



INTERNATIONAL COALITION

AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

c/o AFAD Office Rms. 310-311 Philippine Social Science Center Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel: +6324907862 Email: fpicaed@gmail.com Fax: +6324546759

ICAED Statement on Bangladesh on the International Week of the Disappeared 23–27 May 2015

Every year, during the last week of May, the associations of families of the disappeared across the world commemorate the International Week of the Disappeared (IWD).

The crime of enforced disappearance has become endemic and has become a part of the trend of extrajudicial killings. Allegations by the families of the disappeared persons have been frequently raised against law-enforcement agencies. Over the years, this has been alarmingly increasing in Bangladesh. The root cause of enforced disappearance develops due to autocratic political systems and to suppress self-determination movements or peoples' movements. In the context of Bangladesh, most of the incidents of enforced disappearances occurred due to political instability where the government uses state apparatus to gag the voices of the opponent political groups and civil society activists. Political identities of the disappeared persons entail that due to their involvement in the opposition political groups, they became victims of enforced disappearance. Thus, the acts of enforced disappearance have become an institutionalized practice of repression resorted to by the government. As this is a crime perpetrated by state actors and perpetrators enjoy impunity, state agents commit enforced disappearances without qualms.

The International Week of the Disappeared was first initiated by the Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared-Detainees (FEDEFAM) in 1981 and adopted by many organizations of families of the disappeared and people's organizations world-wide. The commemoration was also meant to step up the campaign against enforced disappearances which were then at their peak during the dark years of the dictatorship in many Latin American countries.

The International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED) has been campaigning for the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance based on documentation of cases of enforced disappearance in Bangladesh that have occurred since 2009. In Bangladesh, from 2009 to April 2016, a total number of 258 people have allegedly disappeared. Among this large number, 37 people were found dead after being disappeared; 105 persons were surfaced alive after being produced before the courts and shown as having been arrested



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in criminal cases, a long time after being disappeared. The whereabouts of 116 are still unknown. Families of the disappeared people allege that the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), police and Detective Branch (DB) of the police were involved in the incidents of enforced disappearance.

Till now 95 states have signed and 51 are parties to the International Convention of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. On the International Week of the Disappeared, ICAED urges the Government of Bangladesh to put to a stop enforced disappearances and other human rights violations, conduct a thorough investigation on existing cases and bring perpetrators to justice. Moreover, ICAED demands that the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances thoroughly investigate and act on each incident of disappearance and call the attention of the Government of Bangladesh to ferret out the truth on the fate and whereabouts of the victims. Finally, ICAED expresses its solidarity with its sisters and brothers in Bangladesh in their call to the government to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to establish human rights and promote the rule of law.

Ratify and Implement the Convention on Enforced Disappearances NOW!

Respect the Right Not to be subjected to Enforced Disappearance!