## Yemen

### Joint allegation letter and reply

150. On 25 August 2023, the Working Group transmitted, jointly with other special procedure mechanisms, an allegation letter concerning the alleged insufficiency and inadequacy of the mechanisms implemented by the Government to provide redress and full and effective reparation to victims of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed during the armed conflict in Yemen, in line with the scale and severity of the harm done; and to effectively investigate and prosecute the violations.<sup>63</sup>

151. On 18 and 30 October 2023, the Government of Yemen replied to the joint allegation letter sent on 25 August 2023.<sup>64</sup>

## IV. Information concerning acts tantamount to enforced disappearance attributable to non-State actors reviewed by the Working Group during the session

### Afghanistan (de facto authorities)

#### Urgent procedure

152. On 22 September 2023, under its urgent procedure the Working Group transmitted one case to the de facto authorities in Afghanistan, concerning an individual who was allegedly abducted around August 2023 in Kabul, presumably by the Taliban.

### Libya (de facto authorities)

#### Urgent procedure

153. Under its urgent procedure, the Working Group transmitted five cases to the Libyan Arab armed forces, concerning:

(a) Khodr Khaled al-Nabush, Moustafa Mohammad Sharaf, Khaled al-Mawas and Hassan al-Mawas, who were taken on 10 August 2023 from the sea near the Malta search and rescue area and detained by the Tariq bin Ziyad Brigade, a paramilitary group, in Benghazi, and last seen at the Qanfudah detention centre; two cases were subsequently clarified on the basis of information from sources;

(b) Saiid Eisay, who was reportedly last seen on 20 July 2023, in detention at the Tariq bin Ziyad Brigade compound, in the Sidi Faraj District, Benghazi, following his arrest on 18 July 2023 by officers believed to belong to the Ministry of the Interior.

#### Clarification based on information from sources

154. On the basis of information provided by sources, the Working Group decided to clarify the cases of Khaled al-Mawas and Hassan al-Mawas, who were reportedly released from prison.

### Syrian Democratic Council (de facto authorities)

#### Standard procedure

155. Under its standard procedure, the Working Group transmitted nine cases to the Syrian Democratic Council, concerning:

<sup>63</sup> YEM 1/2023.

<sup>64</sup> See replies to YEM 1//2023.

(a) An individual who was reportedly arrested in Baghuz, Syrian Arab Republic, in March 2019 and detained by Kurdish forces in the Jabal Baghuz area. In accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of Australia and the Syrian Arab Republic;

(b) An individual who was last heard from in March 2019 while in Baghuz, reportedly detained on either 21 or 22 March 2019 by the Syrian Democratic Forces and American forces; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of Somalia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States;

(c) An individual who was physically separated from his family and believed to have been captured and detained by the Syrian Democratic Forces in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic in late 2018; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of Germany, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom;

(d) An individual who has been detained in Baghuz since March 2019 by the Syrian Democratic Forces in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom;

(e) An individual who was arrested on or around 6 August 2018 by the Syrian Democratic Forces; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom;

(f) An individual who was arrested in March 2019 in the Jabal Baghuz area; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of Australia, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic;

(g) An individual who was captured in Baghuz in March 2019; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of Australia and the Syrian Arab Republic;

(h) An individual who was reportedly captured by Kurdish forces in January 2019, approximately 30 km from the border between the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom ;

(i) An individual who was reportedly last seen in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic in November 2017; in accordance with the Working Group's methods of work, a copy of this case was forwarded to the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom.

## Annex I

### Standard procedure cases

#### Syrian Arab Republic

1. The Working Group transmitted 33 cases to the Government, concerning:
  - (a) An individual who was reportedly arrested by the Military Security of the Syrian regime on 3 May 2011 in the city of Raqqa;
  - (b) An individual who was arrested on 28 June 2011, in the city of Jisr al-Shoghour by officers believed to belong to the Syrian Security forces;
  - (c) An individual who was arrested on 1 October 2011 in the city of Jisr al-Shughour, by officers believed to belong to the Political Security Department;
  - (d) An individual who was arrested on 1 October 2011 in the city of Jisr al-Shughour, by officers believed to belong to the Political Security Department;
  - (e) An individual who was arrested on 21 December 2011 in front of the Daraa Al-Balad high school in the Al Arbaeen neighbourhood by officers believed to belong to the Military intelligence branch in Daraa Governorate;
  - (f) An individual who was arrested on 4 April 2012 at a checkpoint in the city of Binnish by Syrian security forces;
  - (g) An individual who was reportedly arrested on 18 April 2012, and transported to an undisclosed location, by Syrian regime forces personnel;
  - (h) An individual who was arrested in June 2012 at a security checkpoint known as al-Maqs by Syrian security forces;
  - (i) An individual who was arrested on 24 June 2012 from his home on Al Rami road, Orm al Jawz following a raid by Syrian security forces;
  - (j) An individual who was reportedly arrested on 12 August 2012 in Deir al Asafir city in Damascus Suburbs governorate.
  - (k) An individual who was arrested on 24 August 2012 and was reportedly detained in the Seydnaya Military Prison;
  - (l) An individual who was arrested on 24 August 2012 and was reportedly detained in the Seydnaya Military Prison;
  - (m) An individual who was arrested on 5 November 2012 from Aleppo University Hospital, at University Square in Aleppo by officers believed to belong to military intelligence;
  - (n) An individual who was arrested on 11 December 2012 by officers believed to belong to the Syrian State Security agency;
  - (o) An individual who was reportedly arrested on 29 January 2013 in the southern suburbs of Hama governorate, by Syrian regime military personnel;
  - (p) An individual who was arrested on 1 March 2013 by officers dressed in civilian clothes, believed to belong to the Syrian Security forces in Damascus;
  - (q) An individual who was arrested on 7 April 2013 at a checkpoint in Homs city by Syrian government forces, along with three persons under the age of 18 who were in their company;
  - (r) An individual who was arrested on 24 November 2013 at a checkpoint in the city of Idlib by Syrian security forces;

- (s) An individual who was arrested in December 2013 by Syrian security forces at a checkpoint in Damascus;
- (t) An individual was arrested on 2 January 2014 from his place of residence in al-Hayjana town, Eastern Ghouta by Syrian government forces;
- (u) An individual who was arrested on 9 March 2014 by Syrian security forces in the city of Idlib;
- (v) An individual who was arrested on 11 March 2014 by agents of the “Shabiha”, who were associated with the popular committees and agents of the Syrian government forces;
- (w) An individual who was arrested on 10 May 2014 at a security checkpoint between the city of Damascus and Adra by Syrian security forces;
- (x) An individual who was arrested on 2 July 2014 by the Immigration and Passports police in Idlib;
- (y) An individual who was arrested in November 2014 in Sehnaya town, in the west of Damascus suburbs Governorate, at a checkpoint by Syrian security forces;
- (z) An individual who was arrested in November 2014 in Sehnaya town in the west of Damascus suburbs Governorate at a checkpoint by Syrian security forces;
- (aa) An individual who was arrested on 16 January 2015 from his place of residence in al-Hayjana town, Eastern Ghouta by Syrian government forces;
- (bb) An individual who was reportedly arrested on 16 November 2016 by armed officers believed to belong to the Syrian Security forces;
- (cc) An individual who was reportedly arrested on 16 November 2016, by armed personnel from Syrian regime forces;
- (dd) An individual who was reportedly arrested on 23 March 2018 and was last seen in 2019 in Seydnaya Military Prison;

## Annex II

[English/French only]

### General allegations

#### Egypt

1. The Working Group received information from sources concerning reported obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (the Declaration) in Egypt.
2. The information gathered suggests that enforced disappearances are of a systemic nature and affect particularly human rights defenders and political opposition figures. Frequently, after several days, weeks or months, the disappeared re-appear when presented to the state prosecution. The Working Group has also been informed of several instances in which persons re-appeared, and subsequently were forcibly disappeared again.
3. According to the information received, there were 300 enforced disappearances documented in Egypt in 2022.
4. Reportedly, the rights and guarantees of persons deprived of their liberty are systematically eroded. Particularly, information on the detention of such persons and their places of detention, including transfers, are not provided promptly and accurately to the family members, their counsel or any persons with a legitimate interest. This also violates Egypt's domestic law, as Article 54 of the Constitution protects against detention without warrant, and Article 36 of the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure requires every detained person to be questioned by a public prosecutor within 24 hours.
5. Pursuant to international law and the well-established practice of the Working Group, there is no time limit on the duration of an enforced disappearance. Consequently, enforced disappearances that last days or weeks constitute full-fledged enforced disappearances, regardless of whether the disappeared person has been subsequently released, or whether charges have been brought against that person. As such, the disappeared persons and their families have a right to redress and adequate compensation.
6. The Working Group has also been informed of intimidations and reprisals against family members, lawyers, and civil society organizations, as well as difficulties lodging complaints to domestic authorities.
7. According to the information received, no Egyptian official has ever been prosecuted for committing, facilitating, ordering, soliciting, or inducing the commission of, or being an accomplice to, or consciously disregarding information which clearly indicated that subordinates were committing or about to commit an enforced disappearance. Moreover, the Working Group was informed that enforced disappearance is not codified as an autonomous crime under Egyptian criminal legislation.
8. The concerns about enforced disappearances have been raised previously by the Working Group in its annual reports<sup>1</sup> as well as in a [General Allegation](#) in 2017. Similar concerns have also been expressed by the Human Rights Committee, when reviewing the fifth country report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ([CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5](#), paras. 25–26) and in a number of communications by Special Procedures.<sup>2</sup> The Working Group is particularly alarmed that, despite these communications and repeated concerns by various human rights bodies, enforced disappearances are still taking place.

<sup>1</sup> See [A/HRC/54/22](#), paras 74 to 76; [A/HRC/51/31](#), paras. 55 and 56; [A/HRC/48/57](#), paras. 80 to 83.

<sup>2</sup> See for example EGY 3/2023, EGY 10/2022, EGY 6/2022, EGY 5/2022, EGY 4/2022 and more at SP Communication Reports and Search.

9. The Working Group would like to bring to the Government's attention articles 4, 10, 13, and 19 of the Declaration, which are directly related to the present allegation.

10. The Working Group would be grateful for your Excellency's Government's cooperation and observations on the following questions:

(a) Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.

(b) Please provide information on measures in place or planned to prevent enforced disappearances. If no such measures are in force yet or planned, please indicate why.

(c) Please provide information on how the rights of detained persons to be brought before a judicial authority promptly after detention is guaranteed in practice. Please also indicate how it is secured that such information, as well as information on transfers, will be promptly available to family members of those deprived of liberty, the counsel or to any other persons having a legitimate interest.

(d) Please provide information on how persons who have been forcibly disappeared and their families can access justice and obtain redress and adequate compensation.

(e) Please indicate how family members, lawyers, civil society actors and all those advocating for victims of enforced disappearances are protected from intimidation and reprisals. Please specify also how their right to complain and have their complaint investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially is guaranteed.

(f) Please provide information on the applicable criminal legal framework to deal with allegations of enforced disappearance and clarify whether the latter is codified as a separate criminal offence. In case of the absence of a separate crime of enforced disappearance, please inform which are the offences used in criminal investigations concerning reports of disappeared persons. Kindly clarify whether there is any legislative reform envisaged in order to assure that enforced disappearance is codified as a separate offence under domestic criminal legislation.

11. The Working Group requests your Excellency's Government to provide a response to the above questions within 60 days. The text of the general allegation will be published along with the Working Group's post-session report and on its website, where also any response received by your Excellency's Government will be uploaded.

### **Morocco and Spain<sup>3</sup>**

12. Le Groupe de travail a reçu des informations des sources concernant les obstacles rencontrés dans la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration sur la protection de toutes les personnes contre les disparitions forcées (ci-après, «la Déclaration») en Espagne et au Maroc.

13. Cette allégation générale porte sur les disparitions de migrants, notamment de réfugiés et de demandeurs d'asile, dans le cadre d'opérations d'expulsions collectives vers le Maroc menées aux frontières de Ceuta et Melilla, enclaves sous juridiction espagnole, en l'absence de mesures préventives efficaces, notamment pour garantir le respect du principe de non-refoulement; ainsi que pour rechercher les victimes, enquêter et punir les responsables et garantir que les familles des victimes ont accès à l'information, peuvent être associées aux processus de recherche et d'enquête et disposent de mesures adéquates de soutien psychosocial et de réparation du préjudices subies.

14. Les informations reçues par le Groupe de travail font notamment référence à ce qui s'est passé le 24 juin 2022, lorsqu'environ 2000 migrants, pour la plupart d'origine soudanaise, sud-soudanaise et tchadienne, se sont approchés du périmètre frontalier entre le Maroc et l'Espagne pour tenter d'escalader les clôtures et auraient fait l'objet d'un usage

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<sup>3</sup> The general allegation was officially transmitted to the respective Governments in French and in Spanish.

excessif de la force de la part des autorités marocaines et espagnoles, présentes en permanence dans la zone. En raison du recours excessif à la force, 37 migrants ont perdu la vie et des dizaines d'autres ont été blessés. Au milieu de l'opération, des dizaines de migrants ont disparu. Beaucoup d'entre eux ont été vus pour la dernière fois en garde à vue par la police marocaine, à bord d'autobus se dirigeant vers le Maroc depuis la frontière. Selon des témoins, d'autres ont été emmenés dans des prisons marocaines. Au total, ont été enregistrés 77 migrants disparus.

15. Le Groupe de travail a été informé qu'en raison du nombre élevé de victimes, les autorités marocaines avaient creusé des fosses communes près du cimetière de Sidi Salem, à la périphérie de Nador. Les images satellites et les photographies aériennes semblent confirmer cette information.

16. De même, des sources fiables ont informé le Groupe de travail que, plus d'un an après les événements évoqués, sur les 77 migrants disparus, sept seulement avaient été identifiés et se trouvaient dans les prisons marocaines. Le sort et le lieu où se trouvent 70 migrants qui ont disparu à cette occasion restent inconnus. Le Groupe de travail a été informé des graves obstacles rencontrés par les proches de ces personnes pour accéder à l'information et pouvoir être associés aux processus de recherche de leurs proches et à l'enquête correspondante.

17. Le Groupe de travail rappelle que seule une enquête indépendante, impartiale et complète pourra permettre d'exclure une éventuelle disparition forcée. Malgré cela, et selon les informations reçues, à ce jour, les enquêtes menées par les autorités espagnoles et marocaines n'ont pas été efficaces et n'ont pas débouché sur une recherche permettant d'établir le sort et le lieu où se trouvent les 70 migrants disparus dans le cadre de ladite opération de police. De même, malgré leur implication dans l'opération, les autorités des deux États n'auraient pas coopéré ni apporté l'entraide nécessaire pour porter assistance aux victimes et, en cas de décès des 70 migrants disparus, pour leur exhumation, leur identification et la restitution des dépouilles aux proches.

18. En ce sens, le Groupe de travail a été informé qu'un an après les événements évoqués, aucun progrès significatif n'a été enregistré dans l'enquête sur les faits pour permettre d'identifier et, le cas échéant, de poursuivre et de sanctionner les responsables. En particulier, il a été rapporté qu'en décembre 2022, les autorités espagnoles ont décidé d'archiver le dossier parce qu'elles n'avaient pu identifier aucun des agents espagnols qui avaient jeté des pierres sur les migrants et n'avaient pas trouvé suffisamment de preuves d'actions criminelles de la part des autorités. À cet égard, le Groupe de travail souhaite rappeler les conclusions et recommandations figurant dans son Rapport thématique sur les disparitions forcées dans le contexte de la migration (par. 44, 45 et 50-51).

19. De manière générale, aucun des deux États n'aurait adopté de mesures pour rechercher les migrants disparus, compte tenu notamment de ce qui est établi par les Principes directeurs concernant la recherche de personnes disparues et, en particulier, par le Principe 9, qui exige que la recherche doit tenir compte de la vulnérabilité particulière des migrants. À cet égard, nous rappelons à nouveau le rapport thématique susmentionné sur les disparitions forcées dans le contexte de la migration (paragraphe 67 à 69).

20. De même, les mesures nécessaires n'ont pas été adoptées pour protéger les tombes clandestines et les lieux de sépulture mentionnés et empêcher des cas d'altération, de manipulation et de destruction des dépouilles mortelles. Les mesures nécessaires n'ont pas non plus été prises pour garantir que les exhumations soient effectuées conformément aux dispositions de la version révisée du Manuel des Nations Unies pour la prévention efficace des exécutions extrajudiciaires, arbitraires ou sommaires et les enquêtes efficaces sur celles-ci (le [Protocole du Minnesota relatif aux enquêtes sur les décès résultant potentiellement d'actes illégaux](#), 2016).

21. Enfin, comme indiqué au Groupe de travail, les autorités marocaines ont procédé à des autopsies et des tests ADN sur 23 corps transférés à la morgue de Nador le 24 juin 2022, qui pourraient être liés à certains des 70 migrants disparus. Toutefois, une seule personne aurait été identifiée grâce à des photographies et enterrée. En ce qui concerne les 22 autres corps, selon les informations reçues par le Groupe de travail, aucune mesure n'a été prise pour permettre aux personnes recherchant leurs proches disparus et susceptibles de se rendre au Maroc d'accéder à la morgue, ni de mesures pour faciliter l'accès au Maroc pour les

membres des familles qui ne peuvent pas voyager régulièrement, notamment en refusant de délivrer les visas demandés à cet effet par les personnes originaires du Soudan.

22. Dans ce cadre, le Groupe de travail a été informé qu'en mars 2023, les autorités marocaines ont demandé aux familles soudanaises de partager des échantillons d'ADN. L'existence du conflit armé au Soudan rend ce processus difficile. Selon les informations reçues, le Soudan et le Maroc n'ont pas mené de coopération diplomatique ou judiciaire significative pour faciliter l'enquête ou le transport des proches dans le but d'identifier les victimes.

23. En outre, selon les informations reçues par le Groupe de travail, les proches des 70 migrants disparus seraient confrontés à des obstacles extraordinaires pour pouvoir exercer leurs droits à la vérité et à la justice, ainsi que pour recevoir toute forme de soutien psychosocial, car la majorité n'est pas physiquement localisée au Maroc ou en Espagne et ne peut pas voyager régulièrement dans ces pays car ils n'arrivent pas à obtenir des visas humanitaires, se retrouvant ainsi dans l'impossibilité matérielle de faire valoir ses droits fondamentaux. Des sources ont informé le Groupe de travail que les demandes d'accès à l'information soumises par des organisations de la société civile aux autorités marocaines et espagnoles sont restées sans réponse. Le Groupe de travail rappelle à cet égard les conclusions et recommandations contenues dans son étude thématique sur les disparitions forcées et les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels.

24. Selon ce que les sources ont indiqué au Groupe de travail, les événements évoqués ici s'inscrivent dans une situation caractérisée par l'absence de mesures efficaces pour prévenir la disparition de migrants dans le cadre des opérations d'expulsions collectives vers le Maroc menées aux frontières de Ceuta et Melilla. De même, les faits évoqués mettent en évidence l'existence d'obstacles systématiques au respect du principe de non-refoulement par les deux États concernés. Ainsi, de ce qui a été examiné par le Groupe de travail, il ne ressort pas que dans le contexte décrit, le Maroc et l'Espagne aient mis en place des mécanismes efficaces pour garantir qu'ils n'expulsent pas ou ne refoulent pas des personnes vers d'autres États lorsqu'il y a des motifs raisonnables de croire que ces personnes risquent d'être victimes d'une disparition forcée.

25. Le Groupe de travail souhaite attirer l'attention des Gouvernements espagnol et marocain sur les dispositions 3, 7, 8, 13, 17, 19 de la Déclaration, qui sont directement liées aux allégations mentionnées.

26. Le Groupe de travail souhaite porter à l'attention des Gouvernements ses rapports thématiques sur les disparitions forcées dans le contexte de la migration et sur les normes et politiques publiques pour une enquête efficace sur les disparitions forcées, en particulier ses paragraphes 87 à 89. De même, sur les Principes directeurs concernant la recherche des personnes disparues du Comité des disparitions forcées, notamment les principes 2, 3, 5, 9, 12, 13 et 16.

27. Le Groupe de travail apprécierait la coopération et toute information que vos Gouvernements pourraient fournir sur les questions suivantes:

(a) Veuillez fournir toute information ou commentaire que les Gouvernements de Ses Excellences pourraient avoir concernant les allégations susmentionnées.

(b) Veuillez fournir des informations sur les mesures législatives, administratives, judiciaires ou autres visant à prévenir les actes de disparition forcée sur tout territoire relevant de vos juridictions respectives, et notamment aux frontières de Ceuta et Melilla.

(c) Veuillez fournir des informations sur les mesures adoptées pour garantir le plein respect du principe de non-refoulement – notamment dans le cadre des opérations d'expulsions collectives aux frontières de Ceuta et Melilla – et, en particulier, pour déterminer pour chaque personne l'existence de raisons fondées de croire qu'en cas d'expulsion ou de refoulement, ils courent le risque d'être victimes d'une disparition forcée.

(d) En ce qui concerne les événements du 24 juin 2022, veuillez rendre compte des mesures prises pour rechercher les 70 migrants, dont des réfugiés et des demandeurs d'asile, portés disparus. Veuillez en particulier rendre compte des mesures adoptées pour respecter les Principes directeurs concernant la recherche de personnes disparues et pour



garantir l'accès à l'information aux proches des personnes disparues et à ceux – individus ou associations de la société civile – qui les accompagnent, au regard de l'avancement des actions de recherche et des obstacles rencontrés.

(e) Veuillez rendre compte des mesures adoptées par les deux États pour coopérer et se fournir mutuellement toute l'entraide possible pour assister les victimes de disparition en relation avec les événements du 24 juin 2022, en particulier pour la recherche et la localisation des migrants portés disparus et, en cas de décès, pour procéder à l'exhumation, à l'identification et à la restitution de leurs restes. En particulier, veuillez bien vouloir illustrer comment cela se refléterait dans la situation des 22 corps actuellement à la morgue de Nador.

(f) Veuillez rendre compte des mesures prises pour enquêter sur les allégations de violations graves des droits humains, y compris de disparitions forcées, liées aux événements du 24 juin 2022, et visant à identifier et, le cas échéant, à poursuivre et à punir les responsables. Veuillez en particulier rendre compte des mesures adoptées pour garantir que les familles des victimes aient accès à l'information et puissent être associées aux processus d'enquête.

(g) Veuillez rendre compte des mesures prises par les deux États pour s'accorder mutuellement toute l'entraide judiciaire possible dans le cadre de toute procédure pénale relative aux événements du 24 juin 2022, y compris la fourniture de toutes les preuves nécessaires.

(h) Veuillez rendre compte des mesures adoptées pour garantir que les proches des 70 migrants disparus à la suite des événements du 24 juin 2022 reçoivent un soutien psychosocial et une réparation pour les dommages subis, sans préjudice de leur lieu de résidence.

28. De même, dans le cas du Gouvernement du Maroc, des informations sont demandées aussi sur les questions suivantes:

(a) Veuillez rendre compte des mesures prises pour protéger les tombes et les lieux de sépulture du cimetière de Sidi Salem et de la périphérie de Nador et pour procéder à des exhumations et des identifications conformes aux dispositions du Protocole du Minnesota relatif aux enquêtes sur les décès potentiellement illégaux et informer les membres de la famille et leurs représentants des résultats ou des obstacles rencontrés.

(b) Veuillez rendre compte des mesures prises pour identifier, respecter et rapatrier les 22 corps conservés à la morgue de Nador.

(c) Veuillez fournir des informations sur les mesures prises pour permettre l'entrée à la morgue de Nador aux personnes recherchant leurs proches disparus et susceptibles de se rendre au Maroc, et pour faciliter l'accès au Maroc – par exemple, par la délivrance de visas humanitaires –aux membres de la famille qui ne peuvent pas voyager régulièrement; ou faciliter le prélèvement d'échantillons d'ADN dans les pays d'origine des migrants disparus et leur comparaison.

29. Le Groupe de travail demande aux Gouvernements espagnol et marocain de répondre aux questions ci-dessus. Dans le cas du Gouvernement espagnol, une réponse est demandée dans un délai de 60 jours.

30. Toutefois, dans le cas du Gouvernement marocain, compte tenu du tragique tremblement de terre qui a frappé le pays dans la nuit du 8 au 9 septembre, des graves pertes humaines et matérielles et de l'urgence dans laquelle se trouvent les autorités, le Groupe de travail souhaite exprimer sa plus sincère solidarité et, pour ce qui concerne la réponse aux questions précédentes, un délai de 120 jours est accordé.

31. Cette allégation générale sera publiée avec le rapport d'après-session du Groupe de travail et sur son site Web, où toute réponse reçue par vos Gouvernements sera également publiée.

## Pakistan

32. The Working Group received information from credible sources concerning reported obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (“the Declaration”) in Pakistan.

33. The Working Group received information that the cases of enforced disappearance officially registered by the Ministry of Interior and its Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance (COIED) from 2011 amounted to 8701.

34. The Working Group noted with concern that the names published in full on the website are not those of the disappeared persons, but rather those of relatives and/or persons who reported the disappearance. This choice raises security and privacy concerns, as it may expose these persons to reprisals and harassment, as well as attempts of extortion.

35. Amidst increasing cases of reported enforced disappearances perpetrated by, or with the participation of, the police, military, intelligence agencies, and paramilitary forces, new legislative measures have been introduced by the Government, allegedly compounding this situation. It is reported that these measures, which were introduced recently without adequate consultation with the relevant stakeholders, and through a fast-track process, could violate several provisions contained in the Declaration.

36. In this regard, the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023, adds new and vague provisions to the Official Secrets Act of 1923, which may provide security and intelligence agencies with unfettered powers to enter a place or search a person by force, if necessary; and to seize any items deemed susceptible or evidentiary of the commission of a crime under the Act.

37. Moreover, amendments to the Pakistan Army Act of 1952 adopted by the National Assembly in August 2023 reportedly add greater punishment for any person, military or civilian, revealing information about military personnel. Such involvement of the military in civilian matters could violate the right of victims to justice, in contravention with the State’s obligation to ensure that victims have the right to complain before a competent judicial authority and the corresponding judicial process to be undertaken by competent ordinary courts. Similarly, this raises concern with regard to the prohibition of the adoption of measures that might have the effect of exempting persons accused of enforced disappearance from any criminal proceedings or sanction.

38. The Working Group also registered the concerns of reliable sources regarding the exclusion of all relevant stakeholders – including families, human rights organizations, or lawyers who act on their behalf – from meaningful consultations on legislative developments. Language is reportedly another barrier to genuine participation, as the majority of the families of disappeared persons attempting to register their complaints have difficulties with the English language, which is the primary medium of communication in State institutions.

39. According to the sources, from 2006 to 2022, there was a high number of enforced disappearances in Pakistan concerning ethnic minorities in Pakistan, including Baloch, Pashtoon, Punjabi, and Sindhi. The information received by the Working Group indicated the following number of victims of enforced disappearances: 711 from Punjab, 188 from Sindh, and 79 from Balochistan, mostly among members of the opposition political activists, journalists, and human rights defenders.

40. Additionally, the sources highlighted a climate of impunity and ineffectiveness in providing remedies, as authorities may not be sufficiently dedicated to investigating cases of enforced disappearance and holding perpetrators accountable, especially in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan. The information received also shows the lack of effective measures to guarantee the non-recurrence of enforced disappearance.

41. The Working Group was also informed that, during a demonstration in Lahore in May 2023, several women and political activists were arrested. According to the sources, 19 women were initially detained, and, subsequently, 14 of them were released, while the fate and whereabouts of five of them are still unknown and they have not been presented in court or before any competent authority.

42. Furthermore, the Working Group received a number of reports concerning cases of threats, reprisals, and harassment against families of disappeared persons and human rights defenders, including civil society organizations and lawyers who work on issues related to enforced disappearance.

43. The Working Group would like to bring to the Government's attention articles 2, 3, 7, 10, 13, 16, 18 and 19 of the Declaration, which are directly related to the present allegations.

44. The Working Group would be grateful for your Excellency's Government's cooperation and observations on the following questions:

45. Please provide any information or comment that your Excellency's Government may have on the above-mentioned allegations.

(a) Please provide information on investigations, search activities, and judicial processes initiated by the COIED and the outcome thereon. Please also provide information on the witness protection program available as well as other relevant measures to protect victims and witnesses in the context of the work of COIED.

(b) Please provide information on any measures taken to ensure that the right to privacy of relatives of disappeared and persons with a legitimate interest in participating in official investigations and search activities is protected in consonance with article 13 of the Declaration.

(c) Please provide detailed information on how the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill 2023 and the amendments to the Pakistan Army Act of 1954 would align to your Excellency's Government obligation pursuant to international law and, in particular, articles 13, 16 and 18 of the Declaration.

(d) Please provide detailed information on the guarantees in place to prevent enforced disappearances in the context of manifestations and protests. Moreover, kindly provide details on the measures taken to search for the five human rights defenders reportedly disappeared in the context of the manifestations that took place in Lahore in May 2023.

(e) Please provide information on how your Excellency's Government ensures the civil and political rights of ethnic minorities, particularly with regard to the right to life and the prevention of enforced disappearance.

46. The Working Group requests your Excellency's Government to provide a response to the above questions within 60 days. The text of the general allegation will be published along with the Working Group's post-session report and on its website, where also any response received by your Excellency's Government will be uploaded.

## Annex III

### Press releases and statements

1. On 30 May 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release urging Belarus to release all detainees in the country detained on spurious charges for exercising their fundamental rights to peaceful assembly, association, and expression.<sup>1</sup>
2. On 2 June 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release call for greater transparency, oversight, and regulation to address the negative impacts of new and emerging digital tools and online spaces on human rights.<sup>2</sup>
3. On 19 June 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a statement calling for the urgent release of 16 Bahá'ís abducted by *de facto* authorities in Yemen on 25 May 2023 who were peacefully gathered in a private residence to elect the religious community's national governing body when Houthi gunmen wearing balaclavas suddenly stormed the meeting.<sup>3</sup>
4. On 19 June 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms and the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, issued a press release urging the General Assembly to establish a human rights body to meaningfully address the tragedy of missing and forcibly disappeared persons in Syria.<sup>4</sup>
5. On 4 July 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release urging Tajikistan to show genuine commitment to improving the situation of human rights defenders in the country and expressed concern about convictions.<sup>5</sup>
6. On 13 July 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release condemning Ethiopia's summary expulsion of hundreds of Eritreans at the end of June. They called on the authorities to immediately halt any further deportations and put an end to the continuing reports of arbitrary detention of Eritrean refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants.<sup>6</sup>
7. On 21 July 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release expressing serious concern about the situation of migrants and refugees in Libya who were allegedly held captive and tortured, subsequently released by Libyan authorities, and transferred to unknown places of detention, where they are reportedly at risk of further serious human rights violations, including acts tantamount to enforced disappearance.<sup>7</sup>
8. On 26 July 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release warning that a court ruling in Trinidad and Tobago declaring that the 1951 Refugee Convention does not apply to the twin-island State, could have grave implications for people seeking international protection and the lives of migrants.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Belarus must release all detainees held on political grounds and protect their rights: UN experts | OHCHR.

<sup>2</sup> New and emerging technologies need urgent oversight and robust transparency: UN experts | OHCHR.

<sup>3</sup> Yemen: UN experts call for release of disappeared Bahá'ís | OHCHR.

<sup>4</sup> Syria: UN experts urge General Assembly to address plight of the missing and forcibly disappeared | OHCHR.

<sup>5</sup> Tajikistan: UN experts deplore criminal proceedings against human rights defenders | OHCHR,

<sup>6</sup> UN experts urge Ethiopia to halt mass deportation of Eritreans | OHCHR.

<sup>7</sup> Libya: UN experts alarmed at reports of trafficking in persons, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture of migrants and refugees | OHCHR.

<sup>8</sup> Trinidad and Tobago: Court ruling on deportations will gravely impact refugees and migrants, UN experts say | OHCHR.

9. On 11 August 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release calling on Lao People's Democratic Republic to end the arbitrary detention of lawyer and human rights defender Lu Siwei and permit him to continue his journey to reunite with his family.<sup>9</sup>

10. On 17 August 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release expressing alarm at reports of brutal and widespread use of rape and other forms of sexual violence by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) during the four-month-old internal armed conflict in the Republic of Sudan and called for an end to the ongoing violence.<sup>10</sup>

11. On 29 August 2023, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Working Group, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Working Group on Death Penalty, Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Representatives of Indonesia and Malaysia to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, commemorating the international Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances jointly called on all States to make pledges to promote justice for all victims of enforced disappearances without delay, and to ratify international and regional instruments on enforced disappearances.<sup>11</sup>

12. On 30 August 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms and the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, endorsed a press release which warned that women human rights defenders searching for forcibly disappeared loved ones in Mexico are facing intimidation, attacks and even violent death.<sup>12</sup>

13. On 14 September 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms and the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, issued a press release welcoming the decision by a court in Switzerland to put a former member of a Belarusian paramilitary unit on trial for his alleged involvement in the enforced disappearance of three opposition leaders in 1999.<sup>13</sup>

14. On 15 September 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release warning against the forcible repatriation of Mr. Ravil Mingazov from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the Russian Federation, calling for an immediate end to the harmful cycle of extended and arbitrary detention against a former detainee.<sup>14</sup>

15. On 18 September 2023, the Working Group issued a media advisory announcing its 131st Session would examine more than 3,000 cases from 36 countries.<sup>15</sup>

16. On 19 September 2023, the Working Group, issued a press release on its thematic study highlighting the ambivalent relationship between new technologies and enforced disappearances both to hinder the work of human rights defenders and relatives of disappeared people, and to intimidate or harass them. While on the other hand, they can offer cost-effective solutions that have proved useful in locating the disappeared, documenting the crime and promoting accountability.<sup>16</sup>

17. On 19 September 2023, the Human Rights Council issued a statement about the interactive dialogue with the Working Group, which stressed the statement of the Chair, that

<sup>9</sup> Lao must immediately release Chinese lawyer Lu Siwei and prevent his imminent deportation: UN experts | OHCHR.

<sup>10</sup> UN experts alarmed by reported widespread use of rape and sexual violence against women and girls by RSF in Sudan | OHCHR.

<sup>11</sup> Enforced disappearance: UN and regional human rights experts call for justice for victims without delay | OHCHR.

<sup>12</sup> Mexico: UN experts outraged by attacks and killings targeting women human rights defenders | OHCHR.

<sup>13</sup> Switzerland: UN experts welcome landmark trial on enforced disappearances in Belarus | OHCHR.

<sup>14</sup> UAE and USA: UN experts warn against refoulement of ex-Guantánamo detainee and urge his immediate release | OHCHR.

<sup>15</sup> Enforced disappearance: UN expert group to review over 3,000 cases from 36 countries | OHCHR.

<sup>16</sup> UN experts' study on new technologies and enforced disappearances exposes risks and opportunities | OHCHR.

no exceptional circumstances whatsoever may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance.<sup>17</sup>

18. On 22 September 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release pointing to a pattern of serious human rights violations targeting human rights defenders in Lao PDR, including summary executions and enforced disappearances.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Human Rights Council Hears that There Is Still a Long Way Ahead in the Fight Against Enforced Disappearances and that Certain Climate Mitigation Technologies Are Emerging that Could Exacerbate Toxic Pollution | OHCHR.

<sup>18</sup> Lao PDR: UN expert calls out alarming pattern of violations against human rights defenders | OHCHR.

## Annex IV

### Intersessional activities of the members

1. On 30 May 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez participated online in the workshop “Experiencias del Sistema Universal de Derechos Humanos con miras a la justicia transicional y las empresas” organised by Centro de Información sobre Empresas y Derechos Humanos. The intervention is available at <https://www.ciedhcolombia.org/onu>.
2. On 31 May, Ms. Aua Baldé took part in an event on enforced disappearances and human rights protection organized by Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinós) with the support of several entities, including the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office in Brazil.
3. On 24 June, Ms Aua Baldé participated in Paris in the conference “Uruguay 1973-2023: 50 ans après le coup d’Etat, l’impunité menace la démocratie” organized by Donde Están Francia.
4. On 3rd and 4th of July 2023, Ms Aua Baldé participated in Maputo in the 2nd edition of the training in International Human Rights Law in Conflict were she delivered, inter alia, a lecture on Enforced Disappearance, upon the invitation by René Cassin Foundation.
5. On 5 July 2023, Ms. Grażyna Baranowska gave the [interview](#) to EFE about enforced disappearances in Syria.
6. On 12 July 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez participated in a workshop with over 35 lawyers and members of NGOs working on the USA-Mexico border.
7. On 21 July 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez participated in the Inaugural Forum “Access to Inter-American Justice at the @IACHR”. The video of the forum is available [here](#). During her academic visit, she also met with authorities in Washington D.C.
8. On 25 July 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez held an online meeting with civil society organizations from Cuba.
9. On 27 and 28 July 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez participated in Panamá in the Regional meeting on migration, trends in Latin America. At her academic visit, she also met with authorities, families, and civil society organizations at Panamá.
10. On 14 August 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez met with families, institutions, and civil society organizations at her academic visit to Colombia.
11. On 30 August 2023, Ms. Aua Baldé took part in the Seminar to Commemorate the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances organized by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in Addis Ababa.
12. On 31 August 2023, Ms. Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez made an intervention at the forum “Desaparición forzada en Mesoamérica: crimen continuado e impunidad” organized by Asociación Pro-Búsqueda, from El Salvador.
13. On 1 September 2023, Ms. Angkhana Neelapaijit spoke about the work of the Working Group, its recommendations for different stakeholders, and the situation of enforced disappearance in Bangladesh in an interview with the Daily Star. The interview is available [here](#).
14. On 11 September 2023, Ms. Gabriella Citroni delivered online a public lecture on “The Experience of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and Emerging Trends”, upon invitation by the Centre for Human Rights Studies, School of Law, RV University (Bangalore, India).
15. On 8 August 2023 Ms. Gabriella Citroni participated online in an international seminar on “Búsqueda y justicia ante las desapariciones”, organized by Grupo de Trabajo por las personas desaparecidas en El Salvador. The intervention is available [here](#).

16. On 19 September 2023, Ms. Grażyna Baranowska [commented](#) on the process of a former member of a Belarusian paramilitary unit accused of forcibly disappearing three opposition leaders in 1999.

17. During the 131st Session, the Working Group members were interviewed for an ECHO magazine issue which was published in October 2023. The interview is available [here](#).

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