NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 13 | NOVEMBER 2025

WORKING GROUP ON ENFORCED OR INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES



137TH SESSION

(15-24 SEPTEMBER 2025)

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Interative dialogue with #HRC60
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- Universal criminal jurisdiction

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- Joint statement on short term disappearances

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FOLLOW US ON X AND BLUESKY !

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Country visit to Guatemala

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN MEMORIAM

137th session of the Working Group

15-24 SEPTEMBER 2025 | PALAIS DES NATIONS

Humanitarian and monitoring procedures

Urgent procedure

Between 3 May 2025 and 24 September 2025, the Working Group transmitted 404 reported cases of enforced disappearances under its urgent action procedure concerning Algeria, Burundi, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Iran, Israel, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Acts tantamount to enforced disappearances

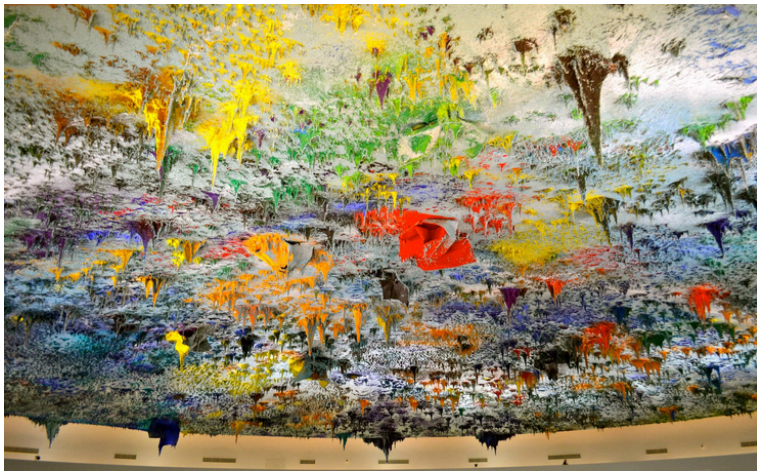
In accordance with its methods of work, the Working Group continued to document acts tantamount to enforced disappearances committed by non-State actors exercising government-like functions or de facto control over territory and population. Between 3 May and 24 September 2025, the Working Group decided to transmit 13 such cases to de facto authorities in Afghanistan, Libya, and north-east Syria.

Standard procedure

During the session, the Working Group reviewed 913 newly reported cases under its standard procedure and updated information on previously transmitted cases, concerning Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, China, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Iran, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Viet Nam.

Internal deliberations

During the 137th session, members examined responses from various Governments to several communications transmitted jointly with other Special Procedures mandate-holders. They also reviewed and adopted general allegations concerning obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in El Salvador, Indonesia/Timor Leste, Lebanon and Tanzania. These general allegations are made public 60 days after being transmitted to the State concerned.



Interactive dialogue with #HRC60

On 16 September 2025, the Chair of the Working Group, Ms. Gabriella Citroni, presented the annual report to the 60th session of the Human Rights Council, highlighting the transmission of 1,280 new cases of enforced disappearance to 38 States, including 927 urgent cases. Nine cases were also sent to de facto authorities in Libya, Myanmar, north-east Syria, and Yemen.

READ THE ANNUAL **REPORT**

Many cases relate to armed conflict, notably in Ukraine and Gaza, where patterns suggest crimes against humanity. Similar concerns arise in Burundi, Venezuela, and Tanzania amid electoral violence. Despite repeated requests, no responses have been received regarding over 3,000 individuals, prolonging families' suffering. Cases also involve disappearances linked to migration, deportations, transnational transfers, and counter-terrorism operations. A total of 20 Member States provided information which led to the clarification of 231 cases.

As regards the UN liquidity crisis, Ms. Cirtroni stressed that it continues to severely hinder the Working Group's mandate. In 2024, only one country visit was possible, and none could be conducted in 2025 despite multiple invitations. To preserve three annual sessions, including one outside Geneva, a mandated visit was cancelled. She thanked Thailand for hosting the Working Group in May 2025 and looked forward to the 2026 session in Côte d'Ivoire. Technical cooperation continued during the reporting period, including a visit to Bangladesh's Commission for Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance. States were urged to ratify the Convention and recognize the Committee's competence. While Bangladesh and Poland joined as States parties, no new ratifications followed the first World Congress on Enforced Disappearances, despite strong participation and pledges.

MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During the session, the Working Group held meetings with representatives of the Governments of Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Japan, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania and authorities of the State of Palestine.

It also held in person and online meetings with relatives of disappeared persons, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders, including members of the Brazilian Parliament, the Group of Independent Experts on Nicaragua, the Designated Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria, the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

#HRC60 Side-events on Burundi, China and Venezuela

On 19 September 2025, the International Federation of ACATs (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture) convened a side-event on the urgent need to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Burundi**, in light of escalating violations linked to the electoral context. The discussion underscored the deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi, particularly in relation to elections. Speakers raised alarm over the worsening socio-economic conditions, exacerbated by the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The event also drew attention to transnational repression, including acts of reprisals and intimidation targeting Burundian human rights defenders in exile. Panellists included Mr. Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi; Ms. Baldé from the WGEID; Ms. Marie Louise Baricako, President of the INAMAHORO Movement - Women and Girls for Peace and Security; and Mr. Armel Niyongere, President of ACAT Burundi and Secretary-General of SOS Torture Burundi.

On 9 September 2025, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (NCHRD), Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Service for Human Rights co-hosted a side-event on the human rights situation in **China**, including developments in Hong Kong, Tibet, and the Uyghur region (Xinjiang). The event reviewed key patterns of violations and assessed the implementation of Special Procedures recommendations over recent years, notably the December 2022 "Xinjiang benchmarks". Speakers included Ms. Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Ms. Rizwangul NurMuhammed, Uyghurs at UN Initiative; Ms. Sophie Richardson, NCHRD; and Mr. Yalkun Uluyol, Human Rights Watch. Ms. Delgadillo Pérez of the WGEID contributed a pre-recorded video statement. VIEW THE EVENT HERE

On 19 September 2025, a side-event on the human rights situation in **Venezuela** was convened by human rights defenders in collaboration with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Held in parallel to the presentation of the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela, the event focused on the escalating politically motivated persecution in the country, particularly in the aftermath of the 28 July 2024 presidential election. The event aimed to amplify the voices of Venezuelan human rights defenders and draw international attention to the ongoing crimes against humanity. Among the speakers was Ms. Delgadillo Pérez, representing the WGEID, who highlighted the systemic nature of enforced disappearances and the lack of institutional accountability in Venezuela.



#HRC60 Side-event on the Addis Abbeba Roadmap

On 24 September 2025, the Working Group participated in a joint side-event at the Human Rights Council's 60th session, organized in the framework of the Addis Ababa Roadmap on cooperation between the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and the ACHPR.

The event was co-convened with DefendDefenders and brought together UN and African experts, State representatives, and civil society actors to discuss strategies for strengthening the protection of civic space and advancing cooperation between the two systems. Opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Aua Baldé (WGEID), Mr. Idrissa Sow (ACHPR Commissioner), Mr. Felix Osei Boateng (Permanent Mission of Ghana), and Mr. Joseph Bikanda (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network). The discussion was moderated by Mr. Clement Voulé, former Special Rapporteur, with closing remarks by Ms. Bafou Jeng from the Permanent Mission of the Gambia.

NEW THEMATIC REPORTS | LNED & UCJ



REPORT ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES IN THE DEFENSE OF LAND, NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

WATCH THE EVENT **HERE**

On 22 September 2025, Ms. Delgadillo Pérez (WGEID) presented the new report of the Working Group on "enforced disappearances in the context of the defense of land, natural resources, and the environment". The event was co-hosted with EMRIP, Front Line Defenders, Global Witness, Global Rights Advocacy, and the Berkeley Human Rights Clinic, and broadcast by the Geneva Environmental Network. Read the press release here.

The report examines the global rise in enforced disappearances targeting land, natural resources, and environmental defenders (LNED), often occurring amid discrimination, weak rule of law, and economic interests - with State complicity. It highlights the disproportionate impact on Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities, and rural populations, and the role of business and financial actors. The report outlines risk factors, impunity patterns, and legal obligations of State and non-State actors, offering recommendations for prevention, accountability, and reparations.

Participants included Ms. Anexa Alfred Cunningham (EMRIP President), Mr. Albert K. Barume (Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples) and and Ms. Citroni (Chair-Rapporteur, WGEID). Other speakers were Hon. Mr. Idrissa Sow (ACHPR), H.E. Mr. Michele Cervone d'Urso (EU Delegation), Ms. Pinnapa Prueksapan (via video), Ms. Miriam Miranda (OFRANEH), Mr. Ahmed Mefreh (Committee for Justice), and Ms. Alejandra Gonza (Global Rights Advocacy, via video).

REPORT ON UNIVERSAL CRIMINAL JURISDICTION IN CASES OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

WATCH THE WEBINAR **HERE**



Vice-Chair Ms. Grażyna Baranowska presented the new report of the Working Group on uniuversal criminal jurisdiction (UCJ) in cases of enforced disappearance, underscoring its importance for accountability and a victim-centred approach to international crimes.

The report provides an in-depth analysis of experiences in Argentina, France, Germany, and Switzerland, citing both ongoing and completed investigations. The report recalls that the *jus cogens* prohibition of enforced disappearance obliges all States to take measures to prevent impunity - either by prosecuting perpetrators under domestic and international law or by cooperating with States that do so.

The Working Group found that universal jurisdiction cases on enforced disappearance remain rare, largely due to States not codifying it as a distinct crime or applying overly narrow definitions. Such acts are often treated as ancillary offenses, and immunity protections frequently block proceedings. The report highlights the role of specialized institutions, structural investigations, and international cooperation in advancing accountability for enforced disappearances. It also identifies major barriers to the safe and effective participation of victims, witnesses, and civil society in universal jurisdiction proceedings.

The report was presented during the webinar "Tools for Justice and Accountability: Universal Criminal Jurisdiction over Enforced Disappearances", co-organized by the Working Group and the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute, with support from leading legal associations.

LAUNCHING EVENT | WATCH HERE

JOINT STATEMENT ON SHORT TERM DISAPPEARANCES

On 23 September 2025, the WGEID co-hosted a side-event with the CED to present their joint statement on short-term enforced disappearances, adopted in September 2024. The statement affirms that no minimum duration is required for an enforced disappearance and outlines States' obligations to prevent, investigate, and ensure justice.

Facilitated by the Geneva Academy, the event addressed global trends, victim challenges, and prevention strategies. The event was moderated by Mr. Felix Kirchmeier (Geneva Human Rights Platform), with speakers Mr. Juan Pablo Alban Alencastro (CED Rapporteur), Ms. Baranowska (Vice-Chair, WGEID), and Mr. Carlos Lusverti (ICJ Latin America Legal Advisor).

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

READ THE REPORT

WATCH THE PRESENTATION HERE

VISIT TO BANGLADESH | 15-18 JUNE 2025



As part of its technical cooperation with the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances in Bangladesh, the Working Group conducted a four-day visit to the country from 15 to 18 June 2025. The delegation was composed of Ms. Baranowska and Ms. Delgadillo Pérez. During the visit, the Working Group met with representatives of the Interim Government, including the Chief Advisor and the Chief of Army Staff, as well as with the prosecution team of the International Crimes Tribunal and the Commission of Inquiry. The delegation also held meetings with human rights defenders, lawyers, academics, journalists, political party representatives, victims' platforms, and other civil society actors.

Following the visit, the Working Group provided technical advice to both the Interim Government and the Commission of Inquiry, and has continued its engagement to support the implementation of recommended measures. These include enacting legislation on enforced disappearances, strengthening independent human rights institutions, and establishing protection mechanisms for victims, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

On 15 September 2025, the Working Group hosted a public event to present the technical advice, with Ms. Baranowska and Ms. Delgadillo Pérez as speakers. The event also featured Ms. Livia Cosenza, Human Rights Officer at the Asia-Pacific Section of OHCHR, and representatives from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh.

REVIEW OF CHILE'S SEARCH PLAN

As part of ongoing technical cooperation efforts of the Working Group, Ms. Delgadillo Pérez will undertake a review of the Search Plan in Chile. In the context of this review, Ms. Delgadillo Pérez will visit the country to hold meetings with a range of stakeholders, including Government authorities, victims, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant actors.

BERKELEY TRAINING FOR COLOMBIA'S SEARCH UNIT

From 28 to 21 July 2025, Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in the online training about Open Source Investigation from the Berkeley Human Rights Clinic, which was organised in the context of the ongoing technical cooperation provided to the Unit for Searching from Colombia.

Annual meeting with the CED

On 23 September 2025, the Working Group also held its yearly joint meeting with the CED to discuss respective activities and common projects.

Post-sessional report

After each session, the Working Group publishes a report summarizing its activities, including transmitted cases and general allegations of obstacles to implementing the Declaration. The report for the 137th session will be available soon.

UN and Regional Bodies



WATCH HER ADDRESS HERE

80TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 21 October 2025, Ms. Citroni (Chair-Rapporteur) addressed the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, presenting the annual report, the thematic studies on enforced disappearances in the context of the defence of land, environment and natural resources and universal criminal jurisdiction in cases of enforced disappearance and the country visit report to Lithuania.

While in New York, Ms. Citroni held bilateral meetings with members states, and she also met with civil society organizations, to discuss issues of enforced disappearance.

85TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS



On 19 to 25th October 2025, Ms. Baldé and Ms. Delgadillo Pérez represented the Working Group at the 85th Session of the ACHPR in Banjul, The Gambia in line with the Addis Ababa Roadmap. The members participated in side-events and panels on various topics including: "Enforced Disappearances and Reparations"; "Enforced Disappearances in the Context of the Defence of Land, Natural Resources, and the Environment"; "The role of African Human Rights Institutions in Responding to the Intensifying Crackdown on Civil Liberties and Human Rights Defenders ahead of Elections in East Africa", and "Extrajudicial Killings in the Context of the Fight against Terrorism in Africa".

READ HER STATEMENT HERE

Ms. Delgadillo Pérez also delivered a statement during the open session under Agenda Item 4 on the situtation of human rights in Africa. The members held bilateral meetings with the Ministry of Justice of the Gambia, National Human Rights Instittutions and civil society organisations. The members also had the opportunity to visit Memory House, a memorial centre run by ANEKED to commemorate the numerous victims of human rights violations including enforced disappearances. The Working Group also welcomes and congratulates Commissioner Hon. Mr. Idrissa Sow, on his election as the Chairperson of the ACHPR and looks forward to the continue its cooperation under his leadership.

OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES FROM **MAY** TO **OCTOBER** 2025

- 14 May 2025 - Ms. Baranowska delivered an intervention on missing migrants as forcibly disappeared persons during the event “Mapping Absence: Global Explorations of Disappearances in Art, Law and Social Science” at the Centre for Latin American Studies, Stanford University.
- 22 May 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez provided training to U.S.-based organizations, while Ms. Citroni delivered the intervention “La disparition forcée en tant que notion juridique et la réalité en Amérique Latine” at the event “Disparition forcée et impunité: Le cas de Colonia Dignidad et le Plan National de recherche au Chili”, organized by Comité Mémoire et Justice, LatinoLab, and the National Human Rights Network at the University of Geneva.
- 27 May 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez joined the panel “La instrumentalización autoritaria del derecho: Represión y censura en El Salvador”, organized by Fundación Böll and Comité por la Solidaridad de El Salvador en México.
- 28 May 2025 - Ms. Citroni introduced the seminar “Sparizione forzata di persone migranti in Messico” with the screening of the documentary Toshkua at the University of Milano-Bicocca. On 29 May, she also spoke at the Foro Internacional para la Semana Internacional del Detenido Desaparecido in Mexico, addressing the Convention and the fight against enforced disappearances in Latin America.
- Early June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez gave interviews to NTN24 and CNN about the enforced disappearances of Venezuelan migrants and the case of Ruth López in El Salvador.
- 5 June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez and Ms. Baranowska met with an NGO from Balochistan, while Ms. Citroni was interviewed by HuffPost.
- 6 June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez conducted a training on enforced disappearances for U.S. civil society.
- 7 June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez gave interviews to Prensa Gráfica and El Faro regarding the disappearance and arbitrary detention of Ruth López. That same day, Mr. Mohammed Al-Obaidi participated in a training workshop organized by FIND for governmental and judicial institutions in the Philippines, delivering a lecture on the ongoing nature of enforced disappearance and its impact on judicial processes.
- 9 June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in a video about the disappearance and detention of Eduardo Torres, a human rights defender from PROVEA, Venezuela.
- 12 June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez joined the online forum for the presentation of the book The Price of Truth, marking five years since the disappearance of Wanchalerm Satsaksit.
- 16 June 2025 - Ms. Citroni participated in the expert seminar “Strategies and Prospects in Prosecuting Enforced Disappearances: Harmonizing the Law and Coordinating Actors”, co-organized by the Geneva Human Rights Platform and the Paris Human Rights Centre.
- 23 June 2025 - Ms. Delgadillo Pérez joined an online meeting with various organizations to discuss the situation of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh.
- 24–25 June 2025 - Ms. Citroni delivered an intervention titled “Searchers in the Crosshairs: The Abuse of Technology” at the Symposium on New Technologies and the Missing, co-organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and WGEID in Geneva.
- 27 June 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in an online meeting with families and NGOs from Venezuela to discuss the situation of enforced disappearances in the country.
- 1 July 2025 – Mr. Al-Obaidi gave a television interview with Al Jazeera News Channel on enforced disappearances in Gaza, presenting the Working Group’s efforts on submitted cases.
- 8 July 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez was interviewed by CNN about Venezuelan migrants in El Salvador.
- 14 July 2025 – Ms. Citroni was interviewed by The New York Times on enforced disappearances in the context of deportations by the United States.
- 17 July 2025: Ms. Baldäe met with Paula Wojcikiewicz Almeida and her team of researchers, Gertúlio Vargas Foundation, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

INTERSESSIONAL FROM **MAY** TO **OCTOBER** 2025 ACTIVITIES

- 19 July 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez joined an online meeting with NGOs and stakeholders from Venezuela on enforced disappearances.
- 24 July 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez also participated in an online meeting with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team and Situ organization to explore future cooperation.
- 25 July 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez met Amnesty International to discuss enforced disappearances in Bangladesh.
- 28–31 July 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez took part in an online Open Source Investigation training led by the Berkeley Human Rights Clinic for Colombia's Unit for Searching.
- 1 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in the webinar "Migration in the Americas: Nicaragüenses en Estados Unidos", organized by the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- 2 August 2025 – La Prensa, Nicaragua published an interview with Ms. Delgadillo Pérez on enforced disappearances of migrants in the U.S..
- 7 August 2025 – Ms. Citroni gave an interview (in Italian) to Osservatorio Diritti Umani on enforced disappearances in Gaza.
- 8 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez joined an online meeting with a Guatemalan NGO to discuss enforced disappearances.
- 14 August 2025 – Ms. Citroni delivered an intervention titled "New Trends and Ongoing Challenges Concerning Enforced Disappearance" at the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.
- 15 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez held meetings with Global Witness and the American Bar Association's Justice Defenders Africa.
- 19 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in an online meeting with Front Line Defenders.
- 21 August 2025 – Ms. Citroni joined the Judicial Dialogue on the Implementation of the Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance Act in Bangkok, Thailand.
- 27 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in the online panel La búsqueda de personas detenidas como política de Estado, organized by the South America Regional Office of OHCHR, and another panel with Venezuelan NGOs.



Ms. Citroni on Aljazeera

- 28 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez was interviewed by TN21, while Ms. Baranowska joined a panel organized by EUROMED Rights on the legal framework for missing and deceased migrants traveling from Africa to South-West Europe.
- 29 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in two online forums: one with OHCHR Peru, and another for the presentation of the report "¿Dónde más busco? Vidas suspendidas, desapariciones forzadas en Nicaragua, organized by UDJ, IM-Defensoras, and Raza e Igualdad. Ms. Baranowska delivered an intervention at the BBPA Annual Conference titled "Victims of Enforced Disappearances: Legal Framework & UN Working Group" and spoke to BBC about enforced disappearances in Gaza aid distribution sites.
- 30 August 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez appeared in a video on enforced disappearances in Venezuela with the International Commission of Jurists. Ms. Citroni was interviewed by BBC Mundo and Ms. Baldé participated through video message in an event organised by FOCODE entitled "Activités commémoratives: journée internationale des victimes des disparitions forcées."
- 2 September 2025 – Ms. Baranowska gave interviews to ARTde and Novaya Gazeta on enforced disappearances in Gaza and Russia, respectively.
- 5 September 2025: Ms. Baldé was interviewed by the news outlet the Exclusive Africa
- 9–10 September 2025 – Ms. Delgadillo Pérez participated in the forum Migration and Mass Graves at Bournemouth University, UK.
- 24 September 2025 - Ms. Baldé participated in a side-event entitled "UN and African Experts working together around the UN Human Rights Council".
- 25 September 2025 - Ms. Baldé participated in a retreat on the Addis Ababa roadmap, engaging Special Porcedures mandate-holders, African Commission and CSOs.
- 6 October 2025 – Ms. Citroni and Ms. Baranowska spoke at the International Bar Association webinar "Tools for Justice and Accountability: Universal Criminal Jurisdiction over Enforced Disappearances".
- 8–9 October 2025 – Mr. Al-Obaidi participated in the Doha Conference on the Protection of Journalists in Armed Conflict, presenting the Working Group's role in protecting journalists from enforced disappearance.
- On 22 October 2025, Ms Gabriella Citroni was interviewed by Aljazeera.

"Any act of enforced disappearance is an offence to human dignity. It is condemned as a denial of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and as a grave and flagrant violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"

Article 1 (1) of the 1992 Declaration

PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES



Song of the Union y Red nacional de Búsqueda dePersonas Desaparecidas from Mexico.

LISTEN HERE

(In Spanish)

READ IT HERE



Read the article on the report of the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances in the Context of the Defense of Land, Natural Resources, and the Environment, and the advisory opinion OC-32/25 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Gracias CEJIL por el espacio.

WHAT'S NEXT

THEMATIC STUDY ON MEMORIALIZATION

CALL FOR INPUTS AVAILABLE **HERE**

The Working Group continued its efforts on the thematic study addressing memorialization in the context of enforced disappearances. The study aims to examine the relationship between memorialization and enforced disappearances, with particular attention to:

1. The legal obligations of States in relation to memorialization;
2. Good practices in commemorative initiatives, whether led by States or civil society actors; and
3. The protection of individuals—especially family members—who engage in commemorative practices, as well as safeguarding memorials and related initiatives from attacks or interference.

As part of the preparatory work, the Working Group organized a webinar in collaboration with the Memory Studies Association titled "Memorialization and Enforced Disappearances: Good Practices and Protections for Persons Engaged in Memorialization", held on 21 October 2025. The session was moderated by Ms. Baranowska and featured expert contributions from Dr. Silvana Mandolessi (KU Leuven), Prof. Cath Collins (Universidad Diego Portales, Chile and Ulster University), and Dra. Ulrike Capdepón (University Department for Ibero- and Latin American Studies, CUCSH, Universidad de Guadalajara).

2026 COUNTRY VISIT TO GUATEMALA

The Working Group will undertake its next country visit to Guatemala. It expresses its appreciation to the Government for accepting the visit. The timing of the visit is currently under discussion and will be announced in due course. In preparation, the Working Group will issue a call for contributions, inviting all interested organizations and stakeholders to submit relevant information.

138TH SESSION (JANUARY 2026)

The 138th session of the Working Group is scheduled to take place from 26 to 30 January 2026. However, due to the ongoing liquidity crisis, both the dates and format of the session remain subject to change. Any updates will be communicated in due course.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXTERNAL SUPPORT RECEIVED DURING THIS PERIOD



Due to the ongoing financial crisis affecting the United Nations, the Working Group sought external funding to carry out essential activities - particularly those that enable it to reach the field, connect with families of disappeared persons, and disseminate its mandate. In this regard, the Working Group extends its sincere gratitude to the following individuals, organizations, and institutions for their invaluable support:

- Berkeley Human Rights Clinic – Prof. Roxanna Altholz, Ms. Radhika Kapor, and students
- Berkeley Human Rights Center – Prof. Brian Nguyen
- Universidad Iberoamericana – Ms. Andrea Paola Horcasitas Martínez, Director of the Human Rights Clinic; Students: Ms. Carlota Álvarez Pérez, Mr. Rodrigo Daniel Villegas Santiago, Mr. Jorge Luis Naranjo Catalán
- Villanova University – Prof. Raúl Diego Rivera Hernández; Students: Ms. Valeria Vázquez, Ms. Juliana Abdelsayed-Roblero, Ms. Andrea Ávila Colón, Ms. Lia Alvarado Polanco, Ms. Sarha Flores Álvarez, and Ms. Sofia Nowell Palacios
- University of Nuremberg-Erlangen, CHREN Human Rights Clinic – Prof. Patricia Wiater
- Volunteers working directly with the Secretariat
- Other volunteers – Mr. Agustín Díaz, Ms. Frida Patlán, Ms. Nicole Crowley, and Ms. Esthela Amozurrutia
- Global Witness
- Front Line Defenders
- Geneva Environment Network
- Mr. Luis Fernández
- Mr. Eric Cheng
- Defend Defenders

IN MEMORIAM

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances mourns the loss of three extraordinary women whose lifelong dedication to truth and justice profoundly shaped the global struggle against enforced disappearances.

On 1 September 2025, the Working Group mourn the loss of Yanette Bautista, a tireless and courageous advocate for the disappeared in Colombia. For decades, she dedicated her life to seeking truth and justice for victims of enforced disappearance, often in the face of personal risk and adversity.



The Working Group further mourns the death of Vera Vigevani Jarach, aged 97, a founding member of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo – Línea Fundadora. Her legacy is one of bravery, resilience, and relentless advocacy, reminding us of the enduring power of collective memory and the fight for human rights.





The Working Group also expressed its deep condolences on the passing of Rosa Tarlovsky de Roinsinblit, Honorary President of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, who passed away at the remarkable age of 106. Rosa was a powerful symbol of courage, generosity, and unwavering commitment to human rights. She dedicated her life to uncover the truth, justice and memory of Argentina's dictatorship.