



International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

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Committee on Enforced Disappearances Twenty-fifth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 471st meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 29 September 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. de Frouville

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Closure of the session

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.
** No summary records were issued for the 462nd to 470th meetings.

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The discussion covered in the summary record began at 5.05 p.m.

Closure of the session

1. **The Chair** invited Mr. Albán-Alencastro to present the Committee's informal report on the activities carried out at its twenty-fifth session.
2. **Mr. Albán-Alencastro** (Rapporteur) said that the Committee's twenty-fifth session had been held in Geneva between 11 and 29 September 2023. At the opening of the session, the Committee had paid tribute to the victims of enforced disappearance and heard the testimony of Ms. Asma Abdelraheem Mohamed Osman, whose brother had been disappeared in the Sudan. In addition, the newly elected member of the Committee, Mr. Fidelis Kanyongolo, had made his solemn declaration and the members of the Bureau for the 2023–2025 term had been elected.
3. The Committee had considered the initial reports submitted by Mauritania and Nigeria under article 29 (1) of the Convention. While the Committee had appreciated the presence of two representatives of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria at the first of the scheduled meetings, the Committee found it regrettable that the State party had not been able to send a full delegation to take part in an interactive dialogue as planned. The Committee had also considered the additional information submitted by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Mexico under article 29 (4) of the Convention, as well as the observations received from Mexico in relation to the report on the visit carried out by the Committee in 2021 under article 33 of the Convention. The Committee likewise found it regrettable that the Kingdom of the Netherlands had been unable to send a delegation to attend the meeting scheduled, which had prevented an interactive dialogue from taking place. The Committee had subsequently adopted concluding observations in respect of the four States parties. It had likewise adopted a list of issues in the absence of a report for the Central African Republic and lists of issues in relation to the initial reports submitted under article 29 (1) of the Convention by Samoa and Sri Lanka.
4. The Committee had held productive meetings with States parties and non-States parties to the Convention, other treaty bodies, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, other special procedure mandate holders and United Nations agencies, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross, civil society organizations and victims.
5. The Committee had held discussions on its working methods, specifically its rules of procedure and its approach to the reporting procedures established under article 29 of the Convention, and had adopted its report on requests for urgent action. It had also adopted the provisional agenda for its twenty-sixth session, adopted and launched its general comment No. 1 (2023) on enforced disappearances in the context of migration, continued working on its forthcoming statement on “short-term” disappearances together with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, marked, together with other human rights bodies, the first anniversary of the adoption of the joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions, and would shortly launch its practical guide to becoming a party to the Convention.
6. **The Chair** said that the practical guide, which was aimed at assisting States that wished to become parties to the Convention and at promoting the latter's universal ratification, provided answers to questions commonly raised by States when considering making that commitment and a toolkit to encourage and support States as they moved towards joining the community of actors committed to preventing and eradicating enforced disappearance and fighting against impunity for that heinous crime. The publication complemented the two-part training guide on reporting under the Convention published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which comprised a manual and a training package. The practical guide and the training guide were currently available in English on the Committee's web page and would soon be made available in French and Spanish and in hard copy in all three languages.
7. He also wished to draw attention to the publication *Recetario para la memoria*, a recipe book designed to give a face to victims of enforced disappearance in the state of

Guanajuato, Mexico, and to help their families and loved ones to keep their memory alive through their favourite recipes.

8. *At the invitation of the Chair, Ms. Gómez Lucini and Ms. Díaz, contributors to the publication, joined the meeting via video link.*

9. **Ms. Gómez Lucini** said that *Recetario para la memoria* was a gastronomic, photographic and social project conceived as a means of empowering the families of disappeared persons in the state of Guanajuato and of helping to combat the stigmatization they often suffered. More than 70 families from more than 10 cities in the state had contributed to the recipe book, which featured the favourite dishes of disappeared persons as a way to remember them and to generate funds to support efforts to search for them and to seek justice on their behalf. Since the book had first been published in 2020, the number of disappeared persons in Mexico had risen from approximately 60,000 to more than 112,000.

10. **Ms. Díaz** said that, after an 18-month search, the body of her brother Felipe, who had disappeared in the state of Guanajuato in June 2020, had been located and that his family had finally been able to bid him farewell. His disappearance had been the subject of a request for urgent action submitted to the Committee, which, she believed, had been crucial to finding him. The project, in which members of 10 search associations in the state of Guanajuato had also participated, was designed to assist victims in their efforts to obtain truth, justice and reparation and to help them to keep the memory of their disappeared loved ones alive while preserving the truth about their fate.

11. **Ms. Villa Quintana** asked how the participants in the project intended to disseminate the recipe book and to raise awareness of it among other victims of enforced disappearance.

12. **Ms. Díaz** said that the Ibero-American University (León) had distributed copies of the recipe book via other universities to help to ensure that it reached the families of disappeared persons across Mexico and further afield. A copy of the book had also been sent to all civil society organizations in Mexico, and to most of the associations involved in searching for disappeared persons in the country. A photography exhibition about the book's contents was currently taking place at the Ibero-American University (León).

13. **Ms. Gómez Lucini** said that an exhibition on the book had also been held in New York and Los Angeles. Group cooking events using recipes from the book were also being organized to help to raise awareness among persons other than activists in the field of searching for disappeared persons. An English translation of the book had been produced and funds were being sought to print a large number of copies.

14. *Ms. Gómez Lucini and Ms. Díaz withdrew.*

15. **The Chair**, thanking the members of the Petitions and Urgent Actions Section of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their work, said that, as at June 2023, the Committee had received requests for urgent action concerning 1,605 disappeared persons in some 30 countries, and that, of the 473 disappeared persons who had been located, 443 had been found alive. He wished to call upon non-governmental and civil society organizations and families of disappeared persons to keep reaching out to the Committee and providing it with feedback. The launch of the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2023) on enforced disappearances in the context of migration had opened up many potential avenues for future work. The Committee had also commemorated the first anniversary of the adoption of the joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions and had heard the testimony of victims of that crime. The ratification campaign for the Convention remained vital as the Committee pursued the goal of universal ratification. It had held a dialogue with and stood ready to support the Convention Against Enforced Disappearances Initiative, which was planning to organize a multi-stakeholder world congress on enforced disappearance with a view to agreeing on a common strategy to promote the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

16. After the customary exchange of courtesies, he declared the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances closed.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.