



General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 August 2023
English
Original: Spanish

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fourth session

11 September–6 October 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Visit to Honduras

Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*, **

Summary

At the invitation of the Government of Honduras, the Working Group visited the country from 20 to 29 March 2023. In accordance with its mandate, the purpose of the visit was to obtain first-hand information on the human rights situation in the country in the area of enforced disappearance, with a view to identifying the progress achieved in protecting the rights to truth, justice, reparation and memory, as well as the main challenges the country is currently facing, including with regard to the prevention of enforced disappearance.

The Working Group recognizes the commitment made by the authorities and their statements acknowledging the existing gaps and challenges in the area of human rights and the measures needed to address them. However, it notes that victims are lacking in trust in view of the climate of systemic and long-standing impunity for human rights violations. Where enforced disappearance is concerned, this impunity is almost total, both for acts that took place in the past – particularly enforced disappearances committed in the 1980s and 1990s in connection with the so-called national security doctrine – and for current cases. The Working Group noted that the lack of progress results from a combination of the inadequate legislative framework, the weakness of institutions and the lack of coordination, capacities and resources, combined with a climate of insecurity, collusion and corruption. While the Working Group acknowledges the steps being taken to overcome the challenges identified, it hopes that these steps will result in concrete and effective change for victims of serious human rights violations and society as a whole in Honduras.

The Working Group considers that Honduras must assume its responsibilities and leadership role and redouble its efforts to guarantee the rights of victims of enforced disappearance in the areas of truth, justice, reparation and memory. The Working Group sets out a series of recommendations on issues ranging from prevention, investigation, punishment and reparation for the harm suffered by victims of enforced disappearance to the protection of groups in situations of particular vulnerability, such as Indigenous Peoples, migrants and persons living in poverty.

* The summary of this report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself is contained in the annex and is being circulated in the language of submission and in English only.

** Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



Annex

Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on its visit to Honduras

I. Introduction

1. The Working Group, represented by its Chair, Aua Baldé, and members Grażyna Baranowska and Luciano Hazan, conducted an official visit to Honduras from 20 to 29 March 2023.

2. The Working Group would like to thank the Government for the invitation to visit the country and for its cooperation. It is deeply grateful to the families of disappeared persons and victims of enforced disappearance for their invaluable efforts, their engagement with the mandate and the testimonies that they provided. It would also like to thank the civil society organizations for facilitating meetings. Lastly, the Working Group wishes to acknowledge the extraordinary support provided during the visit by the country office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras.

3. In accordance with the Working Group's mandate, the purpose of the visit was to obtain first-hand information on the human rights situation in the country in the area of enforced disappearance, with a view to identifying the progress achieved in protecting the rights to truth, justice, reparation and memory, as well as the main challenges the country is currently facing, including with regard to the prevention of enforced disappearance.

4. During the visit, the Working Group had the opportunity to meet with various State authorities and institutions, including the President of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Office of the Presidency, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Ministry of Security, the Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Security, the Police Investigation Directorate, the Attorney General's Office, various committees of the National Congress, the Public Prosecution Service (the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Offences against Life, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime and the Specialist Criminal Investigation Agency), the Supreme Court of Justice, the National Institute of Migration, the Ministry of Social Development, the National Coordination Office for Indigenous Peoples and Hondurans of African Descent, the Ministry of Defence and the Inter-Agency Commission for Monitoring the Investigation of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides. The Working Group met with the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights and the national preventive mechanism.

5. The Working Group also met with families of disappeared persons, victims of enforced disappearance, civil society organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations agencies and programmes in the country. In this connection, the Working Group also attended a meeting with transnational organizations and committees of relatives that deal with cases of disappearances in the context of migration. Furthermore, at the invitation of the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons in Honduras, the Working Group visited the Committee's headquarters in Tegucigalpa, the remembrance site in Amarateca, the "Hogar Diamante" and the "Hogar contra el Olvido" in Santa Ana. These sites played a key part in the enforced disappearances that began in Honduras in the 1980s and 1990s. The Working Group, together with the Garifuna community in Triunfo de la Cruz, also visited places where some members of the community had been kidnapped and disappeared on 18 July 2020.

6. To make it easier to meet and exchange information with families, civil society organizations and the authorities, the Working Group, in addition to going to Tegucigalpa, travelled to La Paz, San Pedro Sula, El Progreso, Tela, Triunfo de la Cruz and Las Vegas.

II. Context

7. In Honduras, serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, are known to have mainly been committed in three historical periods.¹

8. Firstly, enforced disappearances were carried out as part of the so-called national security doctrine in the 1980s and 1990s. In the cases of *Velásquez Rodríguez v. Honduras* and *Godínez Cruz v. Honduras*, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found that, between 1981 and 1984, disappearances were routinely and selectively carried out by the Armed Forces and the State security forces or were carried out with their support or tolerance.² The Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons in Honduras recorded 184 cases of enforced disappearance during this period, including cases involving the enforced disappearance of 25 women. However, these figures do not reflect the total number of cases owing to the high level of underreporting and lack of investigations.

9. Secondly, against the backdrop of the coup d'état of 28 June 2009, after which the then President Manuel Zelaya was ousted by the Honduran military, the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons in Honduras documented 13 cases of persons who were forcibly disappeared after being detained by the State authorities.³

10. Thirdly, enforced disappearances were reportedly carried out in connection with the protests that took place during the post-election crisis in 2017.⁴

11. In addition to the three periods mentioned above, the Working Group has received reports that enforced disappearances, including short-term ones, are currently taking place, particularly in connection with arrests and operations carried out by law enforcement agencies, specifically targeting persons living in marginalized neighbourhoods, minors and young adults, as part of the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking.

12. The Working Group has also received detailed information on disappearances committed by organized criminal gangs, including in connection with disputes over land and migration. It is essential to conduct proper, independent investigations into all aspects of these offences, including the possibility that public officials were directly involved in them or that they were carried out with their support or acquiescence. As mentioned above, the Working Group has received information about the possible enforced disappearance of four members of the Garifuna community in Triunfo de la Cruz.

13. The records of the Working Group contain information on 210 cases of enforced disappearance relating to Honduras. Of these, 80 have been resolved in accordance with its methods of work (37 on the basis of information provided by the Government and 43 on the basis of information provided by the source). Most of the recorded cases occurred before 1990 (only 14 of the cases took place after that year, including 2 that were resolved on the basis of information received by the source). The Working Group currently has 130 pending cases, which, considering the information received as well as the level of impunity in the

¹ See, for example, J. A. Mejía Rivera (coordinator), *Las deudas pendientes de Iberoamérica en materia de memoria, justicia y reparación*, Tegucigalpa, Guaymuras, 2022, available on the website of the library of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: <https://biblioteca.corteidh.or.cr/documento/76510>.

² *Velásquez Rodríguez v. Honduras*, Judgment, 29 July 1988 (Merits), para. 119; and *Godínez Cruz v. Honduras*, judgment of 20 January 1989 (Merits), para. 125. See also *Deras García et al. v. Honduras*, Judgment, 25 August 2022 (Merits, Reparations and Costs), paras. 36 and ff.

³ “Informe Desaparición Forzada en Honduras”, Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons in Honduras, 2018, p. 12.

⁴ “Accountability for Human Rights Violations Committed in the Context of the 2017 Elections in Honduras: Progress and Challenges”, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020, para. 49, available at www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/HN/HondurasFollowupreportaccountabilityforHRviolations_FINALLEN.pdf.

country and other factors noted during the visit, is undoubtedly lower than the total number of actual cases.⁵

14. The Working Group notes that the arrival of the new Government, which took power on 27 January 2022 with the declared political will to promote human rights and combat corruption and impunity,⁶ represents a step forward in the strengthening of human rights in Honduras. The numerous statements made by different authorities, including at the highest level, acknowledging the serious institutional shortcomings and challenges surrounding human rights, as well as the announcements of changes and measures to address them, are encouraging. At the same time, many of the families of disappeared persons with whom the delegation met in various parts of the country gave voice to a certain degree of hope about the recent changes but also frequently expressed their distrust and fear in the light of the systemic failure to ensure accountability for long-standing human rights violations. This impunity depends on several factors and appears to result from a combination of the inadequate legislative framework, the weakness of institutions and the lack of coordination, competencies and adequate resources in a context of violence, insecurity, collusion and corruption. The Working Group noted in particular the enormous challenges that Honduras faces as a result of the pervasive spread of organized crime and its ramifications in the branches of government. In fact, the small amount of progress made so far is due almost exclusively to the commitment and courage of the victims, the relatives of disappeared persons and the civil society organizations that represent them.

15. On 24 November 2022, the President declared a state of national emergency to combat the extortion being perpetrated by organized criminal gangs. On 3 December, the state of emergency (Executive Decree No. PCM 29-2022) went into effect in the 162 neighbourhoods of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula with the highest crime rates. Between that date and the time of writing, it has been extended four times and progressively expanded to cover other departments (until July 2023). The main measures taken were the suspension of the rights to personal liberty, freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement.⁷ This mechanism also granted the police powers to carry out arrests and raids without a warrant. The Working Group stresses the need to adopt a comprehensive security policy that focuses on prevention and investigation and addresses the root causes of violence,⁸ as such measures may encourage the commission of serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances.

16. The Working Group welcomes the Government's stated commitment to demilitarizing public security but is concerned to note that the Public Order Military Police is continuing to carry out public security measures, including arrests and raids in different parts of the country.

III. Legal framework

17. The Working Group welcomes the fact that Honduras has ratified the main human rights treaties and is particularly pleased to note the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2008. Under articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution, the Convention is part of national law and must be respected. However, the Working Group is concerned to note that several provisions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Civil Code are not in conformity with the Convention.

⁵ Since the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance by Honduras in 2008, a total of 28 cases have been registered by the Committee on Enforced Disappearances under article 30.

⁶ On 14 February 2022, President Xiomara Castro requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish an international commission to combat impunity and corruption in Honduras. On 15 December, the United Nations and the Government of Honduras signed a preliminary memorandum of understanding to support the establishment of an international anti-corruption mechanism (A/HRC/52/24, annex, para. 55).

⁷ Ibid., para. 10.

⁸ Ibid.

18. The Working Group notes that enforced disappearance is established as an offence in articles 140 to 142 of the Criminal Code. However, it is concerned to note that, as the Committee on Enforced Disappearances had also noted in 2018, the offence is defined only as a crime against humanity.⁹ This legal gap means that enforced disappearances committed outside a systematic or generalized context are investigated under other categories of criminal offence, such as aggravated unlawful deprivation of liberty (Criminal Code, art. 238), which relates to unlawful deprivation of liberty committed by public officials. This can adversely affect investigations and prosecutions (see para. 45 below).

19. Furthermore, in accordance with article 7 of the Convention, the aggravating circumstances listed in article 141 of the Criminal Code should cover other categories of persons in vulnerable situations,¹⁰ such as Indigenous Peoples.

20. The various types of criminal responsibility should be covered, including in relation to any person who commits, orders, solicits or induces the commission of, attempts to commit, is an accomplice to or participates in an enforced disappearance. Express provision should also be made for the application of individual command or superior responsibility for this offence.¹¹

21. The definition of victim in article 17 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is restrictive and does not conform to international standards in this area, especially article 24 (1) of the Convention.¹² According to information received by the Working Group, discussions concerning a draft reform of the Criminal Code that would address some of these issues have been held. In order for families to be able to exercise their rights, the law currently in force requires disappeared persons to be presumed dead, despite the fact that their fate and whereabouts have not been established. This is contrary to standards in this area, which provide for the concept of the absence of disappeared persons as a result of an enforced disappearance.

22. Lastly, it is essential to recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and consider individual and inter-State communications under articles 31 and 32 of the Convention.

IV. Truth

23. The Working Group notes that the right to know the truth, for individuals and groups, encompasses both the determination of the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared person, the circumstances in which an enforced disappearance occurred and the progress and results of the investigation.¹³ Thus, the search for disappeared persons seeks to address a fundamental aspect of the right to the truth, which, however, has a more comprehensive dimension.

24. In this regard, it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of the reports *Los hechos hablan por sí mismos – Informe preliminar sobre los desaparecidos en Honduras 1980–1993*, by the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, which was published in 1994 and focuses on enforced disappearances perpetrated within the framework of the so-called national security doctrine, and *Para que los hechos no se repitan*, by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was completed in 2011 and mainly addresses the events following the coup d'état of 28 June 2009. However, the recommendations set out in both reports have largely not been implemented and the visit has shown that serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, are still taking place today.

25. With regard to the search for disappeared persons, as a result of the evident lack of a public policy, almost none of the family members of forcibly disappeared persons have been able to locate their loved ones. This task is officially the responsibility of the Public

⁹ CED/C/HND/CO/1, para. 15 (b).

¹⁰ Ibid., para. 15 (c).

¹¹ Ibid., paras. 14–17; A/HRC/45/13/Add.3, para. 98 (e) (iii).

¹² CED/C/HND/CO/1, paras. 36–37.

¹³ A/HRC/16/48, para. 39. See also article 24 of the Convention.

Prosecution Service, which informed the Working Group about the resolution of eight cases. However, all these cases involved persons who reappeared after the enforced disappearance, i.e., persons who regained their freedom without the need for a real search.

26. More than four decades after the start of the enforced disappearances committed within the framework of the so-called national security doctrine, the authorities have not developed a central register of victims of enforced disappearance, either for cases relating to the 1980s or for current cases. As a result, there are no official statistics that would make it possible to precisely determine the scale of the problem or to design effective policies to tackle it.

27. The authorities have also failed to develop a genetic database of family members who are searching for their disappeared loved ones, which has a direct impact on the scarce results obtained, since even if the remains of allegedly disappeared persons are found, the State lacks the capacity to cross-check genetic information with that of all the families searching for their loved ones. There is also no registry or database of unidentified remains in Honduras.

28. The Working Group was informed by legislators of the National Congress about the development of a bill on disappeared persons, the objectives of which include the creation of a genetic-forensic database to improve the effectiveness of criminal investigations. The bill also addresses the creation of a genetic database containing information on families searching for victims of enforced disappearance. The Working Group received some general information about certain aspects of the bill but had been not given access to the text by the time the visit ended.

29. It is essential for the State to ensure that the families of disappeared persons may openly and directly participate in the legislative process.¹⁴ This participation should include not only the possibility of commenting on a bill but also that of directly influencing the discussions surrounding the bill and its drafting. Thanks to the experience of searches that families have accumulated over decades, they are best placed to help ensure that legislation overcomes the obstacles that have so far hindered searches and to help find effective solutions.¹⁵

30. In view of the time that has elapsed since most of the enforced disappearances occurred, particularly those that took place in the 1980s, a genetic database must be designed and implemented as a matter of urgency. In order to ensure that genetic information is complete, the Working Group notes that it is necessary to carry out a wide-ranging awareness-raising campaign throughout the country so that families searching for their loved ones are aware of the mechanism and can provide their genetic information. The State authorities must take appropriate measures to ensure that families have confidence in the procedure, for example, by informing them of the details of the comprehensive search policy to be established and providing them with psychosocial support.

31. In view of the negative experiences of persons who use the criminal justice system to search for victims of enforced disappearance, the Working Group calls on the State to consider alternatives, such as the creation and development of a specialist interdisciplinary search agency with the necessary human, technical and financial resources to assist families searching for their missing loved ones, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Guiding Principles for the Search for Disappeared Persons. A public policy should be developed to ensure the capacity to implement the different methodologies required to search for persons who were disappeared decades ago and victims of the enforced disappearances that continue to be perpetrated today. Consideration should also be given to the challenges of ensuring the coordination between government agencies that is required for such initiatives, drawing on the experiences of other countries.¹⁶

32. Significant challenges are posed by the disappearance of migrants in Honduras and Honduran nationals in countries traversed by migration routes. For this reason, the comprehensive search policy to be implemented should take into account the need for close,

¹⁴ See Guiding Principles for the Search for Disappeared Persons (CED/C/7).

¹⁵ A/HRC/45/13/Add.3, para. 61.

¹⁶ Ibid., paras. 55–56.

ongoing coordination with agencies responsible for searching for disappeared persons in other countries of the region in order to ensure the effectiveness of searches for disappeared persons in the context of human mobility.

33. During the visit, the Working Group learned of a ruling of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice on a habeas corpus motion initiated ex officio and decided on one month after the disappearance, on 18 July 2020, of the four leaders of the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz.¹⁷ The victims were abducted by persons wearing police uniforms. The Working Group was concerned to note the excessively formalistic and inefficient nature of the actions taken by the judicial authorities, who initially rejected the motion on the grounds that a number of State agencies were conducting the search, despite the fact that nothing was known of the whereabouts and fate of the disappeared persons.

34. However, the Working Group was interested to note the ruling issued by the Supreme Court, which ordered that the proceedings be sent back to the judge and that he take the necessary steps to determine the real, legally established location of the aggrieved citizens. The Court also argued that habeas corpus motions require more comprehensive measures to be taken to locate and produce relevant persons, since otherwise the participation of investigative police officers, or officers of any other relevant authority, could not be ruled out. Although the Supreme Court stressed the obligation to defer the proceedings until the aggrieved persons appeared or were found, beyond any semblance of a doubt,¹⁸ the truth is that, according to the information obtained, the procedure did not give rise to any effective search measure, based on the ruling, that produced any results. Its only practical effect was to ensure that the motion continued to be deferred.

35. In-depth analysis of the case, and the interviews that the Working Group conducted during the visit, made it clear that the remedy of habeas corpus was an ineffective means of searching for victims of enforced disappearance. In this connection, it must be stressed that the State is required to implement a prompt and effective judicial remedy to determine the whereabouts of persons deprived of their liberty or to identify the authority that ordered the detention, in accordance with article 9 of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and article 20 of the Convention. As the Working Group has previously pointed out, any delays by the judicial authorities in producing the necessary evidence may increase the risk to the life and integrity of the disappeared person and create favourable conditions for the concealment of the whereabouts of the victim or the destruction of evidence. Therefore, any such delays must be investigated and sanctioned, both at the criminal and administrative levels.¹⁹

36. The Working Group cannot fail to emphasize the harm caused to the families and relatives of disappeared persons when time passes without their receiving any information on the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones, a situation which, owing to its intensity, has been described as torture.²⁰ It is therefore necessary for the State to take particularly urgent action to address the enforced disappearances that occurred decades ago.

V. Justice

37. During the visit, the Working Group noted the prevalence of structural, widespread impunity. With regard to the enforced disappearances already described in different contexts, the Working Group was able to confirm that no perpetrators have been convicted and no real progress has been made in the criminal proceedings.

38. One of the most serious problems concerned the hindering of the criminal justice system in relation to the receiving of victims' complaints. For example, between 24 and 48 hours are required to have elapsed before a complaint may be taken, on the assumption that the disappearance was voluntary, which wastes the best chances of finding the victims and guarantees impunity for the perpetrators. This requirement has particularly adverse

¹⁷ Ruling issued on habeas corpus motion No. 564/2020, 20 August 2020.

¹⁸ Ibid., recital 16.

¹⁹ A/HRC/45/13/Add.3, para. 22.

²⁰ A/HRC/16/48, para. 39.

effects in cases involving the disappearance of adolescent or adult women. The only exception to this rule is that the Amber Alert system is implemented by the National Police in cases involving the disappearance of children or adolescents, although, as noted, this initiative requires greater resources.

39. In other cases, the Working Group was informed of situations in which the police directly refused to take a complaint, leading victims to opt for the alternative of reporting disappearances and other serious human rights violations in a city other than that where the act took place. This is indicative of the serious obstacles that must be overcome before acts can be effectively investigated and the difficulties that families have in gaining access to remedies.

40. Information has also been received about serious threats and harassment being directed at persons who file complaints, human rights defenders and persons who defend the right to land, territory and the environment, which have even led to executions and enforced disappearances. Although the Working Group received information about the national system for the protection of human rights defenders, journalists, social communicators and justice officials, it learned that murders and disappearances have been committed against persons under the protection of the system deemed to be facing a high risk, including Snaider Centeno, one of the young men who disappeared from the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz, and Berta Cáceres.

41. Another practice that has fostered impunity has been the criminalization of human rights defenders, including victims of enforced disappearance, who are sometimes reported by the Public Prosecution Service itself. All these factors have helped to fuel the significant levels of distrust felt by victims towards the authorities in charge of investigations. This situation amounts to a further obstacle to the participation of victims in criminal proceedings, which has an adverse impact on their outcome, given that victims usually play a key role in obtaining evidence, especially in situations where government action is limited and there is widespread impunity.²¹

42. The Working Group is also concerned to note that victims face major obstacles in obtaining access to justice. According to information received, the Public Prosecution Service prevents private complainants from participating in the investigation stage since victims are legally prevented from appearing until an application has been issued by the prosecutor. Practice shows that the Public Prosecution Service spends long periods at the investigation stage without issuing an application, and in many cases does not even do so.

43. Furthermore, there are no free legal services for victims and the Code of Criminal Procedure establishes that, if they lack resources, the Public Prosecution Service may provide them with assistance,²² which renders invisible the role of private complainants. According to reports received, the Public Prosecution Service prevents organizations of victims of enforced disappearance from acting as private complainants on behalf of victims. As the Working Group has argued, the active participation of victims' and human rights organizations in criminal proceedings has helped to move such proceedings forward in different countries, and recognizing the procedural status of such organizations helps to reduce victims' exposure to the risk of reprisals that they face when they act individually.²³

44. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, the status of victim is restricted to the relatives of persons who have died as a result of an offence.²⁴ This legal provision contradicts article 24 of the Convention, which establishes that a victim of enforced disappearance is any individual who has suffered harm as the direct result of an enforced disappearance.

45. Furthermore, the failure to establish enforced disappearance as a separate offence in the Criminal Code, outside the framework of crimes against humanity (see para. 18 above), renders this criminal act invisible, prevents it from being duly reflected in statistics and impedes analysis of the context and understanding of the specific nature of the offence by the

²¹ [A/HRC/45/13/Add.3](#), para. 61.

²² Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 16.

²³ [A/HRC/45/13/Add.3](#), para. 61.

²⁴ Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 17.

authorities in charge of investigations.²⁵ Moreover, it may be a factor that fuels impunity, since a possible enforced disappearance is not always properly investigated from the outset and may be ruled out only by an independent, impartial and thorough investigation.

46. According to information obtained during the visit, this legislative gap gives rise to uncertainty regarding the unit of the Public Prosecution Service responsible for investigating cases and therefore restricts the role played by specialist teams, not only in investigations but also in the provision of psychosocial support and the protective measures necessary to deal with this type of offence. The application of other criminal offences also has an impact on the severity of the sanctions provided for, which do not account for the multiple forms of harm caused by enforced disappearance, both for disappeared persons and their families.

47. During the visit, the Working Group received information, confirmed by the State authorities themselves, about the seriousness of the corruption practised by public officials and their collusion with organized criminal groups, particularly those linked to drug trafficking, organized crime and the irregular and violent control of territories, to the detriment of Indigenous or ancestral communities. Although note was taken of the functions and competencies of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights and the Specialist Criminal Investigation Agency of the Public Prosecution Service, the authorities themselves acknowledged their lack of resources and the fact that their activities are restricted to large cities such as Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. In the rest of the country, including in regions with high levels of conflict, their role is limited to providing advice and support to local prosecutors' offices.

48. According to the information received during the visit, even in cases that have been well documented by the victims of disappearances that occurred in the different periods, the Public Prosecution Service has failed to make progress in bringing criminal proceedings against superior officers in the military or police agencies involved. This situation is aggravated by the lack of interdisciplinary teams with the capacity to analyse the context in which enforced disappearances have occurred and are occurring. Such teams would make it easier to identify responsibilities within a chain of command.²⁶

49. In institutional terms, the Working Group noted that the Public Prosecution Service was evidently weak and that this weakness was aggravated by the strike action taken by its prosecutors and staff.²⁷ However, it was evident from the numerous meetings held during the visit that, even before the strike, the investigations had been at a standstill or had not even begun.

50. The Working Group also learned that the new head of the Public Prosecution Service is to be elected shortly. If this process is carried out in the transparent manner required for the selection of an independent, autonomous, upright official who is committed to human rights, it could represent an opportunity to ensure compliance with the obligation to effectively investigate enforced disappearances.²⁸

VI. Reparation and memory

A. Reparation

51. As mentioned above (para. 24), a number of initiatives have been taken over the years to address human rights violations in Honduras, including enforced disappearances. In 1994, the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights published the report *Los hechos hablan por sí mismos*, which documented 179 cases of enforced disappearance and made recommendations for the provision of reparations to victims. In 2008, the Government adopted Executive Decree No. PCM 028-2008, which set out various reparation measures for victims of the so-called national security doctrine. In 2010, the Government adopted

²⁵ A/HRC/45/13/Add.3, para. 51.

²⁶ Ibid., paras. 71–72.

²⁷ The strike began on 3 February and ended in late April.

²⁸ A/HRC/45/13/Add.3, paras. 35–36 and 38.

Executive Decree No. PCM 011-2010, establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in order to address the human rights violations that occurred during the political crisis of 28 June 2009. The Commission presented its report *Para que los hechos no se repitan*, which contained recommendations for measures to satisfy the right to reparation and ensure guarantees of non-repetition. The Commission proposed the adoption of comprehensive reparation plans for victims and collective and individual remembrance initiatives.²⁹ However, none of these initiatives has been fully implemented.

52. More recently, in 2022, the National Congress adopted Decrees No. 4-2022 and No. 22-2022, establishing a social programme to support the victims of the June 2009 crisis and their descendants and establishing 24 March as the National Day for the Right to Truth, Memory and Justice with the aim of promoting memory and the recognition of victims of gross and systematic human rights violations. Subsequently, the Government adopted Executive Decree No. PCM 17-2022, which empowered the Secretariat for Human Rights to establish a programme to provide social support to families of the martyrs of the Honduran resistance with the aim of assisting the victims of the 2009 coup d'état.

53. On 21 March 2023, during the Working Group's visit, the Government adopted Executive Decree No. PCM 13-2023, establishing the Programme of Memory, Truth, Reparation, Justice and Non-Repetition for the Reconciliation and Refoundation of Honduras for victims of serious human rights violations. The programme focuses on the victims of the so-called national security doctrine and the political crises of 2009 and will be implemented by the Secretariat for Human Rights in coordination with other competent bodies of the three branches of government.

54. While these initiatives are positive in principle, they have not yet produced concrete results in practice. In the view of the Working Group, the Government needs to implement a comprehensive reparations programme for all victims of human rights violations in the country that is based on objective criteria, addresses cases of enforced disappearance that began in the past as well as current cases, and takes into account both the individual and collective dimensions of reparation.

55. The Working Group was also informed of cases of reparations granted by the State in compliance with some decisions of the inter-American system (the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights), either through a judgment or an amicable settlement. However, these reparation processes, in the cases where provision was made for them, have focused mainly on financial compensation and have not addressed other aspects of reparation that are essential for comprehensive reparation. Although, in 2016, a specific commission was established to ensure the protection and restitution of the rights of leaders and members of the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz and Punta Piedra (the Inter-Agency Commission for Implementation of International Judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights), no progress has been made in this regard to date. The Working Group considers it essential for the State to give effect to the guarantees of non-repetition established by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the judgments concerning these communities.

56. During the visit, it was not possible to identify any relatives of disappeared persons who have benefited from State-sponsored psychological, social or medical support or any other forms of assistance. In the absence of such measures, however, the Working Group was inspired by the persistence of the families and associations that have kept the fight against enforced disappearance alive. The Working Group recognizes the work of the families and associations of family members, and recalls that it is the responsibility of the State to fully comply with the right to reparation, which requires, inter alia, medical and psychological care and rehabilitation for any form of physical or mental damage as well as legal and social rehabilitation, guarantees of non-repetition, restoration of personal liberty and similar forms of restitution, satisfaction and reparation that may remove the consequences of the enforced disappearance.³⁰

²⁹ *Hallazgos y recomendaciones: Para que los hechos no se repitan – Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación*, San José, 2011, p. 39, paras. 22–24.

³⁰ A/HRC/22/45, para. 53.

B. Memory

57. The Working Group considers that the establishment of memorial sites and monuments contributes to the collective social recognition of the violations that occurred, as well as to their rejection and repudiation, while also serving as a preventive measure.

58. It is noteworthy that there are no State-sponsored monuments to victims of enforced disappearance in Honduras. However, two legislative initiatives have recently been launched to address this shortcoming: Decree No. 4-2022 of the National Congress, which sets out an official proposal for the establishment of a memorial site in honour of the victims of the June 2009 crisis in the form of a monument to be erected in the square opposite Toncontin airport, which is to be named Plaza Isy Obed, after the first young man killed on 5 July 2009; and Executive Decree No. PCM 13-2023, which stresses the need to reconstruct the historical memory of serious human rights violations, including those committed under the so-called national security doctrine and during the political crises of 2009 and subsequent years, by establishing an archive and centre for the recovery and documentation of historical memory and by constructing memorial sites.³¹ The Working Group welcomes these initiatives but reiterates that it is necessary to implement inclusive and comprehensive memory programmes that are not limited to specific events but include all victims of human rights violations to avoid the risk of reinforcing divisive narratives.

59. The Working Group notes that the only memorial sites that currently exist in Honduras have all been erected by the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons and relate to victims of enforced disappearances during the 1980s and 1990s under the so-called national security doctrine. The Working Group visited several of these sites, including the headquarters of the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons, “Hogar Diamante”, Amarateca and the “Hogar contra el Olvido”. During the visit to Plaza de la Merced, which families would like to be officially renamed Plaza de los Desaparecidos, the Working Group learned of the square’s importance in the fight against enforced disappearance in Honduras as it is a place of vigil where, for four decades, the families of disappeared persons have gathered every first Friday of the month to demand truth and justice. During these visits, the Working Group had the opportunity to meet some of the victims and learn more about the decades-long struggle undertaken by the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons and families in the search for truth, justice, reparation and memory. The Working Group commends the Committee’s relentless efforts to document and preserve the memory of the victims of enforced disappearance, while stressing that it is the responsibility of the State to establish and preserve memorial sites.³²

60. During the visit to the analysis, investigation and communication team in El Progreso, the Working Group learned of the organization’s efforts to preserve the memory of Father Guadalupe (James Francis Carney), who was forcibly disappeared on 16 September 1983 for having fought to defend the campesinos of Honduras. The team organizes events to celebrate his life on the anniversary of his disappearance every year.

61. During the visit to the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz, the Working Group walked with the community’s members to honour the victims and reconstruct the events that led to the disappearance of four of those members, including a community leader, in July 2020. The Working Group stresses that the disappearance of Indigenous community leaders has an adverse effect on the community as a whole and on the ways in which Indigenous communities exercise their right to culture.³³ It also stresses that the State must publicly and clearly repudiate the use of enforced disappearance as retaliation for exercising or promoting economic, social and cultural rights, including land-related claims.³⁴

62. The Working Group expresses its hope that the State will assume responsibility for ensuring the right to reparation and memory in an inclusive, holistic and comprehensive manner and in close collaboration with the families of disappeared persons and other

³¹ Executive Decree No. PCM 13-2023 of 21 March, art. 3, paras. 1 and 3.

³² A/HRC/22/45, para. 64.

³³ A/HRC/30/38/Add.5, annex, paras. 40–41.

³⁴ Ibid., para. 67.

concerned parties. In finding ways to understand its past and present through memorialization, Honduran society will be laying solid foundations for the benefit of its people, including young persons and future generations, and will thereby be helping to guarantee the prevention and non-repetition of the violations that were, and continue to be, committed in the country.

VII. Prevention

63. As mentioned above (para. 11), the Working Group has received reports of enforced disappearances carried out in connection with the fight against organized crime. Information shared at meetings throughout the country suggests that there is an urgent need to strengthen the system for registering deprivation of liberty by, inter alia, establishing a central digital registration system for all places of detention that accounts for transfers between places of deprivation of liberty. In this regard, the Working Group concurs with the decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Juan Humberto Sánchez v. Honduras* regarding the importance of establishing a record of detentions that includes the identification of the detainees, the reason for their detention, the competent authority, the day and time of admission and release, and information on the arrest warrant.³⁵ This record should be accessible to the public and constitutes an invaluable safeguard during the first few hours of detention and for all transfers to other places of deprivation of liberty.

64. The Working Group stresses that there is no time limit, no matter how short, for an enforced disappearance to occur – as long as the constitutive elements are present – and that accurate information on the detention of any person deprived of liberty and his or her place of detention should be made available promptly to family members.³⁶

65. With regard to the prevention of human rights violations, including enforced disappearance, the Working Group welcomes the recent establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman for Persons Deprived of Their Liberty and the National Observatory for Human Rights, which will strengthen the capacity of the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, the country's national human rights institution.

66. The Working Group also stresses the importance of continuing to implement regular training programmes, including with a view to educating and informing participants about the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention. The programmes should be directed at civilian and military law enforcement personnel, judges, prosecutors, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody or treatment of any person deprived of liberty.

VIII. Disappearances in the context of migration

67. Every year, thousands of Hondurans disappear in the context of migration, predominantly in Mexico. There are varying reasons for these disappearances, which include those carried out by non-State actors in connection with trafficking in persons, smuggling and killings. The failure to identify remains following mass extrajudicial executions is another very significant challenge. Several of these disappearances could also amount to enforced disappearances if it is determined that State agents were involved in them, even indirectly.³⁷ The situation is compounded by the challenges and restrictions affecting comprehensive regional strategies for searching for migrants and investigating offences involving them, such as the Mechanism for Mexican Support Abroad in Search and Investigation Activities.

68. The families of Honduran citizens who have disappeared abroad often wonder where and how to file complaints, as several State bodies may be involved in search operations and

³⁵ *Juan Humberto Sánchez v. Honduras*, Judgment, 7 June 2003, (Preliminary Objection, Merits, Reparations and Costs), paras. 189 and 201.12.

³⁶ [A/HRC/39/46](#), para. 143, and [A/HRC/51/31/Add.3](#), para. 36. See also *Yrusta and Del Valle Yrusta v. Argentina* (CED/C/10/D/1/2013), para. 10.3.

³⁷ See [A/HRC/36/39/Add.2](#).

investigations, such as the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Institute of Migration. Currently, however, most of the work of searching for disappeared migrants is carried out by the families themselves and the committees that they organize. The Forensic Database of Untraced Migrants of Honduras contains only some of the statistical information on disappeared migrants, DNA and the circumstances of the disappearances. This mechanism needs more support – including financial support – from the Honduran Government.

69. Families have the possibility of applying for humanitarian visas to travel to Mexico or other countries where their loved ones have disappeared. According to information received by the Working Group, however, such visas are so difficult to obtain that most families end up applying for tourist visas, which last for three months and do not allow them to stay in the country until the completion of the investigation.

70. According to the information received, many Honduran migrants have been killed in massacres in Mexico.³⁸ Given that these acts are not adequately investigated, and that no effective searches are conducted and no punishments are handed down in most cases, the Working Group encourages the Honduran State authorities to collaborate with the Mexican authorities in conducting investigations and promoting the establishment of a special commission for investigating disappearances and massacres of migrants. The commission should be composed of national and international experts to ensure that a regional perspective is brought to investigations of the acts, as recommended by the Committee on Enforced Disappearances at the end of its visit to Mexico in 2022.³⁹

71. The Working Group notes that it is possible for the cost of repatriating the remains of deceased migrants to be covered for families who cannot afford it. However, it is concerned to note the numerous testimonies of incomplete remains being handled and remains being treated disrespectfully. Families have also stated that it is very difficult to receive and register death certificates for people who have died abroad.

72. Honduras is not only a State from which people emigrate; it has increasingly become a transit State and even a destination in itself. Currently, irregular migrants may cross Honduras within five days, without paying a fine, on the basis of an amnesty approved by the National Congress in May 2022, which came into effect in August of the same year and has recently been extended until 1 January 2024. However, it should be noted that this exemption is only temporary⁴⁰ and that a reform of the legal framework is still necessary to ensure that the measure is sustainable.

73. The Working Group notes that there is no protocol for handling the bodies of migrants who have died or been killed while in transit through Honduras. Adopting such a protocol, and involving families from the countries of origin in its design, would set a good example for other States.

IX. Concluding observations

74. The Working Group recognizes the commitment made by the authorities in the fight against enforced disappearance and their statements acknowledging the existing gaps and challenges in the area of human rights and the measures needed to address them. However, it notes that victims are distrustful in view of the absolute lack of search policies and the climate of systemic and long-standing impunity for human rights violations. Where enforced disappearance is concerned, this impunity is almost total, both for acts that began in the past – particularly enforced disappearances committed in the 1980s and 1990s in connection with the so-called national security doctrine – and for current cases. It may also be noted that the lack of progress results from a combination of the inadequate legislative framework, the weakness of institutions and the lack of coordination, capacities and resources, combined

³⁸ For example, the massacre of 72 migrants and the case involving clandestine graves in San Fernando (Tamaulipas) in 2010 and 2011, respectively; the 49 torsos located in Cadereyta (Nuevo León) in 2012; the Güémez case in 2014; and the massacre in Camargo (Tamaulipas) in 2021.

³⁹ CED/C/MEX/VR/1, para. 50.

⁴⁰ A/HRC/52/24, annex, para. 93.

with a climate of insecurity, collusion and corruption. While the Working Group acknowledges the steps being taken to overcome the challenges identified, it hopes that these steps will result in concrete and effective change for victims of serious human rights violations and society as a whole in Honduras.

75. The Working Group considers that Honduras must assume its responsibilities and leadership role and redouble its efforts to guarantee the rights of victims of enforced disappearance in the areas of truth, justice, reparation and memory. The Working Group sets out a series of recommendations on issues ranging from prevention, investigation, punishment and reparation for the harm suffered by victims of enforced disappearance to the protection of groups in situations of particular vulnerability, such as Indigenous Peoples, migrants and persons living in poverty.

X. Recommendations

76. **The Working Group recommends that Honduras:**

Legislation and institutional framework

(a) **Classify enforced disappearance as a separate offence in the Criminal Code and not only as a crime against humanity (arts. 139 to 142), in accordance with the definition set out in the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. In particular, the classification should provide for:**

- (i) **The criminal responsibility of persons who order and instigate enforced disappearance, as well as the responsibility of hierarchical superiors;**
- (ii) **Suitable penalties, appropriate to the gravity of the offence;**
- (iii) **The continuous nature of the offence of enforced disappearance, with a statute of limitations that is in compliance with article 8 of the Convention;**
- (iv) **A definition of victims that recognizes family members as such, in accordance with article 24 of the Convention;**

(b) **Recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and consider individual and inter-State communications under articles 31 and 32 of the Convention.**

(c) **Adopt a comprehensive law on victims of human rights violations that ensures that offences are investigated, perpetrators are punished and victims receive comprehensive reparations. The law should provide for specific measures to:**

- (i) **Strengthen the recognition of victims as rights holders in the judicial and administrative spheres;**
- (ii) **Establish legal procedures that allow victims to file claims for reparations;**
- (iii) **Guarantee free legal representation for victims in legal proceedings, including through the Public Defence Service for persons who do not have sufficient resources;**
- (iv) **Improve victims' access to information at all stages of proceedings;**

(d) **Ensure legal recognition of victims' right to know the truth and to obtain specific information on the development and outcome of investigations, including the circumstances in which an act occurred; and establish a legal mechanism for issuing certificates of absence resulting from enforced disappearance so that families are not required to obtain a death certificate in order to exercise their rights;**

(e) **Ensure that the families of disappeared persons, the organizations that support them and international organizations with experience in this area are included in the process of developing the regulatory framework and the design of public policies;**

(f) Ensure that the military police are not involved in public security activities or activities that, in compliance with international standards, should be carried out by non-military personnel;

(g) Consider ending the state of emergency and reviewing practices and laws relating to states of emergency to ensure that their introduction and the conditions imposed under them are in accordance with international standards and safeguard human rights guarantees, including those set out in the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Truth

(h) Establish a plan for searching for disappeared persons that prioritizes searches for living persons and also includes scientific procedures to expedite the search for, and location of, clandestine graves and the exhumation of human remains and their identification and handing over to families;

(i) Adopt the search and investigation protocols that are being designed, including the protocol relating to migrants, which should incorporate a gender perspective and provide for a differentiated approach to cases involving women, children, adolescents and migrants;

(j) Establish a national register of disappeared persons and a DNA database and ensure that families, including those made up of foreign nationals, are aware of this database and have access to it. Data should be standardized across all facilities and the records should allow information held in one facility to be compared with that held by other facilities in Honduras and other countries in the region, such as Mexico and the United States;

(k) Once the DNA database is up and running, carry out a national awareness-raising and sampling campaign so that all families searching for their loved ones have the opportunity to provide their genetic information;

(l) Design and launch a specialist extrajudicial and interdisciplinary agency that operates independently and has the necessary human, technical and financial resources to search for disappeared persons. This agency should have the capacity to carry out the necessary coordination with other State agencies with search responsibilities in both the executive and judicial branches as well as with agencies of other States in the region that are responsible for searching for disappeared persons in the context of human mobility;

(m) Establish an independent institute of forensic medicine and provide it with all the resources that it needs to independently, impartially and efficiently identify the human remains of disappeared persons. In this connection, it is important to promptly adopt the preliminary bill on the establishment of the national institute of forensic medicine and forensic sciences;

(n) Ensure that the recommendations set out in the reports *Los hechos hablan por sí mismos*, published in 1994, and *Para que los hechos no se repitan*, published in 2011, are comprehensively implemented;

(o) Review the functioning of the habeas corpus motion provided for under the Constitutional Justice Act to ensure that it serves as a prompt and effective judicial remedy to determine the whereabouts of disappeared persons, as required by the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention.

Justice

(p) Take appropriate steps to ensure that police stations immediately accept reports of disappearances and initiate search and investigation operations, taking into account the obligation to initiate investigations *ex officio*;

(q) For cases in which there are allegations of State involvement, even if it is indirect, ensure the availability of reporting channels in specialist prosecutors' offices that guarantee the integrity of investigations and raise public awareness of these channels;

(r) Ensure that State agencies that are allegedly involved do not play any part in the investigation;

(s) Strengthen the national system for the protection of human rights defenders, journalists, social communicators and justice officials, guaranteeing its effectiveness by conducting appropriate risk assessments and exhausting all available resources to protect the lives and integrity of human rights and environmental defenders while ensuring that they are able to continue defending human rights. Also, make this mechanism available to all complainants and witnesses in cases of enforced disappearance;

(t) Expand victims' rights to access justice by providing free legal services in cases of serious human rights violations, such as enforced disappearances, and guarantee the capacity of private complainants to undertake investigations from the outset, irrespective of any initiative taken by the Public Prosecution Service. Also, recognize the procedural status of human rights organizations to ensure that they can represent victims in criminal proceedings;

(u) Establish a specialist unit within the Public Prosecution Service for investigating enforced disappearances and initiating criminal proceedings, ensuring that it has the capacity to analyse cases of enforced disappearance in a contextual manner and facilitating the identification of responsibilities within chains of command in the State agencies involved;

(v) Prosecute and try superior officers and thoroughly and impartially investigate all cases in order to overcome the existing situation of structural impunity;

(w) Strengthen the Specialist Criminal Investigation Agency so that it can undertake investigations of enforced disappearances throughout the country, guaranteeing the integrity of the investigations in the face of possible collusion between the perpetrators and State authorities;

(x) Ensure that the election of the new Attorney General takes place in a transparent manner and in accordance with international standards, and guarantee that the candidates satisfy the conditions of independence, autonomy and probity and are committed to upholding human rights.

Reparation and memory

(y) Adopt a plan or an effective public policy on comprehensive reparation that is inclusive, culturally sensitive and incorporates the gender perspective, with a view to effectively ensuring restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition;

(z) Comply with the decisions taken by the bodies of the inter-American system, including the judgments concerning the Garifuna communities of Punta Piedra and Triunfo de la Cruz, and take concrete measures in relation to the demarcation and titling of the territories of Indigenous communities;

(aa) Establish victim-oriented public support programmes to provide psychosocial support to the families of disappeared persons, irrespective of the context in which the disappearance took place;

(bb) Establish a system of social benefits to support the families of disappeared persons, irrespective of the context in which the disappearance took place, and support the right to education of the children of disappeared persons;

(cc) Pay tribute to victims of enforced disappearance by establishing memorial sites and monuments that simultaneously reject and repudiate past and present violations. In particular:

(i) Officially declare that Plaza de la Merced is to be renamed Plaza de los Desaparecidos;

(ii) Convert into a memorial site the police station of the National Investigation Directorate in Dolores, Tegucigalpa, where several people were detained before being forcibly disappeared and several mothers and siblings of disappeared persons were tortured for trying to find out about the fate of victims in the 1980s and 1990s;

(iii) Convert the clandestine cemeteries identified by the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons in Honduras into memorial sites;

(iv) Support efforts to erect a memorial site in Amarateca;

(dd) In consultation with the Garifuna community, create memorial sites that embrace and celebrate their culture and identity and consider placing commemorative plaques on the homes of disappeared persons;

(ee) Amend school and university curricula to ensure that students are taught about enforced disappearance and other human rights violations;

(ff) Provide support for commemoration initiatives led by civil society, including by setting up independent public funds for the establishment and maintenance of such initiatives and the removal of administrative and legal obstacles.

Prevention

(gg) Create a centralized digital registration system for all places of detention, including for transfers between locations, to ensure the proper and prompt registration of all persons deprived of their liberty and the prompt notification of their families and legal representatives;

(hh) Ensure the ongoing implementation of regular training programmes, including with a view to educating and informing participants about the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention. The programmes should be directed at civilian and military law enforcement personnel, judges, prosecutors, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody or treatment of any person deprived of liberty.

Disappearances in the context of migration

(ii) Ensure that the Public Prosecution Service may immediately receive reports of disappearances in Honduras, and disappearances of Honduran nationals abroad, without requiring that 48 hours elapse;

(jj) Ensure coordination between the Honduran authorities and the authorities of other countries, particularly Mexico, so that progress continues to be made in searching for and identifying victims of disappearances abroad and elucidating the facts;

(kk) Collaborate with Mexico to establish a special commission to investigate disappearances and massacres of migrants (see para. 70 above);

(ll) Request that Mexico include Honduras in the bureau for the search for missing migrants, once it has been established;

(mm) Provide financial, psychological and other forms of support to families searching for Honduran nationals who disappeared abroad, particularly to promote searches and investigations. Reparation measures should be coordinated with countries where migrants were disappeared or killed;

(nn) **Adopt a protocol for repatriating the remains of Honduran nationals who died or disappeared abroad to ensure that all remains are treated with respect and provide families with accurate information and support during the process;**

(oo) **The Working Group invites the Government of Honduras to submit, within 90 days of the date of publication of this report, a schedule specifying the measures that will be taken to implement the Working Group's recommendations and the dates on each of these measures will be implemented.**
