



# INTERNATIONAL COALITION

## AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

c/o AFAD Office Rms. 310-311 Philippine Social Science Center Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City  
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### **End Enforced Disappearances!**

### **End Impunity!**

We must not forget the important historical lessons from the thousands of activists, children and innocent citizens who disappeared in Latin America at the height of the military and civilian dictatorships in the 70s and 80s. Many of those who disappeared chose to question the failure of many governments to implement measures that will address poverty, unemployment and promote civil, political and economic liberties of the people. Since then, the phenomenon of enforced disappearance has continued to spread throughout the world.

The strong commitment of our colleagues in Latin America to search for the disappeared loved ones, and to journey for justice is a very powerful force that continues to inspire the world until today. In 1981, the Latin American Federation of Associations for Relatives of Disappeared Detainees (FEDEFAM) chose the 30<sup>th</sup> of August as the International Day of the Disappeared. This action institutionalizes the campaign against forced disappearances and the inhumane practices of detaining and torturing dissidents and opposition members in undisclosed prisons. The International Day of the Disappeared gained official international recognition by the United Nations in 2010.

In our struggle, each member-organization of the International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED) has been actively campaigning to sensitize the public and to push governments to implement actions against enforced disappearances. There are small and great victories. Two ratifications of the Convention have been achieved in Portugal and Togo during the first eight months of 2014. In Latin America, Estella Carlotto, the President of the famous Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo of Argentina is a symbolic reminder that we must not give up hope and we must persevere in our search for truth and justice. Her pregnant daughter, Laura Carlotto was disappeared by the military during the Dirty War and after she gave birth to her son in 1978 she was killed by her captors. Thirty-seven years after, Estella Carlotto, now 83 years old, has recently been able to embrace her long-lost grandchild, Guido Carlotto, the 114 grandchild found by the grandmothers in Argentina through the power of DNA. A 115<sup>th</sup> grandchild has recently been found....

Further, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (the Convention) has now has 43 ratifications and 93 signatories. These milestones have encouraged more contributions from the global community and the civil society, while we continue to fight against enforced disappearances and the culture of impunity and violence.

*The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED) gathers organisations of families of disappeared and NGO's that work in a non-violent manner against the practice of enforced disappearances at the local, national and international level. The principal objective of ICAED is an early ratification and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances.*



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As of August 2014 the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) recorded 43,000 unresolved cases, some of these crimes were committed decades ago. ICAED is concerned because the figure is alarming, especially with the current situations in Bangladesh, Jammu and Kashmir in India, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Iraq and other countries. These states are being weighed down by persistent practices of corruption and human rights violations in a massive scale. There is an evident implication that more victims of disappearances remain unreported.

It is unquestionable that until today, the states' practices of enforced disappearances continue and as a consequence of the governments' lack of political will, the court proceedings of the pending cases of involuntary disappearances are slowing down. These negative developments are not acceptable in the era when democracy is perceived sovereign.

***Today, as we commemorate the International Day of the Disappeared, the 52 member-organizations of ICAED in Africa, Asia, Europe, Euro-Mediterranean Region, North America and Latin America share the solidarity and struggle to render justice to the disappeared and their families, end enforced disappearances and impunity. We are consistent with our stand, it is imperative for the governments to ratify the Convention, and the states parties must recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, criminalize enforced disappearances and ensure that the families of victims are granted full assistance as they establish the whereabouts of their disappeared loved-ones and as they journey to achieve truth and justice.***

Manila, Philippines, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014

**MARY AILEEN D. BACALSO, Focal Person**

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