

**Human Rights Council****Fifty-seventh session**

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development****Enforced or involuntary disappearance****Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary
Disappearances****Summary*

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances was established pursuant to resolution 20 (XXXVI) of the Commission on Human Rights. The Working Group's mandate was most recently extended by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 54/14.

The mandate of the Working Group is to assist families of disappeared persons to ascertain the fate and whereabouts of their disappeared relatives, to assist States and monitor their compliance with their obligations deriving from the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and to provide States with assistance in the prevention and eradication of enforced disappearances.

Since its inception in 1980, the Working Group has transmitted a total of 61,626 cases to 115 States. The number of cases under active consideration that have not yet been clarified, closed or discontinued stands at 48,619 in a total of 100 States. During the reporting period, 199 cases were clarified.

The present report reflects the activities of the Working Group, and the communications and cases examined by it, from 13 May 2023 to 10 May 2024.

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances expresses its serious concern about its inability, with the present limited financial resources and in the context of the ongoing liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations, to carry out the various tasks assigned to it by the Human Rights Council.

* The annexes to the present report are reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.



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I. Introduction

1. The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the first United Nations human rights thematic mechanism constituted with a universal mandate, was established by the Commission on Human Rights pursuant to its resolution 20 (XXXVI). The mandate was most recently extended by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 54/14.
2. The primary task of the Working Group is to assist families in determining the fate and whereabouts of their relatives who have reportedly been disappeared. In that humanitarian capacity, the Working Group serves as a channel of communication between family members of disappeared persons or other sources reporting cases of disappearances, and the Governments concerned.
3. Following the adoption of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (General Assembly resolution 47/133), the Working Group was entrusted with monitoring the progress of States in fulfilling their obligations deriving from the Declaration. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 7/12, encouraged the Working Group to provide assistance to States in the implementation of the Declaration and of existing international rules.
4. The present report contains information on the Working Group's activities, including communications transmitted and cases examined by the Working Group, from 13 May 2023 to 10 May 2024. A summary of the decisions on individual cases taken by the Working Group and of communications transmitted to the States concerned during the reporting period is presented in section III. Overall statistics concerning cases transmitted between 1980 and 2024 are contained in annex III.
5. Since its inception in 1980, the Working Group has transmitted a total of 61,626 cases to 115 States. The number of cases under active consideration that have not yet been clarified, closed or discontinued stands at 48,619 in a total of 100 States. During the reporting period, 199 cases were clarified.
6. In September 2019, the Working Group announced that it would start documenting violations tantamount to enforced disappearance perpetrated by non-State actors exercising government-like functions or de facto control over a territory and population.¹ Since then, the Working Group has transmitted a total of 155 cases to seven non-State actors, namely to the de facto authorities in Sana'a (92), Hamas (22), the Libyan National Army (13), the Restoration Council of Shan State (3), the self-proclaimed "Donetsk people's republic" (8), the Syrian Democratic Council (in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic) (12), and the Taliban in Afghanistan (4). The number of cases tantamount to enforced disappearance under active consideration that have not yet been clarified, closed or discontinued stands at 75. During the reporting period, the Working Group clarified seven cases tantamount to enforced disappearance perpetrated by non-State actors based on information submitted by sources, concerning Hamas (3) and the Libyan National Army (4).²

II. Activities of the Working Group from 13 May 2023 to 10 May 2024

A. Activities

7. The activities reported here were carried out by the Working Group amid the liquidity crisis faced by the United Nations, which is severely affecting the Organization as a whole, including special procedures. Because of the liquidity crisis, special procedures, including

¹ [A/HRC/42/40](#), para. 94. In doing so, the Working Group acts pursuant to its humanitarian mandate to address a growing protection gap affecting disappeared individuals and their relatives who have been denied information on the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones.

² Cases transmitted to non-State actors 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 by the Working Group or the United Nations.

the Working Group, are not able to carry out all their mandated activities. Special procedures are therefore facing unprecedented challenges to functioning properly and are not ensured the resources they need to discharge their respective mandates effectively. It is noteworthy that those mostly affected by this situation are the individuals who seek assistance from special procedures mechanisms.

8. In the context described, the Working Group is therefore especially thankful for the continuous support, including through voluntary contributions, provided by donor States, notably France.

9. The Working Group recalls that it is the sole mechanism with a universal mandate to assist victims of enforced disappearance, and maintains its unwavering commitment towards victims and will do its best to deliver on its mandate effectively. However, realistically, this will not be possible if Member States do not fulfil without any further delay their obligation to transmit their assessed contributions in full, and if no action is taken to find a lasting solution and to ensure sustainability in the years to come. The Working Group therefore resolutely calls on Member States to meet their financial obligations in full and in a predictable and timely manner. The Working Group also calls on the Secretary-General and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide the Working Group with all the resources necessary to enable it to fully carry out its mandate.

10. During the period under review, the Working Group held three sessions: the 131st session, from 18 to 27 September 2023,³ the 132nd session, from 29 January to 2 February 2024,⁴ and the 133rd session, from 6 to 10 May 2024.⁵ The reports on the sessions should be considered as complementary to the present report.

11. On the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, 30 August 2023, the Working Group released a joint statement⁶ together with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the Chairperson of the Working Group on Death Penalty, Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings in Africa, of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; and the representatives of Indonesia and Malaysia to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, calling on all States to provide effective access to justice for all victims of enforced disappearance.

12. On 19 September 2023, Aua Baldé, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group, presented the annual report for the period from 13 May 2022 to 12 May 2023, and its addenda, to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-fourth session, and participated in the interactive dialogue with States.

13. During the 131st session, the Working Group reappointed, for a one-year term, Ms. Baldé as Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group and Gabriella Citroni as Vice-Chair.

14. On 16 October 2023, Ms. Baldé addressed the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session and participated in the interactive dialogue with Member States.

15. The Working Group expresses its gratitude to the Government of Poland for hosting the 132nd session of the Working Group, in Warsaw. The Working Group also welcomes the invitation from the Government of Thailand to host the following remote session in Bangkok, which is scheduled to take place from 28 April to 2 May 2025.

16. Following the Working Group's decision at its 128th session to conduct, during the period under review, a thematic study on the issue of enforced disappearances and elections, the Working Group held consultations in September 2023 on the margins of its 131st session and launched a call for inputs⁷ in November 2023, to inform the report. The Working Group

³ See [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#).

⁴ See [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#).

⁵ See [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#).

⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/disappearances/statements/20230829-statement-IntDayDisappearances-ced-wgeid-EN.pdf>.

⁷ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-contributions-thematic-study-working-group-enforced-or-involuntary>.

is thankful to the experts who participated in its consultations and for the submissions received from Member States, as well as from individuals and organizations, following its call for inputs. The thematic report is presented as an addendum to the present report.⁸

17. The Working Group decided to devote its next thematic report to the topic of enforced disappearances in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and the environment, and has commenced discussions and will hold consultations in September 2024, following with a call for inputs to inform the report.

18. During the reporting period, the Working Group advanced in the discussions concerning ongoing initiatives, including its study on universal jurisdiction and enforced disappearance, and the joint statement on so-called “short-term” enforced disappearances that is to be adopted together with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

19. Following on from its previous thematic report on new technologies and enforced disappearances,⁹ during the reporting period, the Working Group engaged, with the support of a consultant, in the development of a simulation case study to illustrate the step-by-step process to investigate a case of enforced disappearance through the use of new technologies, with the objective of showing the implications, both in terms of advantages and existing obstacles. The outcomes of this project will be made available and be publicly presented in the near future.

20. During the reporting period, all the members of the Working Group carried out a number of activities connected to enforced disappearance, which included participating in conferences, consultations, seminars, training events, workshops and lectures, organized by Governments, academia and civil society organizations.¹⁰

B. Meetings

21. During the period under review, the Working Group held meetings with representatives of the Governments of Algeria, Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). A number of informal meetings were also held with representatives from various States. The Working Group expresses its appreciation to those Governments for the meetings and emphasizes the importance of cooperation and dialogue.

C. Communications

22. During the reporting period, the Working Group transmitted 998 new cases of enforced disappearance to 37 States.

23. The Working Group transmitted 701 of the above-mentioned cases under the urgent procedure to 21 States.

24. During the reporting period, the Working Group transmitted 83 cases tantamount to enforced disappearance to de facto authorities in Afghanistan (1), Libya (6) and Yemen (47), in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic (13), and in the State of Palestine (16).¹¹

⁸ [A/HRC/57/54/Add.7](#).

⁹ [A/HRC/54/22/Add.5](#), para. 6.

¹⁰ [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), annex IV; [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), annex IV; and [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), annex IV.

¹¹ The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to de facto authorities in Afghanistan, Libya, the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, and in the State of Palestine, 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.

25. The Working Group clarified 199 cases in 22 States. Of the 199 cases, 122 were clarified on the basis of information provided by Governments and 77 on the basis of information provided by sources.

26. During the reporting period, the Working Group transmitted two prompt intervention letters addressing allegations of harassment and/or threats to human rights defenders and relatives of disappeared persons in Sri Lanka and Türkiye.

27. The Working Group also transmitted, together with other special procedure mandate holders, 24 joint urgent appeals concerning persons who had been arrested, detained, abducted or otherwise deprived of their liberty or who had been forcibly disappeared or were at risk of disappearance, in Algeria (1), Belarus (2), Belgium (1), Ethiopia (1), Guatemala (1), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (5), Israel (1), Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Malaysia (1), Saudi Arabia (2), Sudan (1), United Arab Emirates (1) and United States of America (3), and to "other actors" (3).

28. The Working Group transmitted, together with other special procedure mandate holders, 74 joint allegation letters, concerning Angola (1), Argentina (2), Burkina Faso (1), Canada (1), China (2), Colombia (1), Costa Rica (1), Cuba (1), Egypt (2), Greece (1), Honduras (1), India (1), Indonesia (2), Israel (1), Kazakhstan (1), Lao People's Democratic Republic (1), Mexico (5), Nepal (2), Nicaragua (1), Niger (1), Pakistan (1), Panama (1), Peru (2), Russian Federation (2), Sao Tome and Principe (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Sri Lanka (3), Syrian Arab Republic (1), Thailand (1), Tunisia (1), Türkiye (1), United Arab Emirates (2), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1), United Republic of Tanzania (1), United States of America (1), Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (3), Yemen (1) and Zimbabwe (1), and "other actors" (19).

29. The Working Group transmitted three other letters, concerning bills, laws, policies and practices that do not comply with international human rights law and standards, to Mali (1), Spain (1) and Uruguay (1).

30. The Working Group transmitted eleven general allegations relating to obstacles in the implementation of the Declaration, to the Governments of Brazil (1), China (1), Ecuador (1), Egypt (1), Iraq (1), Libya (1), Nicaragua (1), Pakistan (1), the Russian Federation (1) and the United States of America (1), and one joint general allegation on Morocco and Spain. The Working Group wishes to thank the Governments of Brazil, the United States of America and Morocco for their replies to the general allegations.¹²

D. Country visits

31. During the reporting period, the Working Group carried out a visit to the African Union's judicial and human rights organs and other subregional bodies from 21 to 26 October 2023. The report of the visit is contained in an addendum to the present report.¹³

32. During the reporting period, the Working Group requested visits to Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Malaysia, Maldives, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United States of America. In addition to these new requests, the Working Group reiterated its requests to visit Algeria, Cameroon, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Lithuania, Ghana, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Thailand and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

33. During the reporting period, the Working Group received positive responses from the Governments of Lithuania, Maldives and the Republic of Korea, inviting the Working Group to undertake country visits. The Working Group extends its appreciation to the aforementioned Governments for the invitations and expects that the visits will take place between 2024 and 2026. However, for this to happen, the liquidity crisis must be solved, in

¹² See replies to general allegations at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-disappearances/sessions-working-group>.

¹³ [A/HRC/57/54/Add.1](#).

particular by ensuring the Working Group's full mandated entitlements, to carry out two country visits per year.

34. The Working Group invites all States that have received a request for a visit by the Working Group to respond favourably to it, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 21/4.¹⁴

E. Follow-up reports and other procedures

35. At its 130th session, the Working Group postponed the consideration of the follow-up reports on the implementation of recommendations made following its visits to Kyrgyzstan¹⁵ and Tajikistan¹⁶ conducted in 2019.¹⁷ During the reporting period, the Working Group undertook the follow-up assessment, and expresses its thanks to the Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and to all the stakeholders who submitted information for its consideration. The reports are available as addenda to the present report.¹⁸

36. Cognizant of the prevailing circumstances in Ukraine, the Working Group decided, at its 131st session, to further postpone its follow-up report on the visit to Ukraine¹⁹ that it had carried out in June 2018.²⁰ The Working Group remains actively engaged and closely monitors the matter and expresses its hopes that it will be in a position to assess the implementation of its recommendations in the near future.

F. Technical cooperation

37. In November 2022, the Working Group accepted a formal request for technical cooperation received from the Government of Chile, through the Under-Secretary for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. The technical cooperation concerns the implementation of the national plan for searching for victims of enforced disappearance during the dictatorship. The technical cooperation involves providing recommendations, sharing best practices and ensuring adherence to international standards. During the reporting period, the Working Group held meetings on the technical assistance activities with State officials on 1 February 2024, and with the Minister of Justice, Luis Cordero, on 8 March 2024.

38. In October 2023, the Search Unit for Missing Persons in Colombia and the Working Group formalized a technical cooperation agreement based on: (a) forensic standards for searching for victims of enforced disappearance and for the recovery and identification of remains; (b) cross-border and transnational searches based on the experiences in Colombia and Latin American countries, as well as the adoption of strategies, protocols and memorandums of understanding; and (c) training, with the support of international experts, on the following topics: (i) the use of search technologies and applications based on the experience in different countries; (ii) data analysis through artificial intelligence, open source platforms and mathematical models, inter alia; (iii) multidisciplinary analysis for searching for victims of enforced disappearance; (iv) methods for the identification of remains; (v) the examination and location of sites of forensic interest; and (vi) addressing complex scenarios of forensic interest.

39. The Working Group also undertook a technical assistance visit to Nairobi, Kenya, from 17 to 19 April 2024, to provide a capacity-building training to 20 officials from 10 different line ministries and agencies, including the Independent Policing Oversight Authority and Internal Affairs Unit, an internal oversight body within the National Police

¹⁴ See annex I below for country visit requests and invitations extended.

¹⁵ [A/HRC/45/13/Add.2](#).

¹⁶ [A/HRC/45/13/Add.1](#).

¹⁷ [A/HRC/WGEID/130/1](#), paras. 44 and 71.

¹⁸ [A/HRC/57/54/Add.2](#) and [A/HRC/57/54/Add.3](#).

¹⁹ [A/HRC/42/40/Add.2](#).

²⁰ [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), para. 13.

Service. The Working Group also met with civil society organizations that provide support to victims of enforced disappearance in Kenya.

40. During the reporting period, the Working Group continued to act as an observer in the context of a multidisciplinary and interinstitutional commission set up pursuant to a decision of the Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico, that is in charge of searching for two disappeared persons and the identification of those responsible.²¹

²¹ Special commission for the search for Edmundo Reyes Amaya and Gabriel Alberto Cruz, set up in accordance with an order of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation dated 4 August 2022.

	Number of outstanding cases at the beginning of the reporting period	Number of cases transmitted to the Government during the reporting period					Number of cases clarified during the reporting period by:	Number of cases of possible clarification by the Government (six-month rule)	Number of outstanding cases at the end of the reporting period	Number of communications sent during the reporting period					Number of communications received during the reporting period				
		Urgent procedures	Standard cases	Government	Sources	Number of cases of possible clarification by the Government (six-month rule)				Prompt intervention letter	Urgent appeal	Allegation letter	General allegation	Other letter	Response to prompt intervention letter	Response to urgent appeal	Response to allegation letter	Response to general allegation	Response to other letter
Indonesia	178		10					188			2						1		
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	569		4		1	1		572		5						4			
Iraq	16 428							16 428				1							
Israel	3	1	7					11		1	1								
Kazakhstan	1							1			1								
Kenya	90	1						91											
Lao People's Democratic Republic	6	2	1		1			8		1	1								
Lebanon	311	4			1			314											
Libya ^b	54		2					56				1							
Luxembourg	0							0		1					1				
Malaysia	4	5		1				8		1					1				
Mali	0							0					1						
Mauritania	6		3					9											
Mexico	357			2		1		355			5						4		
Morocco	153		2					155				1			1				
Nepal	480							480			2						1		
Nicaragua	103	4	1	1	1			106		1	1								
Niger	0							0		1									
Pakistan	843	30	87	20	6			934		1	1								
Panama	0		1					1			1						1		
Peru	2 361							2 361			2						2		
Philippines	590	2						592											

	Number of outstanding cases at the beginning of the reporting period	Number of cases transmitted to the Government during the reporting period					Number of cases clarified during the reporting period by:	Number of cases of possible clarification by the Government (six-month rule)	Number of outstanding cases at the end of the reporting period	Number of communications sent during the reporting period					Number of communications received during the reporting period				
		Urgent procedures	Standard cases	Government	Sources					Prompt intervention letter	Urgent appeal	Allegation letter	General allegation	Other letter	Response to prompt intervention letter	Response to urgent appeal	Response to allegation letter	Response to general allegation	Response to other letter
United States of America	4							4		3	1	1						1	
Uruguay	19							19						1					1
Uzbekistan	11			4				7											
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	28	16	1		6			39			3								
Yemen ^f	29							29			1							1	
Zimbabwe	5							5			1							1	
State of Palestine ^g	4							4											

^a During the reporting period, a total of one case was transmitted by the Working Group under its urgent action procedure to the Taliban. The Working Group also transmitted one allegation letter to the Taliban and received no response. This case and the allegation letter are not counted in the statistics of Afghanistan. The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to the Taliban 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.

^b During the reporting period, a total of six cases were transmitted and four cases were clarified by the Working Group to the Libyan National Army. These cases are not counted in the statistics of Libya. The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to the Libyan National Army 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.

^c The Working Group discontinued one case concerning Spain, in accordance with its methods of work.

^d During the reporting period, a total of 13 cases were transmitted by the Working Group under its standard procedure to the Syrian Democratic Council. These cases are not counted in the statistics of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to the Syrian Democratic Council do not in any way imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country, city or area, or of its authorities.

^e Please note that the total number of outstanding cases at the beginning of the reporting period is reflected as 2 due to a clerical error; see [A/HRC/54/22](#), annex II.

^f During the reporting period, a total of 47 cases were transmitted by the Working Group to the de facto authorities in Sana'a. These cases are not counted in the statistics of Yemen. The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to the de facto authorities in Sana'a 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.

^g During the reporting period, 10 cases were transmitted by the Working Group to Hamas under its urgent procedure and six cases under its standard procedure. The Working Group also considered clarified three cases based on information receive by sources, during the reporting period. These cases were not counted in the statistics of the State of Palestine. The Working Group stresses that the cases addressed to Hamas 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.

IV. Enforced disappearances and elections

41. In this thematic study submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 54/14, the Working Group examines the interrelation between enforced disappearances and elections. It analyses the key features of enforced disappearances in the electoral context, as well as the accountability challenges and the preventive measures that can be implemented to address this phenomenon, concluding with recommendations.

42. The thematic study is informed by cases received by the Working Group, reports by the United Nations and other international organizations, information received from the expert consultations held on the sidelines of the 130th and 131st sessions of the Working Group, and through submissions provided in response to the call for inputs issued in November 2023.

43. The Working Group notes that while elections are one of the fundamental pillars of democracy, in many instances they take place amid a growing decline in the rule of law and democratic principles, with significant impact on the enjoyment of human rights including the fundamental right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance.

44. The Working Group emphasizes that although enforced disappearances in the electoral context remain somehow invisible and underreported, such tactics are employed by States not just to suppress political dissent and intimidate the opposition, but also to instil fear among voters, thereby compromising the democratic process. The consequences of the practice of enforced disappearance in the electoral context are significant and far-reaching, as these acts not only cause direct harm to the disappeared person and their relatives and communities, but also create an environment of fear and disengagement among the population, tainting the electoral process and undermining democracy.

45. The Working Group notes that the impunity that is generally linked to the practice of enforced disappearance is further exacerbated in electoral contexts. The challenges surrounding the investigation and prosecution of enforced disappearances are complex and multifaceted, ranging from legislative loopholes to lack of political will and the compromised independence of investigative, prosecutorial and judicial bodies. However, establishing effective accountability mechanisms for enforced disappearances in the electoral context is of paramount importance in order to end the cycles of impunity, to ensure justice for victims and to build strong and long-lasting foundations for democratic societies and free and fair elections.

46. The Working Group further notes that oversight mechanisms, such as election commissions, national human rights commissions and national and international election monitoring bodies can play a significant role in preventing enforced disappearances in the context of elections. Through their involvement, these bodies can maintain neutrality and enhance transparency, and, as such, positively influence the conduct of elections and serve as a deterrent to electoral violence, including the practice of enforced disappearance. The Working Group also believes that early warning mechanisms can play a significant role in preventing enforced disappearances by identifying potential risks and triggers for electoral violence. These mechanisms involve the collection and analysis of data, the creation of early warning alerts, and the coordination of prevention and mitigation activities.

47. In the thematic study, the Working Group makes several recommendations to States, including electoral bodies, to the United Nations, to online platforms and to intergovernmental bodies involved in election support.

V. Enforced disappearances in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and the environment

48. In its next thematic study, on enforced disappearances in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and the environment, the Working Group will examine the contextual factors in which enforced disappearances have occurred in relation to the defence of land,

natural resources and the environment. It will seek to understand how enforced disappearances are used as a tool to target human rights defenders, communities, Indigenous Peoples and other actors who are advocating for preserving their land and natural resources or resisting or protesting against environmentally harmful projects and the impact on individuals, families, communities and countries. Furthermore, it will examine the role of various actors in enforced disappearances, including State enterprises, non-State actors, transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The report will highlight the challenges, and best practices and measures adopted by States to prevent and address enforced disappearances in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and environment, to search for the disappeared, to investigate, identify, prosecute and sanction those responsible and to provide adequate measures of reparation. The study will also explore the main challenges that undermine the implementation of best practices.

VI. Observations

49. During the reporting period, the Working Group has been exceptionally moved by the work and dedication of hundreds of families and civil society organizations with which it has had interactions. The Working Group is seriously concerned by the extent of unreported cases of enforced disappearance and by the repeated and consistent information it receives concerning the challenges faced in the pursuit of truth, justice and reparation by families and civil society organizations who advocate for and search for disappeared persons. They reported patterns of reprisal, criminalization, ill-treatment, intimidation and threat against family members and human rights defenders. The Working Group wishes to reiterate that States also violate the human rights of families of the disappeared, including their economic, social and cultural rights, and that the pain and suffering inflicted upon them, as well as the official indifference shown in the face of their demands, may also amount to torture.²³

50. The Working Group continues to believe that it is crucially important that all States become parties to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and examine individual and inter-State complaints. In this regard, the Working Group acknowledges as a positive development the fact that, during the reporting period, Côte d'Ivoire, Maldives, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Thailand became States parties to the Convention, and encourages States that have not yet done so to do the same.

51. The Working Group expresses its support for the initiative to hold a World Congress on Enforced Disappearances in Geneva on 15 and 16 January 2025²⁴ with a view to promoting the universal ratification and effective implementation of the Convention, and calls on stakeholders, including Member States, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and associations of relatives of disappeared persons to actively engage in this activity.

52. In addition to the observations in this section and those formulated in its post-session documents (see para. 10 above), the Working Group makes the following country-specific observations in relation to situations that are of particular concern.

Argentina

53. During the reporting period, the Working Group continued to receive information on the rollback of public policies on enforced disappearance that have been so painstakingly established over the years. This includes the recent decisions taken by the Ministry of Defence to lay off 10 of the 13 people working in the Ministry's survey and analysis teams, who were dedicated to researching and analysing archives related to gross human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, committed during the last military dictatorship.

²³ E/CN.4/1983/14, paras. 134–136. See also A/HRC/30/38/Add.5, para. 2.

²⁴ See <https://www.edworldcongress.org/>.

The Working Group also expressed concern about public statements by public officials supporting persons convicted of committing crimes against humanity.²⁵

54. The Working Group encourages the Government to continue to advance searches, investigations and reparations in cases of enforced disappearance, respecting the rights to memory, truth, justice and reparations. In this regard, the Working Group recalls its report on standards and public policies for effective investigation of enforced disappearances, underlining that all the authorities in charge of the investigation must have access to all relevant information, including military, police and intelligence information, and that public policies should include the necessary human and material resources.²⁶ Moreover, the Working Group recalls the obligations of States to protect relatives of disappeared persons against ill-treatment, intimidation or reprisals and to ensure accountability.²⁷

Bangladesh

55. The Working Group continued to receive information concerning acts of harassment and intimidation against families of victims of enforced disappearance and members of opposition political parties and civil society organizations in the run-up to the general elections of 7 January 2024.²⁸

56. The Working Group reiterates its previous recommendation to the Government to remove any restrictions on the participation by families of disappeared persons in the investigative processes and search activities imposed on them by restraining their legal capacity on the basis of ambiguous or unfounded criminal allegations. The Working Group recalls that article 13 (3) and (5) of the Declaration protects the families and those working to clarify the fate and whereabouts of disappeared individuals from retaliatory measures that curtail the enjoyment of their civil and political rights, and requires States to protect and uphold the rights to memory, truth, justice and reparations.²⁹

Belarus

57. The Working Group received reports concerning the incommunicado detention of individuals imprisoned on charges related to the organization or other forms of participation in the protests that erupted in the country in August 2020 in the run-up to the presidential elections.³⁰ According to information received, authorities decided to implement a policy not to allow these detainees to communicate with their loved ones. The authorities have also reportedly intimidated and threatened lawyers dealing with cases of persons related to the protests, which has led lawyers to drop such cases and has caused a chilling effect on other legal practitioners. As a result, even though the authorities disclose the information on the place of detention, the detainees have no legal recourse and the relatives cannot verify this information or even confirm that their loved ones are alive.³¹ The Working Group notes that when the fate and whereabouts of detainees are concealed and the persons are placed outside the protection of the law, this amounts to enforced disappearance. In view of the above, the Working Group is seriously concerned at the reduced engagement and unresponsiveness by the Government of Belarus as regards the Working Group's procedures.

58. As previously reported, the Working Group remains concerned at the allegations that the territory of Belarus, either with the cooperation or the acquiescence of authorities, has

²⁵ [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 20.

²⁶ [A/HRC/45/13/Add.3](#), paras. 24 and 78.

²⁷ Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, art. 13 (3) and (5). See also art. 24 (7) of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

²⁸ [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 26; and [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 21.

²⁹ [A/HRC/54/22](#), para. 62.

³⁰ [A/HRC/52/68](#), para. 22.

³¹ See communications BLR 13/2023 and BLR 4/2023. All communications mentioned in the present report are available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>. See also [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 27.

been used as transit route for transferring captive Ukrainian soldiers and civilians to the Russian Federation.³² The Working Group reiterates that transfers of individuals who are placed outside of the protection of the law is a violation of States' obligations enshrined in article 8 of the Declaration.

China

59. The Working Group reiterates the concerns expressed in its general allegation transmitted on 15 March 2024 to the Chinese authorities concerning prolonged incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances.³³ Notably, the Working Group regrets the lack of response by the Government regarding the measures taken to ensure: (a) that the families can realize their right to know the truth about the fate and whereabouts of their family members who are deprived of their liberty; (b) that human rights defenders, political activists, members of ethnic minorities, and refugees can benefit from protective measures during deportation and return processes to neighbouring countries; and (c) that relatives who are overseas have the right to communicate with their loved ones who are deprived of liberty, without fear of threats and reprisals.

60. The Working Group continues to be concerned at reports of incommunicado detention and enforced disappearance of Tibetan Buddhists allegedly on the basis of their religion or belief or cultural affiliation,³⁴ and of human rights defenders reportedly on the basis of legitimate human rights activities.³⁵

61. The Working Group reiterates that article 10 (2) of the Declaration requires States to take measures to ensure that accurate information on the detention of persons deprived of liberty and on their place or places of detention, including transfers, is made available to their family members, to their counsel or to any other persons having a legitimate interest in the information, as soon as possible.

62. Moreover, the Working Group recalls that enforced disappearances of human rights defenders violate the economic, social and cultural rights of others engaged in related activities and of a larger community of people who relied on the disappeared person to represent them and fight for their rights.³⁶ The Working Group urges the Government of China to take all necessary measures to protect human rights defenders and leaders, including religious leaders, of minority communities, bearing in mind their special vulnerability.

Cuba

63. The Working Group expresses its concern at the reported misuse of pretrial detention and excessive use of force by the police and military against demonstrators, journalists and human rights defenders in the context of peaceful protests in July 2021, and at the information that, in that context, most of the detainees did not appear before a judge until many days, weeks or months after their initial detention in connection with the demonstrations. Prior to being brought before a judicial authority, the fate and whereabouts of the detainees remained unknown, which constitutes acts of enforced disappearance.³⁷

64. On 17 November 2023, the Working Group requested an invitation to visit the country. No response has been received from the Government. The Working Group hopes that a positive reply will be received soon.

³² A/HRC/54/22, para. 64.

³³ A/HRC/WGEID/132/1, annex II.

³⁴ A/HRC/WGEID/133/1, para. 25.

³⁵ See communication CHN 10/2024.

³⁶ A/HRC/30/38/Add.5, paras. 37 and 40.

³⁷ A/HRC/WGEID/133/1, para. 31.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

65. The Working Group continued to transmit cases of enforced disappearance to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including cases of abduction of nationals of the Republic of Korea during the period of the cold war (1966–1974) and cases of forced repatriation of nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from China. In relation to the latter, the Working Group reiterated its extreme concern about the allegations of ill-treatment and forced repatriation of victims of human trafficking, who were lured into China for the purposes of forced marriage, domestic servitude and sexual slavery, including forced impregnation.

66. The Working Group noted the response of the Government, dated 18 June 2024, and called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take decisive steps to search for the forcibly disappeared, fully involve the families and those working to clarify their fate and whereabouts, and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Egypt

67. The Working Group continues to express concern at the reported patterns of use of the Anti-Terrorism Law and national security legislation to perpetrate enforced disappearances, in particular the cases reported during the reporting period.³⁸ The Working Group recalls that, in accordance with article 7 of the Declaration, no circumstances whatsoever, whether a threat of war, a state of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked to justify enforced disappearances.

68. The Working Group reiterates the concerns expressed in its general allegation transmitted on 8 November 2023 to the Egyptian authorities and regrets that no reply has been received.³⁹

69. The Working Group has requested to Egypt to carry out a country visit since 30 June 2011. The Working Group hopes that a positive reply will be received soon, as it considers that a visit would be a timely follow-up to the training held in May 2023 and could be beneficial for all stakeholders.

Libya

70. The Working Group is deeply concerned at the allegations of arbitrary deprivation of liberty and enforced disappearance of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in Libya, including women, children and disabled persons.⁴⁰ The Working Group has reported, in the period under review, cases of migrants who were captured on the high seas and abducted by de facto authorities in Benghazi.⁴¹

71. The Working Group is also concerned about the conditions of detention in migration and detention facilities, which are reportedly inhumane, and it is especially disturbed by accounts that civil society organizations attempting to monitor the conditions of detention and assist persons deprived of their liberty are allegedly often hindered. The Working Group detailed its concerns in the general allegation transmitted on 21 March 2024 to the Libyan authorities and regrets that no reply has been received.⁴²

72. The Working Group recalls the particular vulnerability of migrants, who face special protection gaps in cases of disappearance. As such, the Working Group reiterates that States should adequately investigate any allegation of involvement, collusion or acquiescence of

³⁸ See communications EGY 3/2023 and EGY 7/2023.

³⁹ [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), para. 52.

⁴⁰ [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 75.

⁴¹ [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), para. 153.

⁴² [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 75.

State authorities in acts which may end in the disappearance of migrants and should criminalize all acts of enforced disappearance of migrants.⁴³

73. The Working Group further recalls that, since its visit that was planned for 2013 was postponed because of the security situation in the country,⁴⁴ it has not been possible for the visit to materialize. The Working Group hopes to be able to visit the country, in conditions in accordance with its methods of work.

Mexico

74. The Working Group reiterates its concerns regarding the alleged lack of transparency in the new campaign to update the National Register of Disappeared and Unaccounted for Persons in Mexico. Additionally, it expresses concern about the integrity of the data contained within the register and about the potential revictimization of the families of the disappeared during the review process. In this context, the Working Group is also troubled by the absence of prior public consultation with victims' collectives, experts, human rights defenders and civil society organizations concerning the selection process for the new Commissioner of the National Search Commission – the commission in charge of establishing methodologies for searching for, locating and identifying disappeared persons in Mexico.⁴⁵

75. During the reporting period, the Working Group also continued to receive allegations of intimidation and attacks and even violent deaths of women human rights defenders searching for their forcibly disappeared loved ones. The Working Group warns that operating in a constant environment of fear, threat and insecurity has an intimidating effect on relatives of the victims, civil society actors, human rights defenders, and organizations, and it reminds the Government of Mexico of its obligations pursuant to article 13 (3) and (5) of the Declaration and article 24 (7) of the Convention.⁴⁶

Nicaragua

76. During the reporting period, the Working Group expressed its deep concern at the so-called “short-term” enforced disappearances carried out as a result of the protests, which are allegedly being used as an instrument to repress opponents and critics of the Government, and to punish social protest.⁴⁷ The Working Group also received information that enforced disappearances continue to occur and that those that have occurred since 2018 have not been investigated effectively.⁴⁸ In this regard, the Working Group refers to the four cases transmitted to the Government under its humanitarian mandate.⁴⁹

77. The Working Group emphasizes that accurate information on the detention of persons deprived of liberty and their place or places of detention should be made promptly available to their family members and any person with a legitimate interest (art. 10 (2) of the Declaration), and that failure to do so constitutes an enforced disappearance.

78. During the reporting period, the Working Group also sent a general allegation to the Government of Nicaragua in which these practices, and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Declaration, were referenced.⁵⁰ The Working Group regrets that no response has been received.

⁴³ See [A/HRC/36/39/Add.2](#).

⁴⁴ [A/HRC/27/49](#), para. 83.

⁴⁵ [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 79.

⁴⁶ See OHCHR, “Mexico: UN experts outraged by attacks and killings targeting women human rights defenders”, 30 August 2023.

⁴⁷ See communication NIC 4/2023.

⁴⁸ [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 63.

⁴⁹ [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 83.

⁵⁰ [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 63.

Pakistan

79. The Working Group observed an increasing trend of cases of abduction of civilians, followed by their disappearance, being reported through its humanitarian procedure during the reporting period. The number of cases transmitted under the humanitarian procedure to the Government of Pakistan increased by 27 per cent over the preceding reporting period, and the number of urgent cases was the highest transmitted in the last five years. The increased number of abductions of civilians by military and security officials, including paramilitary groups, police and intelligence services, was mostly reported in the Provinces of Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The Working Group is very concerned by the inaccurate information provided by the Government reporting a decrease in cases transmitted by the Working Group.⁵¹

80. The Working Group calls on the Government to clarify how the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill 2023 and the amendments to the Pakistan Army Act of 1954 are consistent with the Declaration, particularly with the rights to complain and to have that complaint investigated (art. 13) and to bring those responsible to justice through ordinary civilian courts (art. 16) and with the prohibition of amnesty laws or similar measures (art. 18).

81. The Working Group noted with concern the lack of reply by the Government of Pakistan to the general allegation⁵² transmitted on 14 November 2023 following the 131st session and remains hopeful for positive engagement with the State.

Russian Federation

82. The Working Group remains deeply concerned by the ongoing influx of reports concerning enforced disappearances perpetrated by armed forces and affiliated armed groups against civilians and prisoners of war since the beginning of the armed conflict in Ukraine in February 2022,⁵³ as attested to by the number of cases transmitted under its humanitarian procedure during the reporting period.⁵⁴ In this regard, the Working Group recalls that, pursuant to the Declaration, the systematic practice of enforced disappearance is of the nature of a crime against humanity. Pursuant to its methods of work,⁵⁵ the Working Group may refer such cases to the competent authorities, be they international, regional, subregional or domestic.⁵⁶

83. The Working Group met around 200 Ukrainian families of victims and survivors of enforced disappearance. The testimonies of Ukrainian soldiers released from the captivity of the forces of the Russian Federation suggest that, contrary to States' obligations pursuant to the Third Geneva Convention, they have been detained in poor conditions in penitentiary facilities, with a lack of adequate medical care, and are frequently subjected to ill-treatment.

84. The Working Group welcomes the progressive confirmation of captivity of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians by the authorities of the Russian Federation, noting, however, significant delays in the process. In some cases, such delays cause additional pain and suffering to the families of soldiers killed in action and whose bodies have not been retrieved from the battlefield.⁵⁷

85. In most cases, such confirmations would not be sufficient to clarify the case, for the authorities fail to disclose the captives' fate and whereabouts. Furthermore, the limited access for independent monitoring mechanisms to places of detention in the Russian Federation and

⁵¹ [CCPR/C/PAK/RQ/2](#), para. 79.

⁵² [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), annex II.

⁵³ [A/HRC/54/22](#), paras. 93 ff.

⁵⁴ [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), para. 101; [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 98; and [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 66.

⁵⁵ [A/HRC/WGEID/1](#), para. 59.

⁵⁶ Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, general comment on enforced disappearance as a crime against humanity (2009), para. 15.

⁵⁷ [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 78, and see also annex II thereto.

in territory of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation does not facilitate the work of the Working Group to establish the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons.⁵⁸

86. On 2 November 2006, the Working Group requested an invitation to visit the country, and has sent a number of reminders over the years, with no positive response. The Working Group is equally concerned at the lack of responsiveness by the Government to its requests to engage in dialogue and hopes that positive replies will be received soon.

Sri Lanka

87. The Working Group has previously⁵⁹ raised its concern at allegations of acts of reprisal and intimidation against relatives and individuals working to ascertain the fate and whereabouts of victims of enforced disappearance, and has continued to receive similar information.⁶⁰ The Working Group has also continued to register cases of enforced disappearance that reportedly occurred during the armed conflict, particularly during the onset of the second Eelam War in 1989 and 1990.⁶¹

88. In this context, the Working Group reiterated its concern regarding the numerous obstacles reported in the implementation of the Declaration, particularly regarding articles 13 and 18, and the right of the victims and persons with a legitimate interest to submit complaints to competent authorities, to have those complaints promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigated by that authority, and to receive adequate compensation.

89. The Working Group welcomed the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled “Accountability for enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka” and endorses its conclusions and recommendations to the Government of Sri Lanka.⁶² The report found that there was a continued accountability deficit and persistent impunity nearly 15 years after the end of the armed conflict and the waves of enforced disappearances that occurred in Sri Lanka. In this regard, the Working Group acknowledges that in the early 2000s, it considered thousands of cases to be clarified, based on information provided by the Government. The Working Group has since revised its methods of work⁶³ to ensure that clarification of cases can only occur when the fate and whereabouts of a disappeared person are clearly established and detailed information is transmitted, as a result of an independent, impartial, thorough and effective investigation and search activities conducted by the State, inquiries conducted by non-governmental organizations, missions conducted by the Working Group or by human rights personnel from the United Nations or from any other international organization operating in the field, or a search conducted by the family, irrespective of whether the person is alive or dead.

90. Furthermore, the Working Group notes that, pursuant to the methods of work currently applied, cases cannot be archived upon receiving a certificate of death of the disappeared person, but only when the competent authority specified in the relevant national law issues a declaration of absence as a result of enforced disappearance and the relatives of the disappeared person or other interested parties have manifested, freely and indisputably, their desire not to pursue the case any further.

91. In this connection, where families wish to submit to the Working Group, pursuant to its methods of work,⁶⁴ petitions to reopen cases that have been previously clarified, archived or discontinued, the reopening is decided on a case-by-case basis.

⁵⁸ A/HRC/WGEID/1, para. 28.

⁵⁹ A/HRC/51/31, para. 72.

⁶⁰ A/HRC/WGEID/129/1, para. 90; A/HRC/WGEID/131/1, para. 128; and A/HRC/WGEID/132/1, para. 6. See also A/HRC/51/5, paras. 30–32 and 39.

⁶¹ A/HRC/WGEID/133/1, para. 83.

⁶² See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sri-lanka/report-accountability-enforced-disappearances-sri-lanka-may2024-en.pdf>.

⁶³ See A/HRC/WGEID/1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 32.

Türkiye

92. The Working Group continued to receive information concerning acts of harassment and intimidation against families of forcibly disappeared persons and civil society organizations working on those cases.⁶⁵ The Working Group also transmitted a prompt intervention letter on 23 November 2023 concerning the violation of the rights of the Saturday Mothers/People (Cumartesi Anneleri), who regularly participate in Saturday vigils at Galatasaray Square in Istanbul.⁶⁶

93. The Working Group recalls the Government's obligation under article 13 (3) and (5) of the Declaration to protect the right of the families of disappeared persons to be involved in the investigative processes and search activities for disappeared individuals and not to be subjected to retaliatory measures that curtail the enjoyment of their civil and political rights.

United Arab Emirates

94. The Working Group remains deeply concerned by reports of sustained persecution of persons involved in the 2011 demonstrations calling for democratic reforms in the United Arab Emirates, and in particular at the new charges brought against 84 of the 133 individuals who were indicted in 2011 in relation to the "UAE 94" trial⁶⁷ and at the allegation that a number of those imprisoned were forcibly disappeared while in custody following the conclusion of their sentences.⁶⁸ In this connection, the Working Group also reported the case of an international transfer from Jordan of Halife Abdulrahman Abdullah, who had reportedly also been part of the UAE 94 trial.⁶⁹

95. Based on the reports received, the Working Group emphasizes that accurate information on the detention of persons deprived of liberty and their place or places of detention, including transfers, should be made promptly available to their family members, to their counsel or to any other persons having a legitimate interest in the information (art. 10 (2) of the Declaration) and that failure to do so amounts to an enforced disappearance.

United States of America

96. The Working Group transmitted a general allegation on 21 March 2024 concerning the enforced disappearance of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, including women, pregnant women, children, and persons with disabilities seeking protection in the United States of America, by United States Customs and Border Protection, the United States Coast Guard, and other State agents. These persons are reportedly subjected to incommunicado detention in poor conditions for days, and minors are separated from their families and are deprived of fundamental rights, without ensuring that families, legal representatives or other persons with a legitimate interest have access to information about their fate or whereabouts.⁷⁰ The Working Group acknowledges the reply from the Government and hopes to continue engaging to ensure the full implementation of the Declaration.

97. On 17 November 2023, the Working Group requested an invitation to visit the country. The Working Group acknowledges the reply from the Government, received on 3 June 2024, to its request for a visit, and looks forward to continued engagement with the Government towards the realization of a visit in 2025.

⁶⁵ See communication TUR 10/2023.

⁶⁶ [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 116.

⁶⁷ See communication ARE 1/2024.

⁶⁸ [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), para. 137 (b) and (c).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 137 (a).

⁷⁰ [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 121.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

98. The Working Group reiterates its alarm at the reported increase in enforced disappearances of citizens exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association and participating in matters of public interest since December 2023.⁷¹ The Working Group has documented a pattern of enforced disappearances against opposition members and members of the military, who were deprived of their liberty by State authorities, taken to recognized detention facilities and denied fundamental rights and protections such as access to legal representation – in particular, the 16 reported cases of enforced disappearance in the context of elections, transmitted to the Government during the reporting period.⁷²

99. The Working Group recalls that, pursuant to article 7 of the Declaration, no circumstances whatsoever, whether a threat of war, a state of war, internal political instability, or any other public emergency, may be invoked to justify enforced disappearances.

100. The Working Group reiterates its readiness to provide technical cooperation and assistance to ensure the implementation of the Declaration.

101. On 28 November 2019, the Working Group requested an invitation to visit the country. No response has been received from the Government, despite a number of reminders. The Working Group hopes that a positive reply will be received soon.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

102. **The Working Group would like to reiterate the expression of its solidarity with, and admiration for, relatives of disappeared persons, organizations that support them, and human rights defenders and lawyers who, despite all the difficulties and the increasingly hostile and dangerous environments in which they often operate, continue their struggle for truth, justice, reparations, memory and non-repetition. The Working Group was created in 1980 precisely to address the plight and respond to the anguish and sorrow of relatives of disappeared persons across the world and stands ready to continue supporting them. The Working Group calls on all States concerned to provide the necessary support to families of disappeared persons through adequate psychological, legal, administrative and financial means.**

103. The Working Group expresses its serious concern about its inability, with the present limited financial resources and the ongoing liquidity crisis, to carry out the various tasks assigned to it by the Human Rights Council. The Working Group resolutely calls on Member States to meet their financial obligations, with a view to finding a lasting solution. The Working Group also calls on the Secretary-General and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide the Working Group with all financial and human resources necessary.

104. The Working Group wishes to express its serious concern at the ongoing influx of reports concerning enforced disappearances in the context of armed conflicts. In certain countries, the number of reports received is suggestive of the existence of a systematic practice of enforced disappearance, which may reach the threshold of a crime against humanity. The Working Group will carefully evaluate these situations and, pursuant to its methods of work, where appropriate, will refer them to the competent authorities.

105. The Working Group is also concerned at the treatment of disappeared persons, as they are reportedly subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, which is prohibited as an international norm of *jus cogens*, and as reflected, inter alia, in Human Rights Council resolution 25/13 and General Assembly resolution 68/156, as well as being codified in articles 2 and 16 of the

⁷¹ See OHCHR, “Alarming rise in enforced disappearances ahead of Venezuela’s presidential poll: UN experts”, 30 April 2024.

⁷² [A/HRC/WGEID/131/1](#), para. 148; [A/HRC/WGEID/132/1](#), para. 122; and [A/HRC/WGEID/133/1](#), para. 103.

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Working Group recalls with concern that the pain and suffering inflicted upon relatives of disappeared persons, as well as the official indifference shown in the face of their demands, may also amount to torture.

106. Conversely, the Working Group notes that the low number of cases registered in certain regions should not be interpreted as the non-existence of enforced disappearances, but rather as an alarming sign of a widespread phenomenon of underreporting, in many instances associated with fears of reprisals, and of the overall invisibility of this crime under international law.

107. The Working Group stresses the importance of acknowledging that enforced disappearance remains a global phenomenon and of tackling it by adopting effective measures to address and overcome the root causes, thus creating the conditions for victims to pursue truth, justice and reparation, and to prevent further cases.

108. During the reporting period, the fate and whereabouts of many persons reported as disappeared were determined promptly due to the prompt responses received from the States concerned. The Working Group hopes that more Member States will engage in a swift, transparent and meaningful dialogue in response to its communications on individual cases, contributing to the fulfilment of its humanitarian mandate and putting an end to the suffering of victims.

109. Country visits are an integral part of the mandate of the Working Group. The Working Group recognizes the cooperation extended during its visit to the African Union's judicial and human rights organs and other subregional bodies in October 2023. It also extends its thanks to the Governments of Lithuania, Maldives and the Republic of Korea for the invitations to conduct country visits.

110. The Working Group thanks all the States and stakeholders that responded to its calls for inputs for thematic reports, country visits and follow-up reports, and for the engagement in its activities, during the reporting period. The Working Group encourages the continued engagement of stakeholders with it, and with activities, such as the World Congress on Enforced Disappearances.

111. The Working Group calls on States and stakeholders to review, disseminate and implement the recommendations enshrined in its report on enforced disappearances and elections. It calls on States to establish effective accountability mechanisms for enforced disappearances in the electoral context, with a view to ending the cycles of impunity, ensuring justice for victims, and building strong and long-lasting foundations for democratic societies.

112. The Working Group reiterates its call to all States to ratify or accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance without delay and to accept the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances under articles 31 and 32 of the Convention to receive and consider individual and inter-State communications.

Annex I

Country visit requests and invitations extended

Invitations extended to the WGEID

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>
Algeria	Tbd
Burkina Faso	Last quarter of 2019 (did not take place)
Ghana	Last quarter of 2021
Kenya	Last quarter of 2023
Libya	tbd, postponed
Lithuania	20 November – 27 November 2024
Maldives	First quarter of 2025
Mali	26 August – 3 September 2019 (did not take place)
Republic of Korea	Second quarter of 2025
South Sudan	Last quarter of 2016 (did not take place)
Sudan	20 to 29 November 2017 (did not take place)

Visits requested by the WGEID

<i>Country</i>	<i>Request sent</i>	<i>Last reminder sent</i>
Afghanistan	17 April 2019	24 April 2020
Algeria	25 August 2000	24 November 2023
Angola	23 May 2023	-
Bahrain	27 October 2014	18 January 2019
Bangladesh	12 March 2013	24 April 2020
Belarus	30 June 2011	8 February 2019
Brazil	8 April 2020	24 May 2023
Burkina Faso	2 April 2019	-
Burundi	27 May 2009	18 January 2019
Cameroon	12 April 2019	28 February 2024
Canada	20 February 2024	-
Cuba	24 November 2023	-
China	19 February 2013	12 March 2020
Colombia	22 October 2020	-
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	22 May 2015	24 November 2023
Democratic Republic of the Congo	17 May 2017	28 February 2024
Ecuador	24 November 2023	-

Visits requested by the WGEID

<i>Country</i>	<i>Request sent</i>	<i>Last reminder sent</i>
Egypt	30 June 2011	18 January 2019
El Salvador	6 October 2017	24 November 2024
Guatemala	30 May 2018	1 February 2024
India	16 August 2010	26 February 2020
Indonesia	12 December 2006	25 May 2023
Lao PDR	6 May 2020	25 May 2023
Lebanon	27 November 2015	7 January 2022
Nepal	12 May 2006	27 July 2020
Nicaragua	23 May 2006	24 November 2023
Nigeria	23 January 2019	28 January 2024
Malaysia	24 November 2023	-
Pakistan	14 November 2019	8 April 2020
Philippines	3 April 2013	25 May 2023
Russian Federation	2 November 2006	28 February 2024
Rwanda	27 October 2014	8 April 2020
Saudi Arabia	24 November 2023	-
South Africa	28 October 2014	24 November 2023
South Sudan	29 August 2011	8 February 2019
Sudan	20 December 2005	8 April 2020
Syrian Arab Republic	19 September 2011	18 January 2019
Thailand	30 June 2011	24 November 2023
Turkmenistan	18 November 2016	18 January 2019
United Arab Emirates	13 September 2013	7 January 2022
United States of America	24 November 2023	-
Uzbekistan	30 June 2011	23 January 2019
Venezuela	28 November 2019	24 November 2023
Yemen	31 October 2017	-
Zimbabwe	20 July 2009	10 January 2022

Annex II

Statistical summary: cases of enforced disappearance reported to the Working Group between 1980 and 10 May 2024, and general allegations transmitted

States/entities	Cases transmitted to the Government				Cases clarified by:		Status of person at date of clarification			Discontinued cases		General Allegation	
	Outstanding cases		Total		Government	Sources	At liberty	In detention	Dead	Discontinued cases	Closed cases	GA sent	Response
	Cases	Female	Cases	Female									
Afghanistan	20	0	21	0	1	0	0	0	1				
Albania	1	0	1	0	0	0							
Algeria	3 313	20	3343	23	9	21	11	10	9			2013/2018/2020/2023	Yes (2013); No (2018); No (2023)
Angola	0		12	1	9	0			9	3			
Armenia	38	2	38	2	0	0							
Argentina	3 061	727	3 444	775	305	78	39	5	339				
Azerbaijan	31	0	34	0	2	1	1	1	1				
Bahrain	0		22	2	7	15	4	18				2014/2018	Yes (2014); No (2018)
Bangladesh	73	1	91	2	11	7	10	8				2011/2017/2019	No
Belarus ^a	5	1	5	1	1	0		1					
Bhutan	1	0	1	0	0	0							
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	26	3	48	3	21	1	21		1				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0	1	0	0	0						2009/2011/2014	Yes
Brazil	16	3	66	7	46	4	1		49			2019/2022/2024	No (2019, 2022); Yes (2024)
Bulgaria	0		3	0	3	0			3				
Burkina Faso	0	0	3	0	3	0			3				

States/entities	Cases transmitted to the Government				Cases clarified by:		Status of person at date of clarification				General Allegation		
	Outstanding cases		Total		Government	Sources	At liberty	In detention	Dead	Discontinued cases	Closed cases	GA sent	Response
	Cases	Female	Cases	Female									
Burundi	252	10	253	9	0	1	1					2018	
Cambodia	1	0	3	0	0	0				2			
Cameroon	18	1	25	1	5	2	6	1				2016	No
Central African Republic	3	0	3	0	0	0						2013	No
Chad	24	0	35	0	3	8	9	1	1				
Chile	787	63	910	64	101	22	2		121				
China	145	16	312	46	132	36	126	38	4			2010/2011/2018/2019/2024	No
Colombia	944	96	1287	126	275	68	160	24	159			2012/2013/2015/2016/2017/2020/2021	No; Yes (2021)
Comoros	1	0	1	0	0	0							
Congo	89	3	91	3	0	0				2			
Cuba	0		4	1	3	1		2	2				
Cyprus	77	11	77	11	0	0							
Czechia	0		0		0	0						2009	Yes
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	450	71	450	71	0	0							
Democratic Republic of the Congo	50	11	60	11	6	4	10					2015/2019	Yes; No (2019)
Denmark	0		1		0	1		1				2009	No
Djibouti	0		1	0	0	1	1						
Dominican Republic	2	0	5	0	2	0	2			1			
Ecuador	5	0	27	2	18	4	12	4	6			2024	No
Egypt	279	9	900	10	410	184	138	435	21	7		2011/2016/2017/2023	Yes; No (2017)
El Salvador	2283	295	2675	333	318	74	197	175	20			March 2015/May 2015/2022	No
Equatorial Guinea	11	0	11	0	0	0							

States/entities	Cases transmitted to the Government				Cases clarified by:		Status of person at date of clarification			Discontinued cases		Closed cases		General Allegation	
	Outstanding cases		Total		Government	Sources	At liberty	In detention	Dead	Discontinued cases	Closed cases	GA sent	Response		
	Cases	Female	Cases	Female											
Eritrea	63	4	63	4	0	0						2012/2017	No		
Ethiopia	113	2	120	3	3	4	2	5							
France	1	0	1	0	0	0									
Gambia	14	2	22	2	0	8	8								
Georgia	0		1	0	1	0			1						
Greece	1	0	3	0	0	0				2					
Guatemala	2897	372	3154	390	177	80	187	6	64			2011/2013/2022	Yes		
Guinea	37	2	44	2	0	7			7						
Guyana	1	0	1	0	0	0									
Haiti	38	1	48	1	9	1	1	4	5						
Honduras	130	21	210	34	37	43	54	8	18			2021/2022	Yes, No (2022)		
India	444	10	530	13	70	16	51	9	23			2009/2011/2013/2019	No		
Indonesia	188	5	192	5	3	1	3	1				2011/2013/2017	No		
Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran)	572	109	603	109	21	10	13	9	9			2017	No		
Iraq	16428	2300	16576	2317	117	31	122	17	9			2020/2024			
Ireland	0		0		0	0						2009	No		
Israel	11	0	12	0	0	1			1						
Jordan	0		9	0	2	5	4	3		2					
Kazakhstan	1	0	3	0	0	2		2							
Kenya	91	1	91	1	0	0						2011/2014/2016/2017	No		
Kuwait	0		3	0	0	2	1	1		1					
Lao People's Democratic Republic	8	4	18	5	0	9	1	7	1	1					
Latvia	2	0	2	0	0	0									
Lebanon	314	19	325	19	2	9	10	1							
Libya	56	0	76	1	5	13	7	10	1	2		2014/2018/2024	No		

States/entities	Cases transmitted to the Government				Cases clarified by:		Status of person at date of clarification					General Allegation	
	Outstanding cases		Total		Government	Sources	At liberty	In detention	Dead	Discontinued cases	Closed cases	GA sent	Response
	Cases	Female	Cases	Female									
Lithuania	0		0		0	0						2012	Yes
Malaysia	8	2	11	2	1	1	1	1		1			
Maldives	1	0	1	0	0	0							
Mauritania	9	0	10	0	1	0		1					
Mexico	355	26	563	45	136	41	83	18	76	31		2013/2014/2017/2017/2017/ 2022/2023	Yes (2022, 2023); No (2014, 2017 and 2021)
Montenegro	0		15	1	1	0		1			14		
Morocco	155	9	411	31	170	53	141	16	66	33		2013/2020/2023	No (2013, 2020); Yes (2023)
Mozambique	5	0	5	0	0	0							
Myanmar	20	4	27	9	7	0	5	2				2017	No
Namibia	2	0	3	0	0	1	1						
Nepal	480	60	694	76	135	79	153	60	1			2021	
Nicaragua	106	2	244	7	112	26	47	16	75			2022/2024	No
Nigeria	7	1	17	3	6	4	10					2021	
North Macedonia	0		0		0	0						2009	No
Oman	1	0	2	0	0	1	1						
Pakistan	934	5	1635	11	615	177	489	239	38			2015/2017/2019/2023	No (2017); Yes (2019)
Panama	1	0	1	0	0	0							
Paraguay	0		23	0	20	0	19		1	3		2014	Yes
Peru	2361	224	3003	284	254	388	450	85	107				
Philippines	592	67	781	94	142	47	133	19	37			2009/2012	No
Qatar	1	0	2	0	1	0	1						
Romania	0		1	0	1	0	1						
Republic of Korea	4	0	4	0	0	0							

States/entities	Cases transmitted to the Government				Cases clarified by:		Status of person at date of clarification			General Allegation			
	Outstanding cases		Total		Government	Sources	At liberty	In detention	Dead	Discontinued cases	Closed cases	GA sent	Response
	Cases	Female	Cases	Female									
Russian Federation	2 149	61	2293	64	54	90	114	18	12			2016/2018/2022/2024	Yes (2016); No (2018 and 2022)
Rwanda	28	3	31	3	0	2	1	1		1			
Saudi Arabia	29	6	80	11	20	29	14	33	4	2		2020	No
Serbia	1	0	2	0	1	0	1						
Seychelles	3	0	3	0	0	0							
Somalia	1	0	1	0	0	0							
South Africa	2	1	13	2	3	2	1	1	3	6			
South Sudan	3	0	3	0	0	0							
Spain	6	0	10	0	3	0			3	1		2014/2023	No (2014); Yes (2023)
Sri Lanka	6 282	193	12873	262	6551	40	118	27	644			2011/2014/2022	Yes
Sudan	177	5	394	39	206	11	214	3				2022/2023	No
Switzerland	0		1	0	1	0		1					
Syrian Arab Republic	697	48	760	53	17	46	33	23	7			2011/2011/2019/2021/2023	Yes (2011); No (2019, 2021, 2023)
Tajikistan	3	0	12	0	5	2	1		6	2			
Thailand	77	6	94	9	7	2	5	1	3	8		2008/2018	No
Timor-Leste	428	29	504	33	58	18	51	23	2				
Togo	10	2	11	2	0	1	1						
Tunisia	13	0	30	1	12	5	2	15					
Türkiye ^b	83	3	240	15	94	62	74	42	39		1	2022	No
Turkmenistan	4	0	9	0	5	0		4	1			2018	No
Uganda	22	2	29	4	2	5	2	5					
Ukraine	6	0	13	0	3	1	2		2	3			
United Arab Emirates	25	1	65	5	9	31	11	29				2022/2023	No

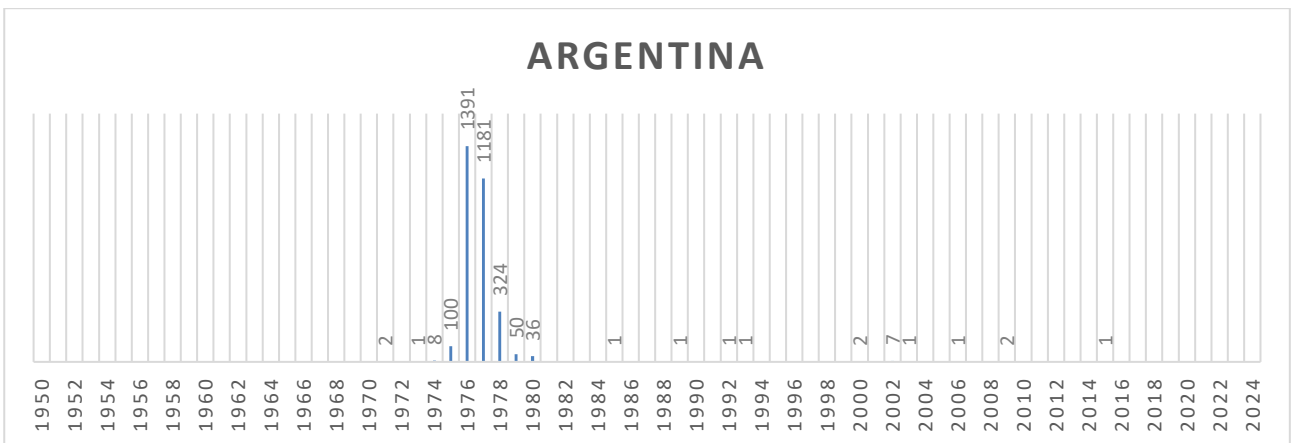
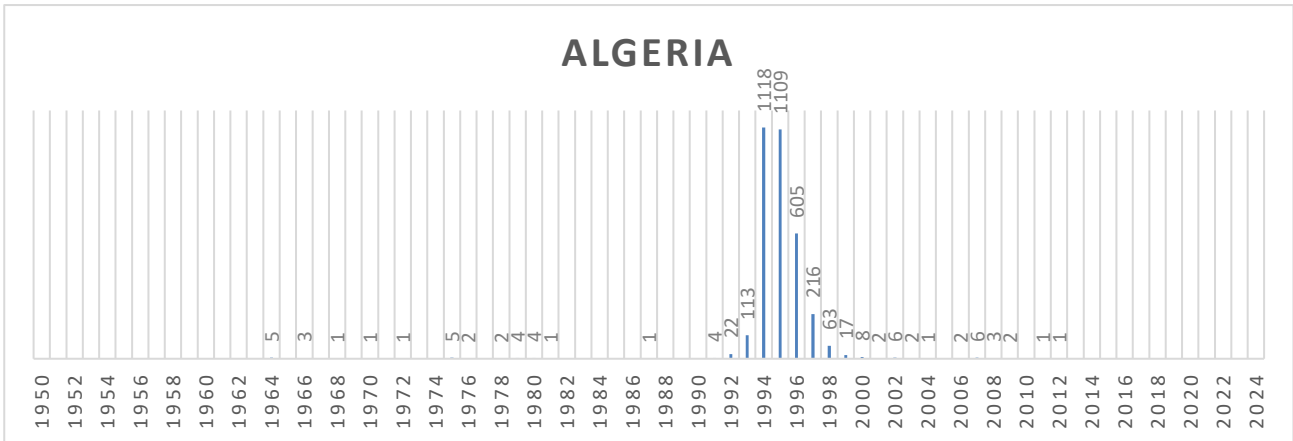
States/entities	Cases transmitted to the Government				Cases clarified by:		Status of person at date of clarification					General Allegation	
	Outstanding cases		Total		Government	Sources	At liberty	In detention	Dead	Discontinued cases	Closed cases	GA sent	Response
	Cases	Female	Cases	Female									
United Republic of Tanzania	2	0	4	0	2	0		2					
United States of America	4	0	5	0	1	0	1					2019/2024	Yes
Uruguay	19	3	34	8	14	1	5	4	6			2013/2015/2018	Yes (2013)
Uzbekistan	7	0	26	0	18	1	2	17					
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	39	5	56	4	8	9	8	6	3			2019	No
Viet Nam	2	1	6	1	3	1	2	2					
Yemen	29	0	187	0	135	9	66	5	73	14		2023	No
Zambia	0		1	1	0	1		1					
Zimbabwe	5	1	7	2	1	1	1		1			2009	No
State of Palestine	4	1	5	1	0	1	1						

^a At its 132nd session, the Working Group decided to reopen one case, which was previously closed based on the information provided by the Government (in detention) (A/HRC/WGEID/132/1, para. 27).

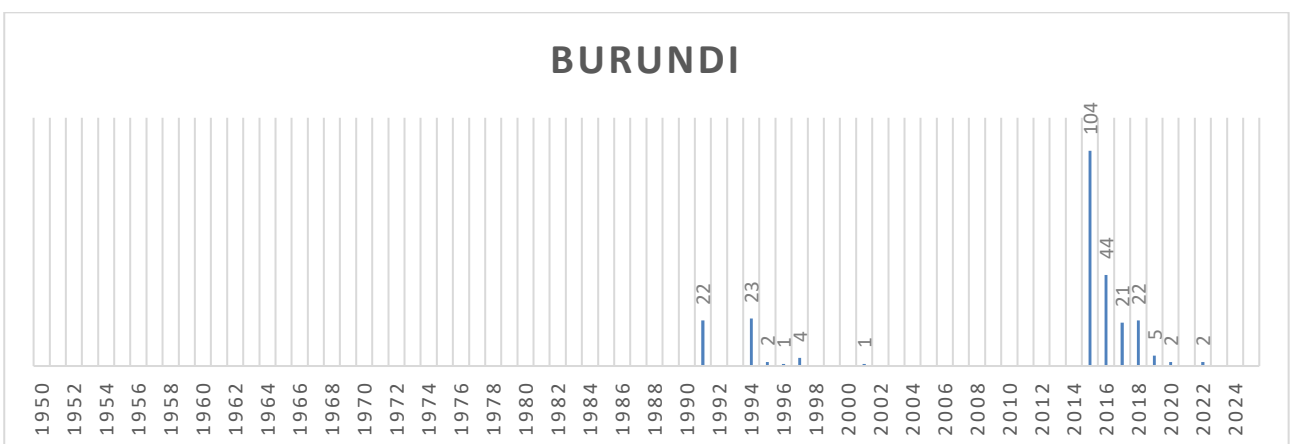
^b Please note, that the total number of outstanding cases at the beginning of the reporting period is reflected as 84 due to a clarification of the case in the 2022–2023 reporting period, see A/HRC/WGEID/128/1, para. 95. Due to a clerical error this was not reflected in the statistics in A/HRC/51/31, Annex I.

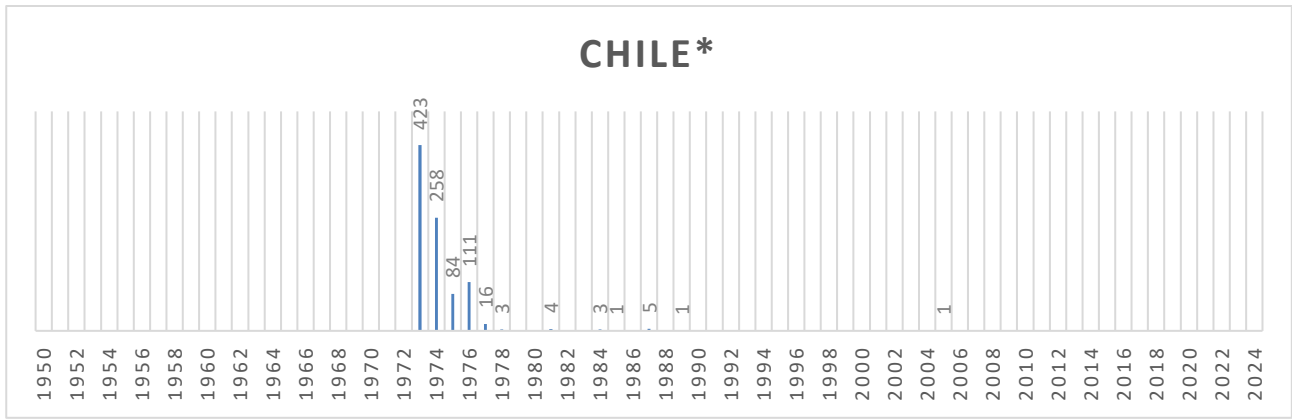
Annex III

Graphs showing the number of cases of enforced disappearance by country and by year according to the cases transmitted by the Working Group between 1980 and 10 May 2024 (only for countries with more than 100 cases transmitted)

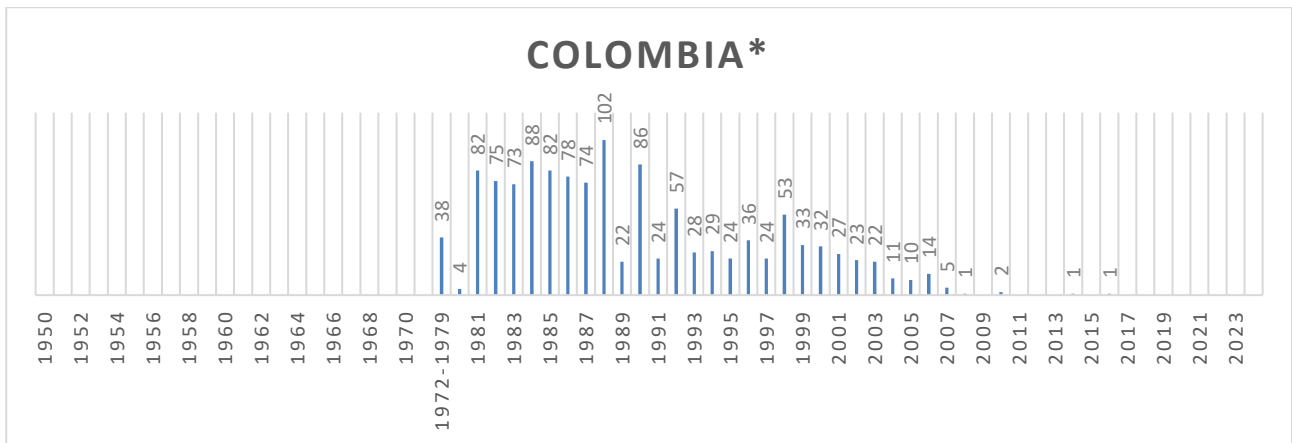
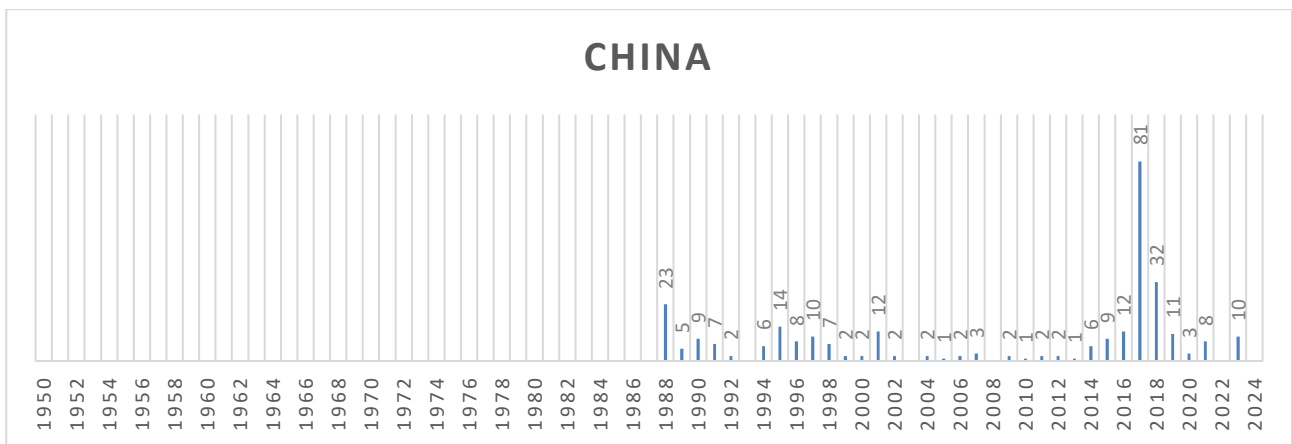


* Argentina ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2007.



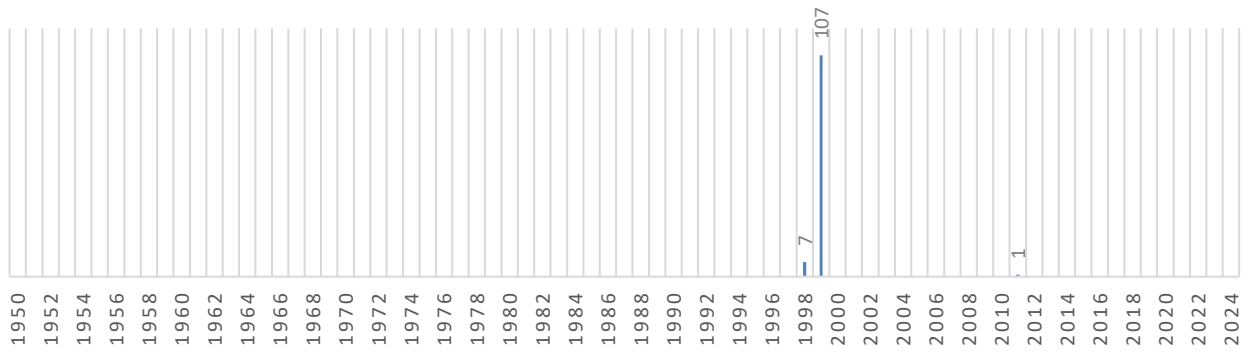


* Chile ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2009.

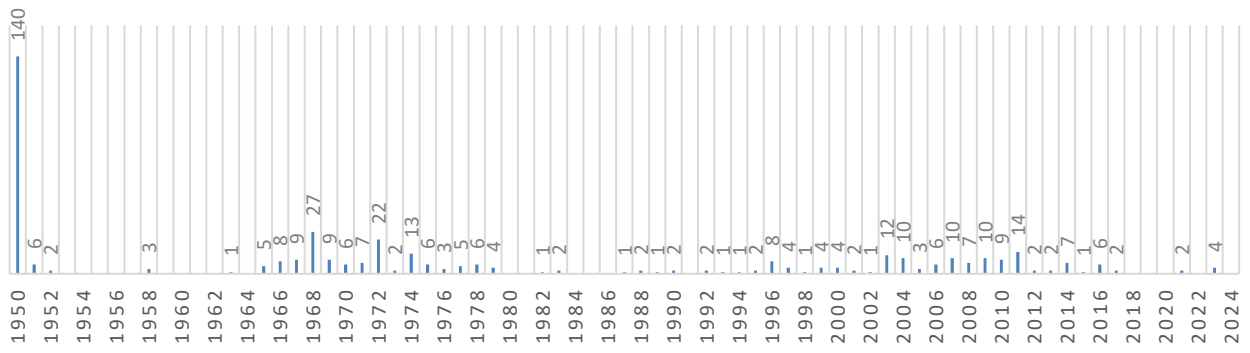


* Colombia ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2012.

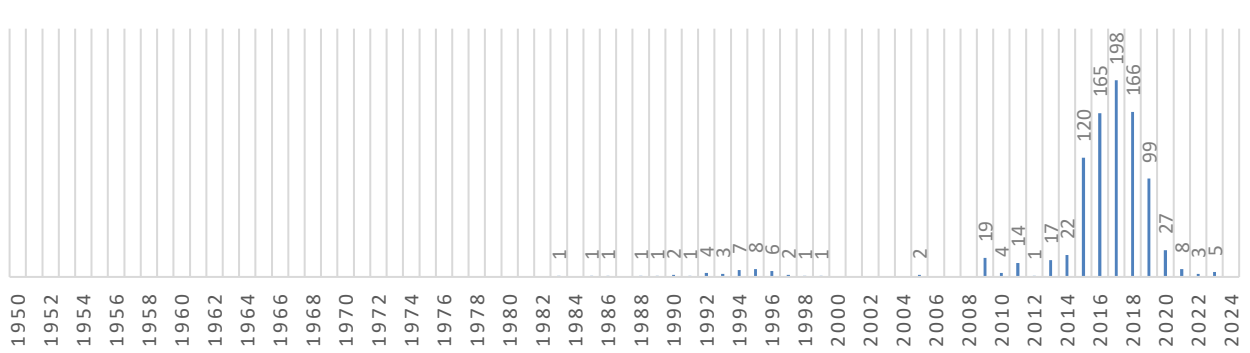
CONGO, REPUBLIC OF

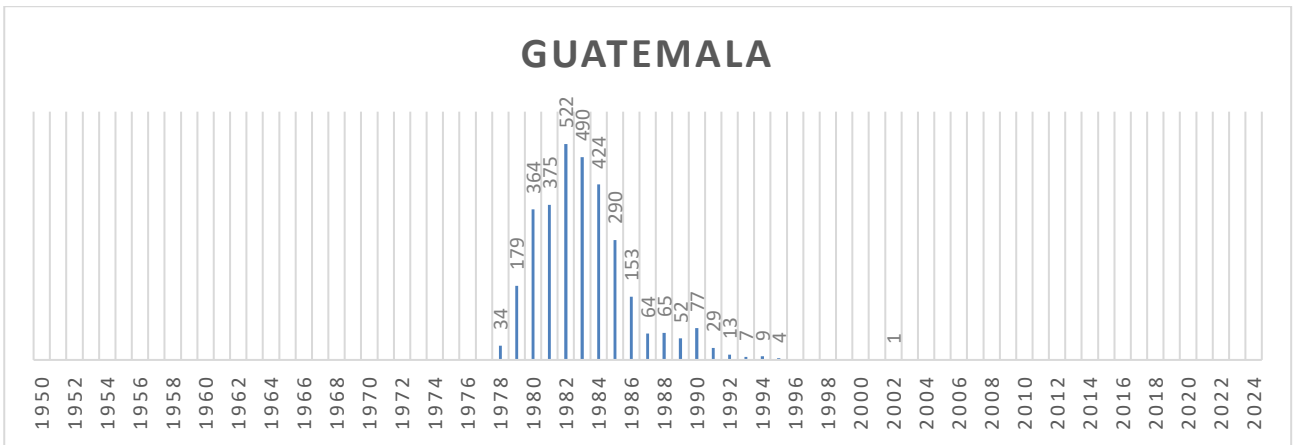
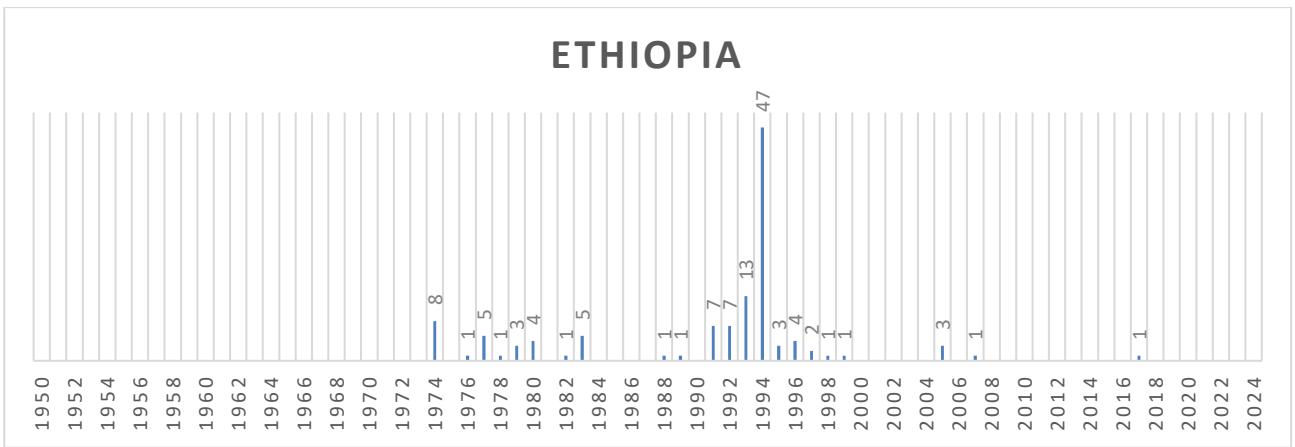
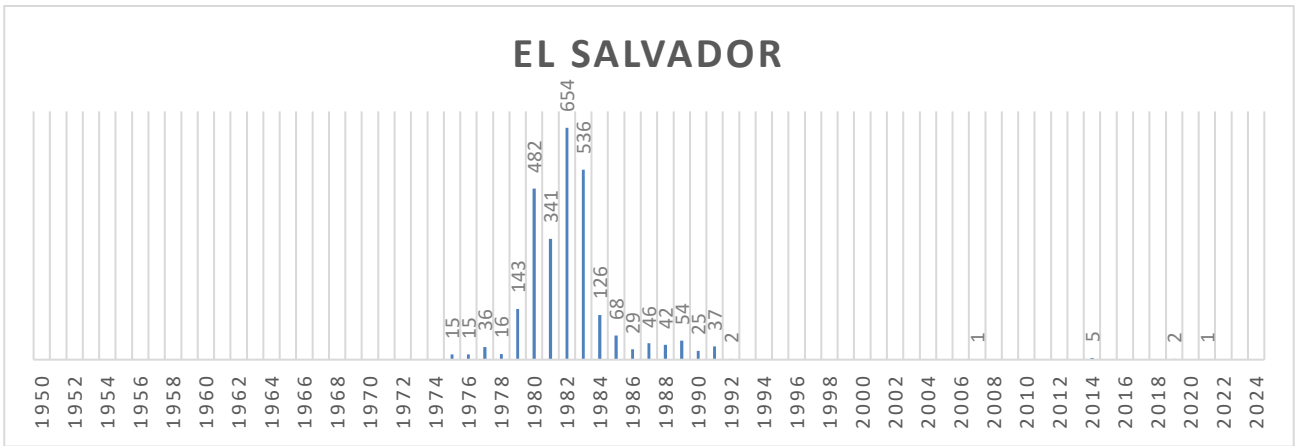


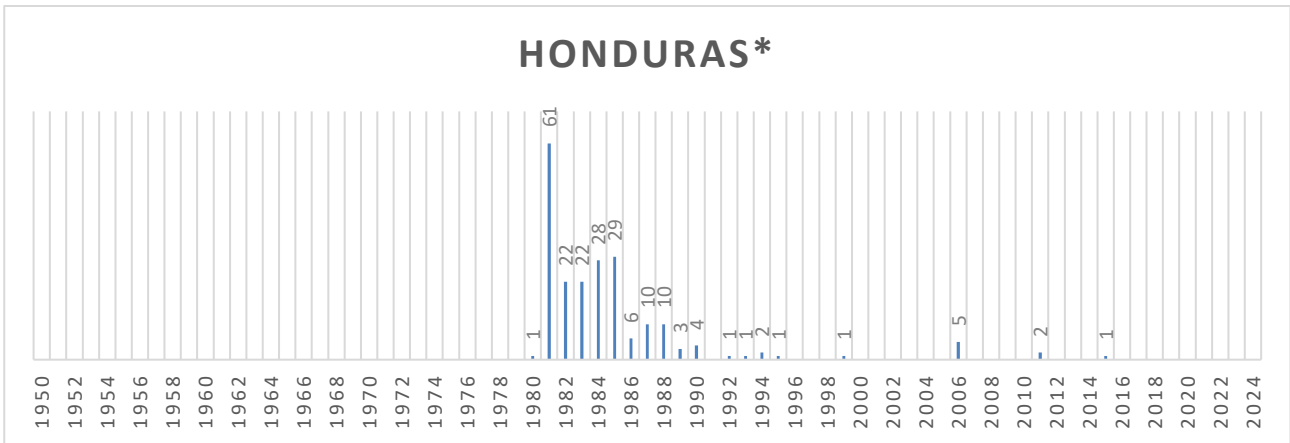
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA



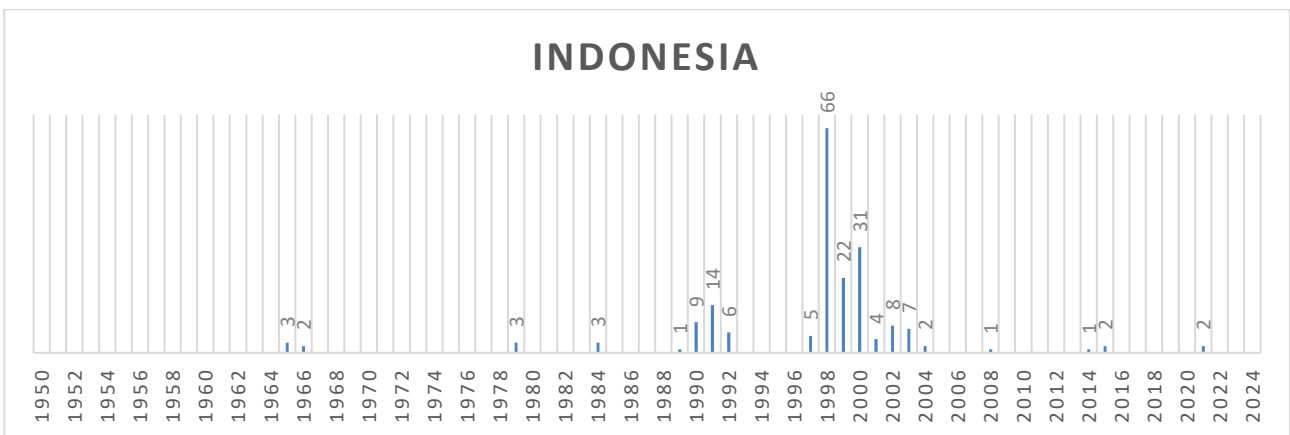
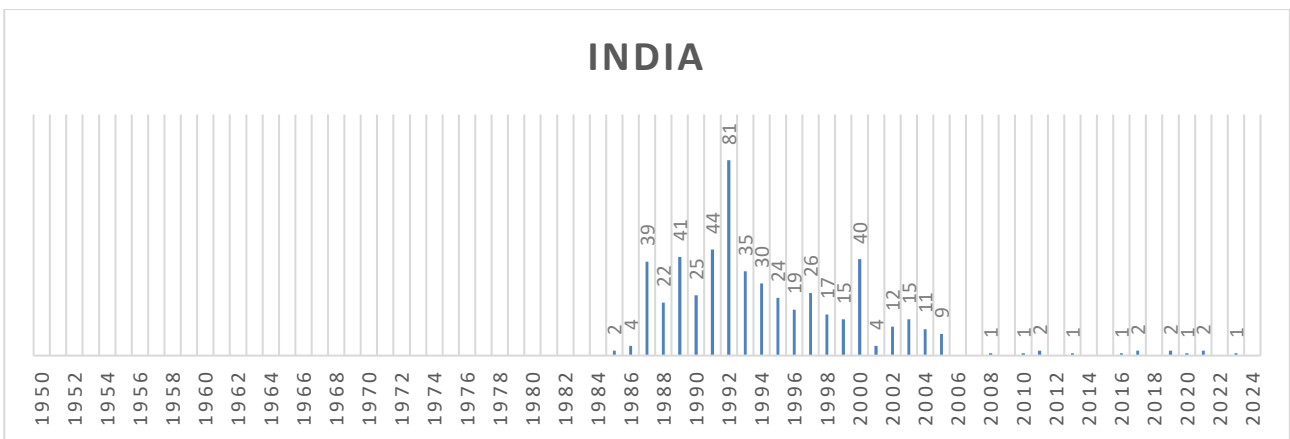
EGYPT

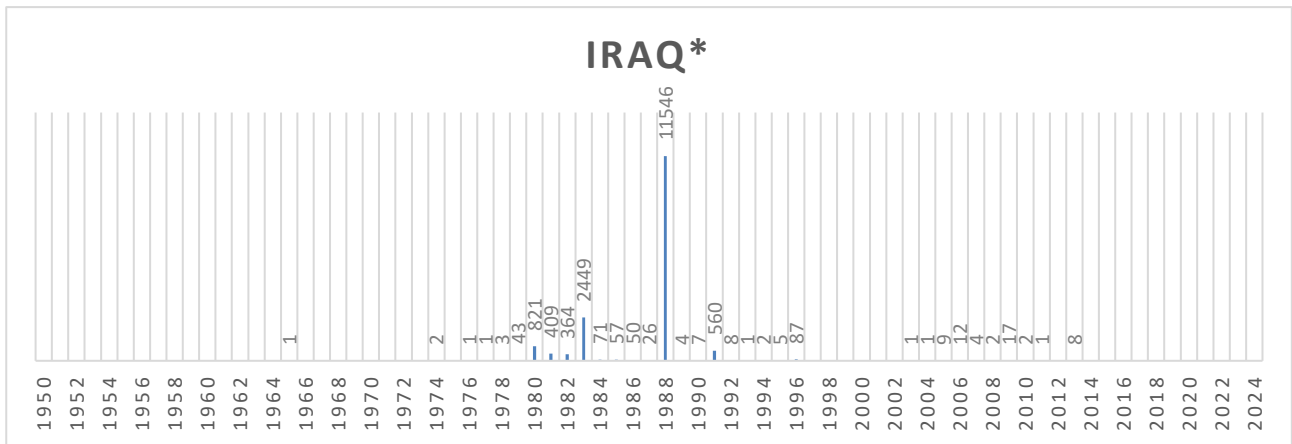
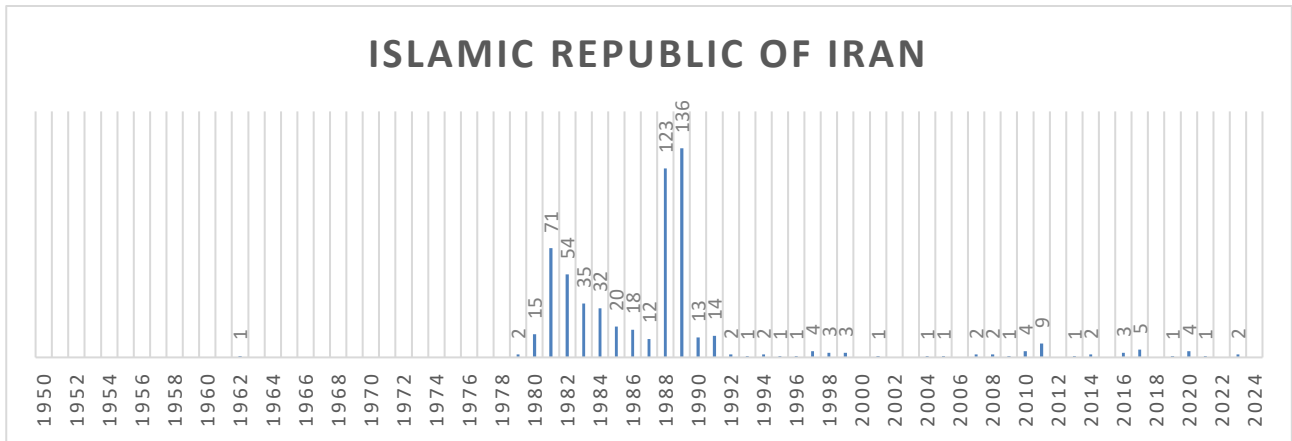




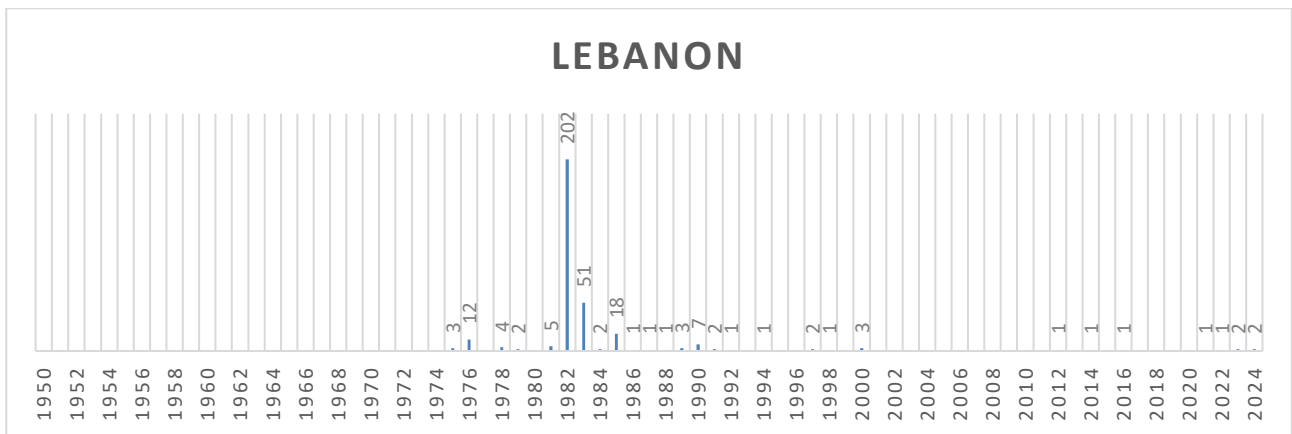


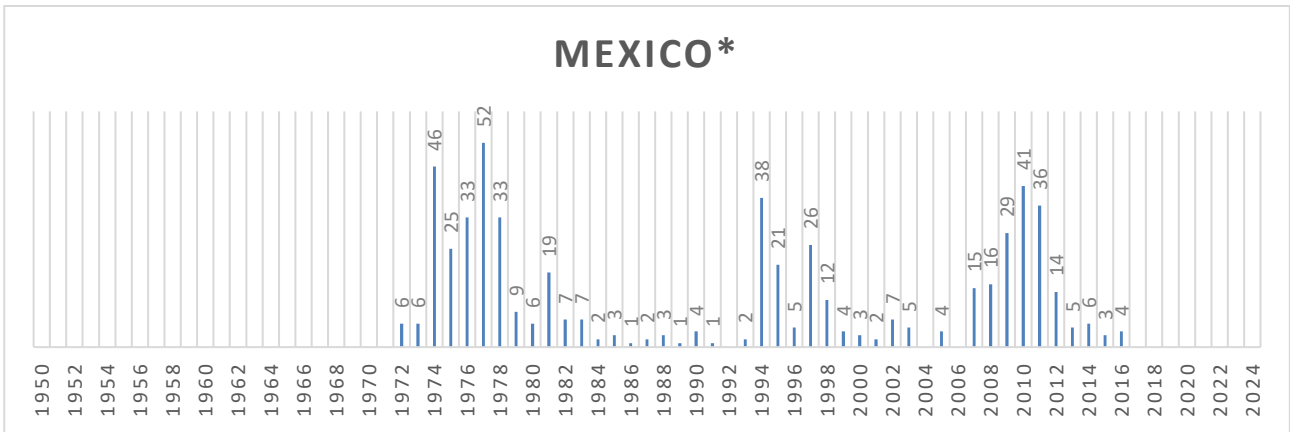
* Honduras ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2008.



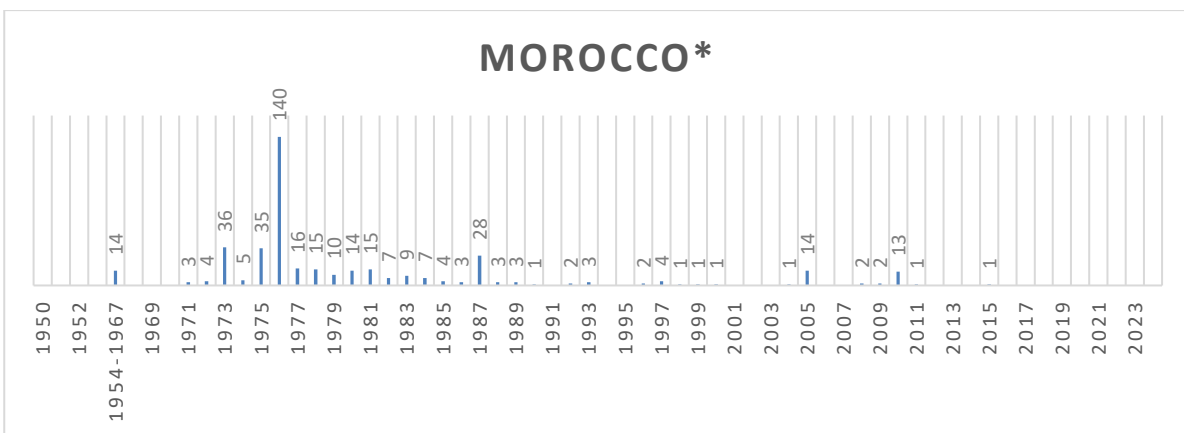


* Iraq ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2010.

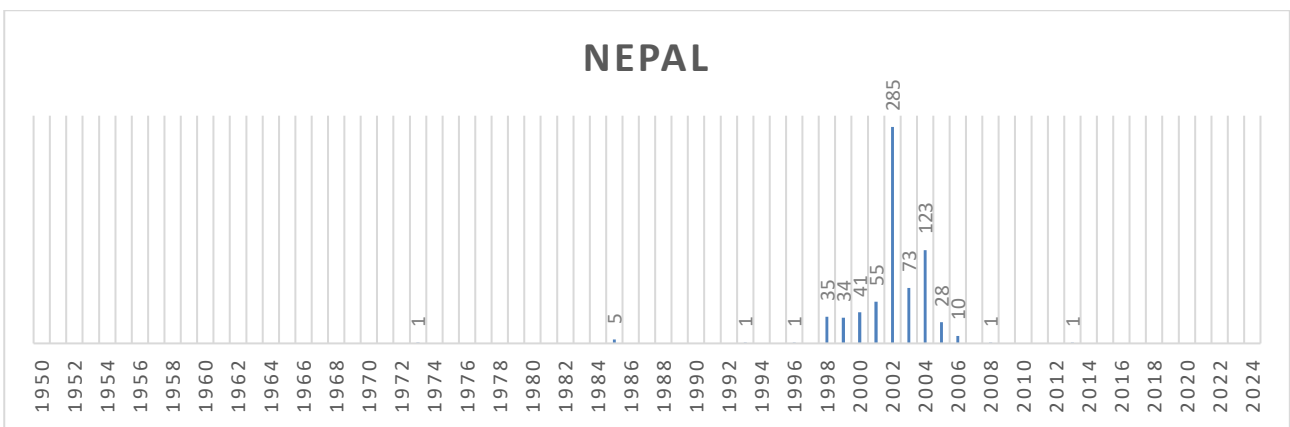


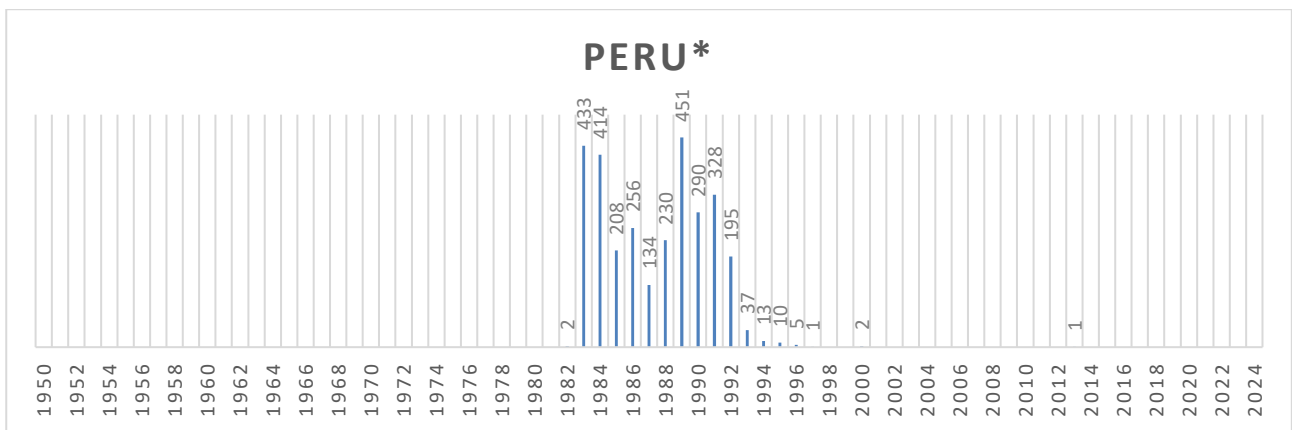
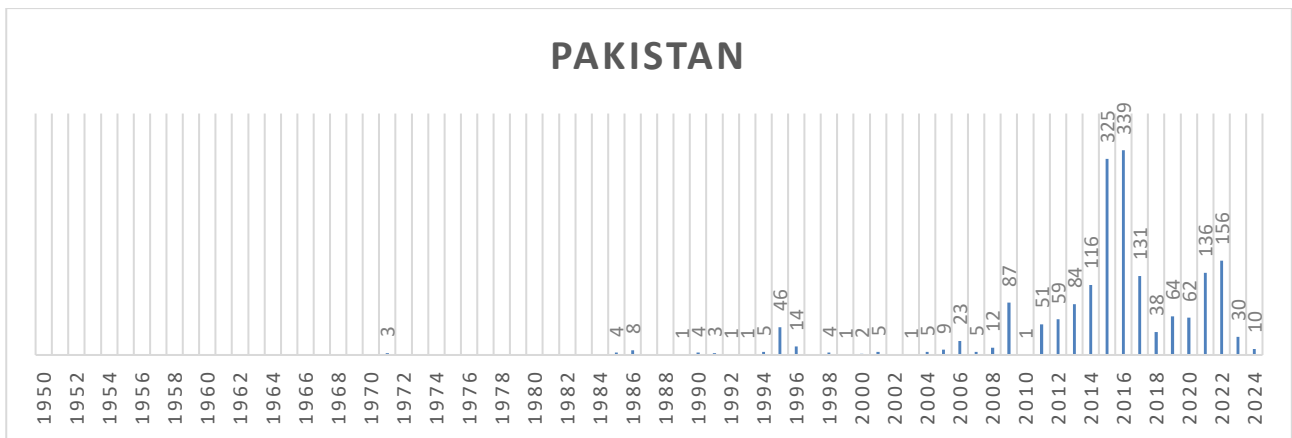
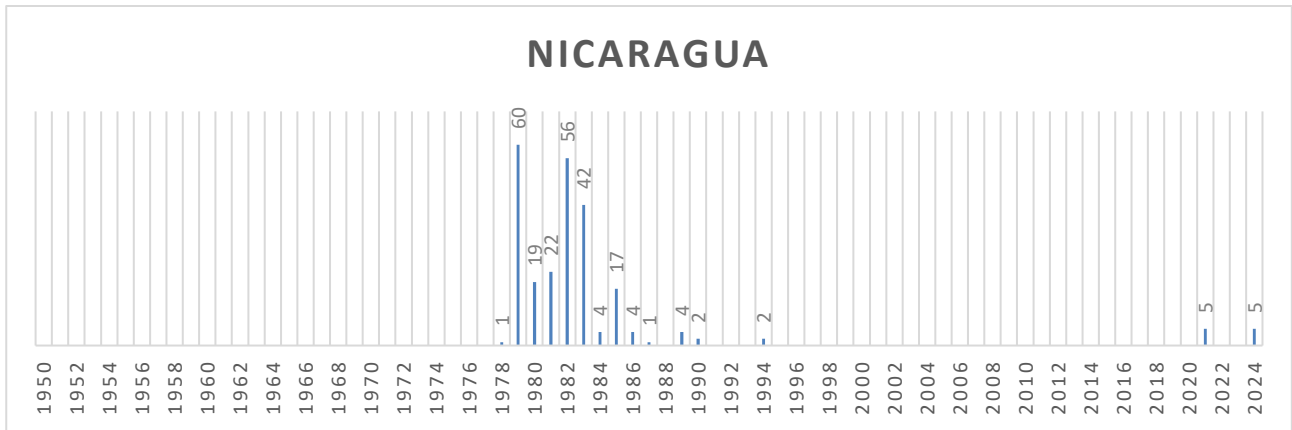


* Mexico ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2008.

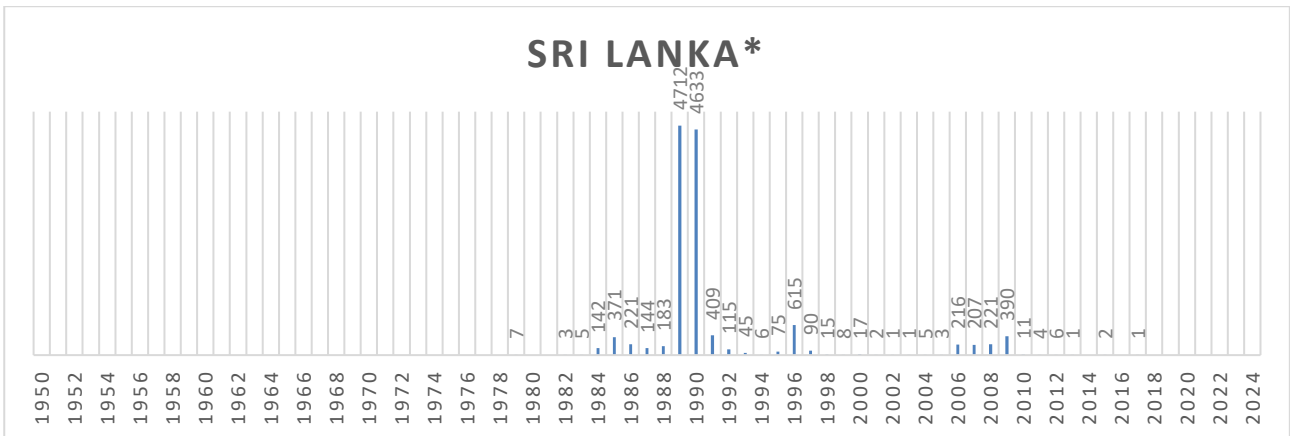
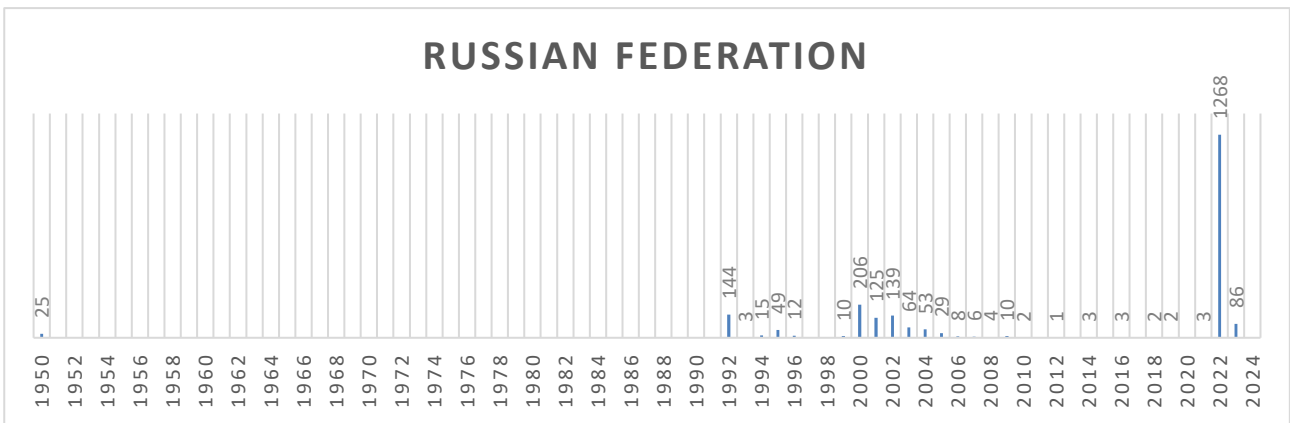
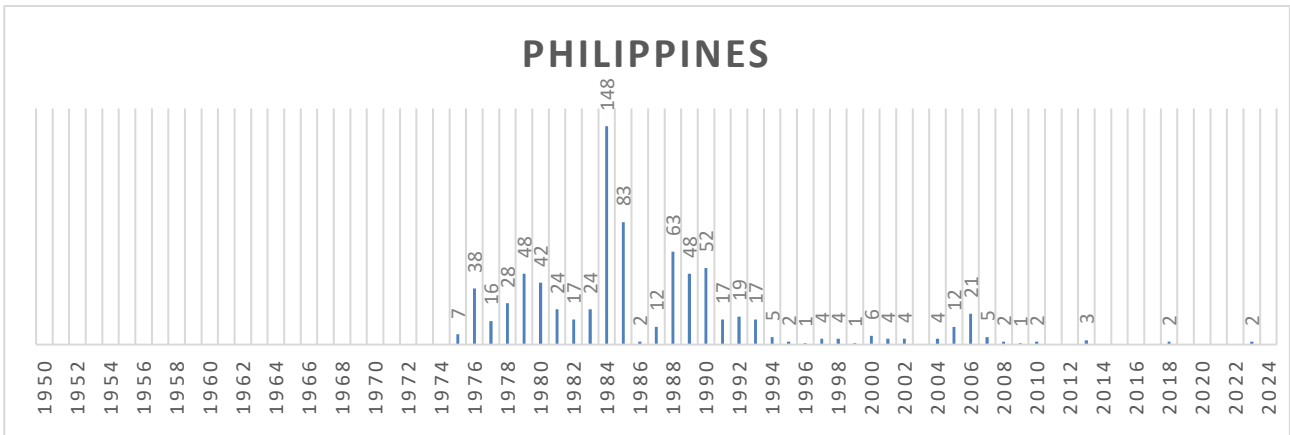


* Morocco ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2013.

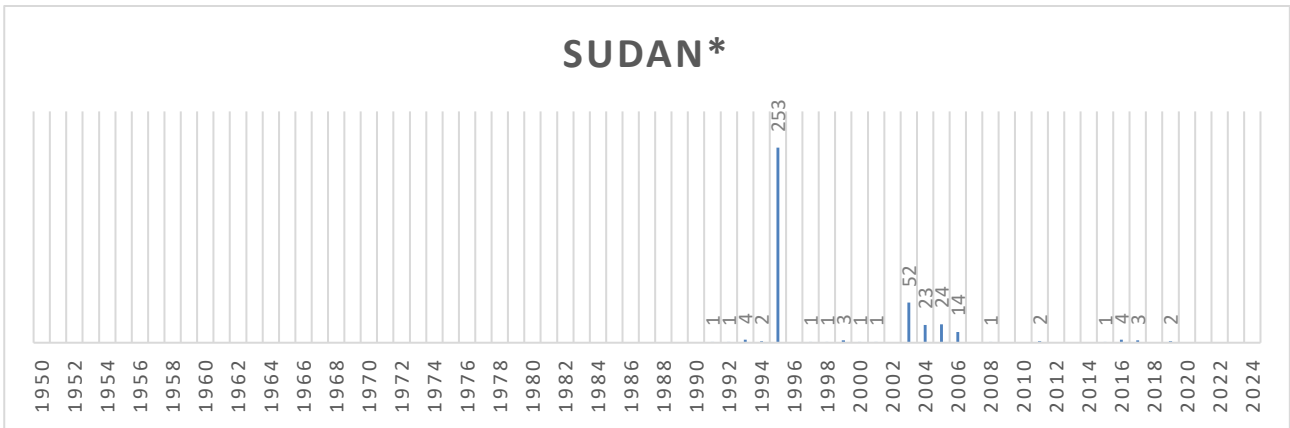




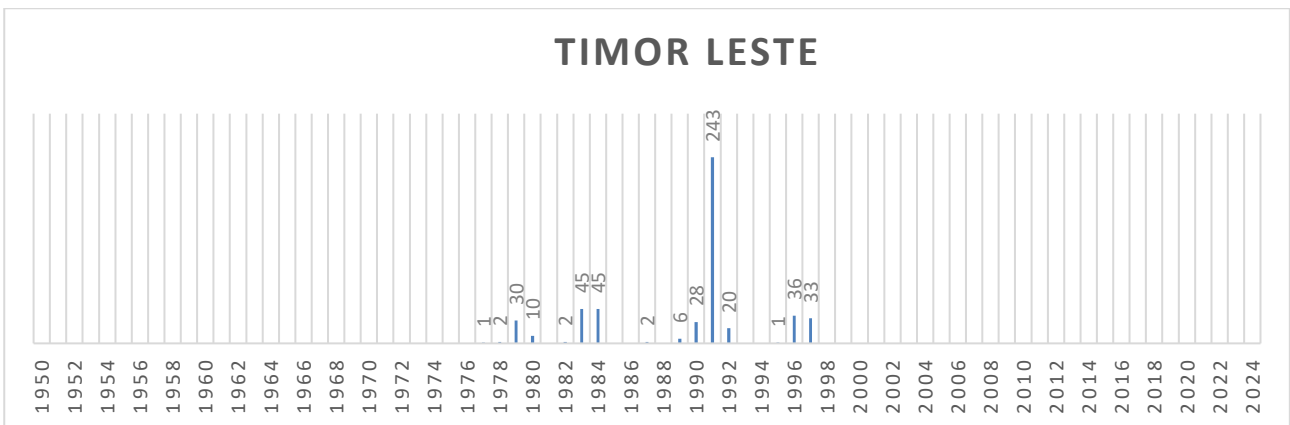
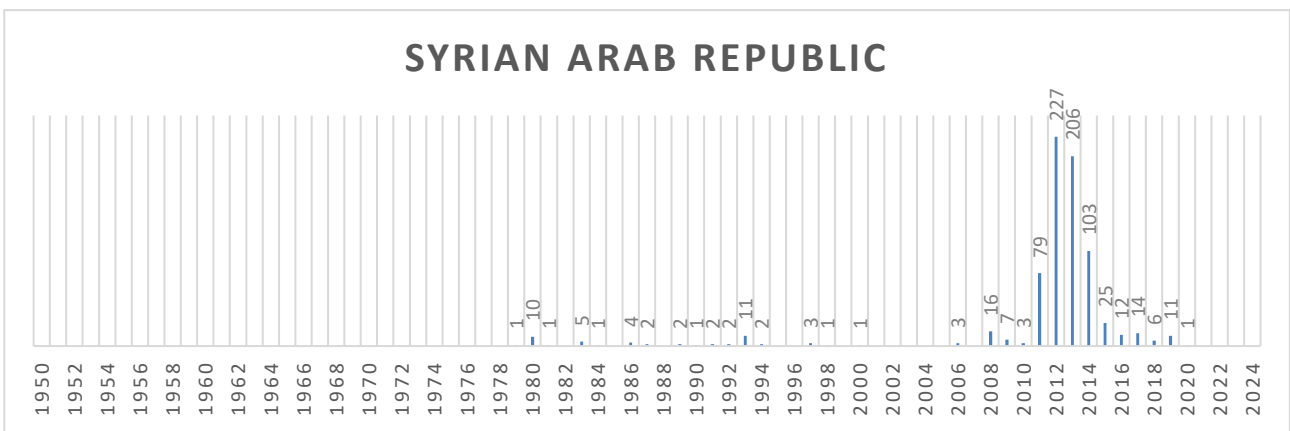
* Peru ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2012.



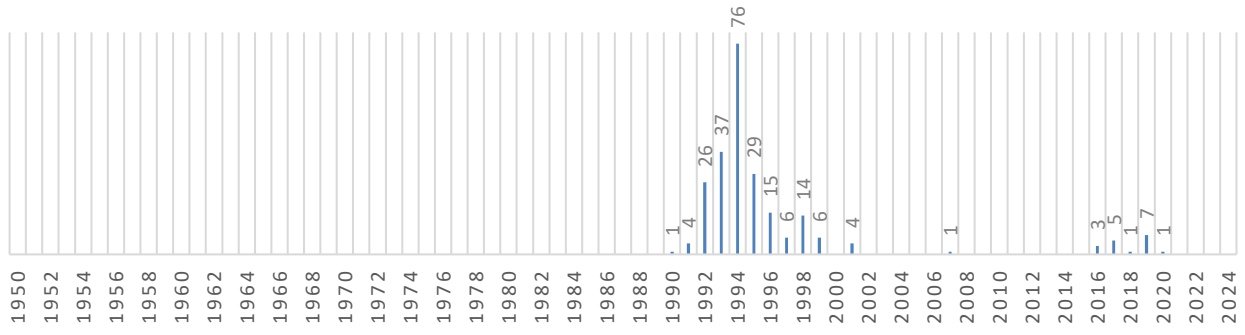
* Sri Lanka ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2016.



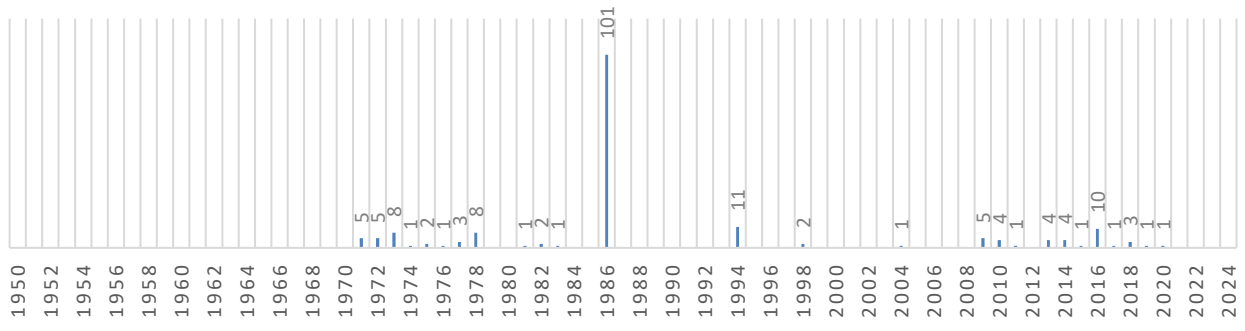
* Sudan ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2021.



TÜRKİYE



YEMEN



Annex IV

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.¹
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.²
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.³
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.⁴
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.⁵
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.⁶
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.⁷
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.⁸
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

¹ [Belarus must release all detainees held on political grounds and protect their rights: UN experts | OHCHR.](#)

² [New and emerging technologies need urgent oversight and robust transparency: UN experts | OHCHR.](#)

³ [Yemen: UN experts call for release of disappeared Bahá'ís | OHCHR.](#)

⁴ [Syria: UN experts urge General Assembly to address plight of the missing and forcibly disappeared | OHCHR.](#)

⁵ [Tajikistan: UN experts deplore criminal proceedings against human rights defenders | OHCHR.](#)

⁶ [UN experts urge Ethiopia to halt mass deportation of Eritreans | OHCHR.](#)

⁷ [Libya: UN experts alarmed at reports of trafficking in persons, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture of migrants and refugees | OHCHR.](#)

⁸ [Trinidad and Tobago: Court ruling on deportations will gravely impact refugees and migrants, UN experts say | OHCHR.](#)

arbitrary detention of lawyer and human rights defender Lu Siwei and permit him to continue his journey to reunite with his family.⁹

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.¹⁰

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.¹¹

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.¹²

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 1999.¹³

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.¹⁴

15. On 18 September 2023, the Working Group issued a media advisory announcing its 131st Session would examine more than 3000 cases from 36 countries.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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

⁹ [Lao must immediately release Chinese lawyer Lu Siwei and prevent his imminent deportation: UN experts | OHCHR.](#)

¹⁰ [UN experts alarmed by reported widespread use of rape and sexual violence against women and girls by RSF in Sudan | OHCHR.](#)

¹¹ [Enforced disappearance: UN and regional human rights experts call for justice for victims without delay | OHCHR.](#)

¹² [Mexico: UN experts outraged by attacks and killings targeting women human rights defenders | OHCHR.](#)

¹³ [Switzerland: UN experts welcome landmark trial on enforced disappearances in Belarus | OHCHR.](#)

¹⁴ [UAE and USA: UN experts warn against refoulement of ex-Guantánamo detainee and urge his immediate release | OHCHR.](#)

¹⁵ [Enforced disappearance: UN expert group to review over 3000 cases from 36 countries | OHCHR.](#)

¹⁶ [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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

19. On 12 October 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issues a press release condemning the targeted and deadly violence directed at civilians in Israel and violent and indiscriminate attacks against Palestinian civilians in Gaza and a further tightening of the unlawful blockade, which will have devastating impacts on the whole civilian population.¹⁹

20. On 17 October 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release calling on China to consider alternative solutions to forcible repatriation of North Korean escapees in line with the principle of non-refoulement guaranteed under international law.²⁰

21. On 18 October 2023, the Working Group endorsed the statement of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders calling on China to release the human rights defender Guo Feixiong, whose health has been seriously deteriorating in prison.²¹

22. On 18 October 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release urging the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the proposed counter-terrorism bill meets international human rights standards.²²

23. On 19 October 2023, the Working Group issued a press release announcing its official visit to the African Union organs with judicial and human rights mandates and other regional bodies to be conducted from 21 to 26 October 2023.²³

24. On 30 November 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release concerning the alarming escalation of violence in Sudan, particularly sexual violence committed in the conflict, primarily by the Rapid Support Forces.²⁴

25. On 8 December 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release urging the UN member States to use all measures at their disposal and their influence to promote an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.²⁵

26. On 14 December 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a statement calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza to protect the rights and futures of women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel.²⁶

27. On 19 December 2023, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release emphasising the need for the international community to support civil society groups expressing international solidarity in pursuit of peace and social justice and not to conflate international solidarity with antisemitism or islamophobia.²⁷

¹⁷ [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.](#)

¹⁸ [Lao PDR: UN expert calls out alarming pattern of violations against human rights defenders | OHCHR.](#)

¹⁹ [Israel/occupied Palestinian territory: UN experts deplore attacks on civilians, call for truce and urge international community to address root causes of violence | OHCHR.](#)

²⁰ [China must not forcibly repatriate North Korean escapees: UN experts | OHCHR.](#)

²¹ [China: UN expert urges release of human rights defender Guo Feixiong | OHCHR.](#)

²² [UN experts say Sri Lanka's counter-terrorism bill fails to heed their recommendations, status quo fundamentally unchanged | OHCHR.](#)

²³ [UN experts on enforced disappearances to visit African Union | OHCHR.](#)

²⁴ [Sudan: UN experts appalled by use of sexual violence as a tool of war | OHCHR.](#)

²⁵ [UN experts urge States to unite for peace and push for ceasefire in Gaza | OHCHR.](#)

²⁶ [Occupied Palestinian territory and Israel: UN experts call for permanent ceasefire to protect rights and futures of women and girls | OHCHR.](#)

²⁷ [Support civil society's international solidarity efforts for peace: UN experts | OHCHR.](#)

28. On 15 January 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release welcoming the recent decision by Suriname's highest court upholding the 20-year prison sentence of former President Desiré Delano Bouterse for the torture and extrajudicial execution of 15 political opponents in 1982.²⁸

29. On 19 January 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release expressing grave concern that the trial in the United Arab Emirates of 84 members of civil society on spurious terrorism charges could result in the death penalty or lengthy prison sentences for acts allegedly committed in 2010-2011.²⁹

30. On 24 January 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release hailing the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights holding that Greece had violated a Syrian refugee's right to life when its coastguards shot at a vessel carrying migrants and asylum seekers in 2014.³⁰

31. On 31 January 2023, the Working Group with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release concerning the landmark ruling by the International Court of Justice, which they noted offers the first concrete hope to protect civilians in Gaza enduring apocalyptic humanitarian conditions, destruction, mass killings, wounding and irreparable trauma.³¹

32. On 5 February 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release on the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Sudan, which has caused acute hunger and forced displacement.³²

33. On 16 February 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issues a press release on accountability for political opposition member Alexey Navalny's death in custody and immediate release of all political prisoners.³³

34. On 18 February 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release urging the de facto authorities in Sana'a to halt the imminent execution of human rights defender Fatima Al-Arwali.³⁴

35. On 23 February 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release calling for greater efforts by the international community to end Russia's war against Ukraine in line with the UN Charter and find a path of peace without delay.³⁵

36. On 7 March 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release expressing concern over reports of attacks on minorities, media and civil society in India and called for urgent corrective action as the country prepares to hold elections in early 2024.³⁶

37. On 7 March 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release urging the international community to increase pressure

²⁸ Suriname: UN experts welcome landmark ruling against former President Desiré Bouterse, urge implementation | OHCHR.

²⁹ United Arab Emirates: UN experts alarmed by new charges brought against civil society in UAE87 trial | OHCHR.

³⁰ UN experts hail landmark ruling by European Court of Human Rights on shooting by Greek Coastguard | OHCHR.

³¹ Gaza: ICJ ruling offers hope for protection of civilians enduring apocalyptic conditions, say UN experts | OHCHR.

³² Sudan: 25 million people in dire humanitarian need, say UN experts | OHCHR.

³³ Russia: UN experts call for accountability for Navalny's death and immediate release of all political prisoners | OHCHR.

³⁴ Yemen: UN experts call on Houthi de facto authorities to halt execution of human rights defender Fatima Al-Arwali | OHCHR.

³⁵ UN experts urge international community to step up efforts to forge peace between Russia and Ukraine | OHCHR.

³⁶ India: UN experts urge corrective action to protect human rights and end attacks against minorities in lead up to elections | OHCHR.

on the parties to the conflict to end grave crimes and fully comply with international law in Gaza.³⁷

38. On 11 March 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release on the disappearance of Somchai Neelapaijit, a human rights defender and senior member of two lawyers' associations in Thailand, who allegedly forcibly disappeared on 12 March 2004, calling for truth and justice on the 20th anniversary of his enforced disappearance.³⁸

39. On 14 March 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release demanding accountability for human rights defender Cao Shunli's death.³⁹

40. On 3 April 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release expressing grave concern about the confirmation of the death sentences against seven individuals by Egypt's highest court on 24 January 2024, in the so-called "Helwan Brigade" counter-terrorism case.⁴⁰

41. On 22 April 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issued a press release calling for the immediate release of human rights defender Ahmad Fahim from prison after 6 months.⁴¹

42. On 30 April 2024, the Working Group issued a press release denouncing an alarming increase in enforced disappearances of citizens exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and participating in matters of public interest is reported in Venezuela since December 2023.⁴²

43. On 9 May 2024, the Working Group, together with other Special Procedures mechanisms, issues a press release warning that former Guantánamo Bay detainee, Saeed Bakhouche, would not get a fair trial and risked renewed arbitrary detention.⁴³

³⁷ UN experts urge the international community to step up pressure to end crimes, uphold international law and save lives in Gaza | OHCHR.

³⁸ Thailand: UN experts demand truth and justice 20 years after the enforced disappearance of Somchai | OHCHR.

³⁹ China: UN experts renew calls for accountability for Cao Shunli's death | OHCHR.

⁴⁰ Egypt must halt executions, warn UN experts | OHCHR.

⁴¹ UN experts urge immediate release of Afghan rights defender | OHCHR.

⁴² Alarming rise in enforced disappearances ahead of Venezuela's presidential poll: UN experts | OHCHR.

⁴³ Former Guantánamo Bay detainee faces re-victimisation in Algeria, UN experts say | OHCHR.