



A Statement by ICAED on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2018

**WORLD: History of Human Rights Day should inspire States to afford justice and human dignity to citizens**

The people's struggles for affording human rights continue after seventy years of adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The inconsistency between the States' pledges to adhere to international human rights norms and implementing them domestically is strongly visible across the world. Despite certain institutional developments in a number of Western states gross violations of human rights are an everyday phenomena in the life of citizens born in our planet.

The world celebrates 'development' in building infrastructures, economy as well as immense innovations in science, medicine, and technology for the convenience of the people. In fact, majority population of the planet earth does not have access to the developments and innovations let alone making their life safe and dignified. Dignity of all human being beyond his or her race, gender, ethnicity, faith, or political and ideological affiliation is still a far cry.

The global picture of enforced disappearances expose the fact that many States lack commitment to protect their own citizens from this 'crime against humanity'. The latest report of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) shows a grave picture. The WGEID alone, since its inception, has handled 57,149 cases of enforced disappearances worldwide, with 45,499 cases from 92 States still unresolved as of 2 May 2018. As a matter of fact, the actual number of enforced disappearances is many times higher than this figure. Among the cases handled by the WGEID: 5,590 are from the States of Africa; 26, 840 from Asia Pacific States; 819 from the States of Eastern Europe; 108 are from the States of Western Europe and other groups; 12,138 disappearances are from the States of Latin America and the Caribbean Group (GRULAC); and 4 cases are from the Observers.

Such a huge number of cases from 92 States deserve sincere response with commitments to address the issues related to disappearances. Since the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) entry into force 12 years ago 59 States have ratified or acceded to the treaty. Among the State Parties 17 from Africa, 4 from Asia Pacific, 9 from Eastern Europe, 15 from GRULAC and 11 are from Western Europe.

These State Parties have made reservation on Article 31 of the Convention, which bars the victims to seek intervention from the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) of the UN. In another word, without recognising the competence of the CED the State Parties prevent themselves and their citizens to benefit from the expertise of the independent experts of the UN. As a result, the ratification or accession does not help the States Parties to achieve anything other than their names shown in the list of accession or ratification. This reality once again teaches the lesson that universal ratification is needed now more than ever.

Continuation of enforced disappearances or absence of justice to the families of the disappeared establishes a fact that the criminal justice institutions are dysfunctional in the given States. This truth



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deserves to be acknowledged, at first, to make progress in addressing the deepened problems centred to the crime of enforced disappearances. All the States where enforced disappearances are inflicted, either in the past or continuously happening at present, need to realise that they are destroying their own social fabric by committing the crime and depriving justice to the families. All the States should initiate credible investigation into the allegations of enforced disappearances immediately. The true prosperity and development can only be achieved through affording justice and ensuring dignity to the citizens as human beings.

On the World Human Rights Day every State can begin enhancing the competence of their domestic criminal justice mechanism so that the citizens' life become safe, peaceful and prosperous at their own jurisdictions. The history behind the recognition of the Human Rights Day should inspire the States, their political leaderships, and bureaucrats to avoid populism, authoritarianism, and coercive system of governance.

On behalf of ICAED,

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