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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In resolution 66/160, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-seventh session, a report on the status of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the implementation of its resolution. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request.

In a note verbale dated 3 May 2012, the Secretary-General invited Governments to transmit information pertaining to the implementation of the resolution. Replies have been received from the Governments of Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Their responses are summarized in the present report.

The present report also includes information on the activities carried out in relation to the implementation of the resolution by the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, United Nations agencies and organizations, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

* A/67/150.



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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 66/160 on the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-seventh session, a report on the status of the Convention and the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request.

2. On 3 May 2012, the Secretary-General invited Member States to transmit relevant information pertaining to the implementation of the resolution. As of 23 July 2012, replies were received from the Governments of Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The Secretary-General also sent requests for information on the implementation of the resolution to United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds, as well as civil society organizations. The Secretary-General received information on the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), the Organization of American States and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as submissions from the International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances, Amnesty International, the International Commission of Missing Persons, and TRIAL (Swiss Association against Impunity). Their responses are summarized in the present report. The full text of the submissions is available on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).¹

II. Status of ratifications of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

3. As of 23 July 2012, 91 States have signed and 34 have ratified or acceded to the Convention; 14 States have recognized the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (the Committee) to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of individuals subject to its jurisdiction claiming to be victims of a violation by a State party of the provisions of the Convention (article 31); and 15 States have recognized the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications in which a State party claims that another State party is not fulfilling its obligations under the Convention (article 32). Updated information on the status of ratification of the Convention is set out in annex I to the present report.

III. Replies received from States

4. The summaries of the replies by States relating to the implementation of resolution 66/160 are provided below.

¹ Available from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ReportoftheS-GtoGA.aspx>.

Argentina

5. Argentina has undertaken an active campaign to promote universal ratification of the Convention, including acceptance of the full competence of the Committee under the Convention. To that end, Argentina has encouraged States to ratify the Convention through the formulation of recommendations in the context of the universal periodic review as well as through its bilateral discussions with various States.

Austria

6. Austria informed that it had ratified the Convention on 7 June 2012.

Belgium

7. Belgium informed that it had ratified the Convention on 2 June 2011 and that it recognized the competence of the Committee to receive individual and inter-State complaints, as provided by articles 31 and 32 of the Convention.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

8. Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Convention nationally on 24 October 2011 and internationally on 30 March 2012. Bosnia and Herzegovina indicated that it did not recognize the competence of the Committee under articles 31 and 32 at the time, although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will shortly commence a process to that end.

Burkina Faso

9. Burkina Faso ratified the Convention on 3 December 2009 and recognized the competence of the Committee. A study on the conformity of the national legislation concluded that there was no specific law on incriminating enforced disappearance. The assistance of OHCHR in drafting a law on enforced disappearance would be welcomed.

Colombia

10. In August 2011, the Supreme Court of Colombia approved the text of the Convention as well as Approving Law 1418 of 2010, which paved the way for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hold inter-institutional consultations with a view to ratifying the Convention.

11. On 19 and 20 April 2012, Colombia organized a seminar in Cali on prevention of the crime of enforced disappearance and directive 007 of the National Police together with the Ministry of Defence, the national police, the Commission to Search for Missing Persons and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In the light of the success of the seminar, Colombia intends to organize similar seminars in Medellín and Santa Marta.

12. Colombia ratified the Convention on 11 July 2012, after it had submitted its reply for the present report.

Finland

13. Finland informed that it was preparing for the ratification of the Convention. A bill on the acceptance of the Convention was planned for submission to the Parliament at the end of 2012 or the beginning of 2013. The options provided by articles 31 and 32 of the Convention were under consideration by the working party on the bill.

France

14. In its submission, the Government of France underlined the major role it had played in the fight against enforced disappearances over the past 30 years and its intention to continue its efforts towards universal ratification and implementation of the Convention.

15. France ratified the Convention on 23 September 2008 and recognized the competence of the Committee under article 31. Although national legislation is essentially in line with the Convention, the Council of Ministers proposed amendments to the criminal code on 11 January 2012 and submitted it to the Senate. The draft law envisages specification of the crime of enforced disappearance (new article 221-12 of the criminal code); prosecution for “tacit complicity” in respect of holding the superiors of an accused criminally responsible (new article 221-13); and setting 30 years as the maximum time limit for bringing proceedings against an accused in relation to crimes associated with war, terrorism and drug trafficking (new article 221-18). In addition, the draft law allows for the prosecution in France of an accused, if, inter alia, extradition is refused by France on the basis that the offence is punishable in the requesting State by a sentence or detention contrary to French public order, or if the accused would be judged in the requesting State by a court that does not provide the fundamental guarantees of procedure and protection of rights of defence (new article 113-8-1). Finally, the draft law envisages the extension of French jurisdiction foreseeing quasi-universal jurisdiction for crimes of enforced disappearance (new article 689-13 of the criminal procedure code).

16. On 15 May 2012 France organized, together with Argentina and the Research Centre on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the University of Paris II, an international conference on enforced disappearances. Participants included experts of the Committee and of the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, States members of the Human Rights Council, representatives of the Council of Europe, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the African Court of Justice and Human Rights and representatives of the principal non-governmental organizations concerned with the fight against enforced disappearance. The conference permitted a better understanding of the Convention and its role in preventing enforced disappearance. It also underlined the importance of cooperation among the various international and regional mechanisms and organizations dealing with enforced disappearance and emphasized the need for continued support to civil society to promote ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Germany

17. Germany ratified the Convention on 24 September 2009 and recognized the Committee's competence to receive individual and inter-State complaints on 20 June 2012.

18. On 25 April 2012, the German Institute for Human Rights organized a seminar and panel discussion on the theme "The Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance: a relevant issue for Germany". The Chair of the Committee and the representative of the Government for human rights matters participated.

19. Germany informed that it was preparing its first report, which it intended to submit to the Committee by the deadline of 23 December 2012. The report was being prepared in cooperation with the federal State (Länder) authorities and relevant non-governmental organizations.

Greece

20. Greece informed that the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights intended to set up a special committee in order to elaborate a draft law ratifying the Convention.

Hungary

21. Hungary accepted the universal periodic review recommendation in 2011 to accede to the Convention and initiated the necessary internal consultations among the relevant Government departments that had expressed positive opinions regarding future ratification. During the consultations no technical objections against the recognition of the competence of the Committee were raised. The Government informed that it intended to submit the draft legislation on the accession to the Parliament in the second half of 2012.

Kazakhstan

22. Kazakhstan acceded to the Convention on 27 February 2009. Kazakhstan noted that it had not sought assistance from the United Nations system, or intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, in respect of the Convention.

Madagascar

23. Madagascar had not yet ratified the Convention. In its response, Madagascar referred to regulation 62-003 of 24 July 1962, by which the term "absence" was defined as a situation whereby a person is separated from his domicile and whose existence is uncertain due to lack of news. The regulation also sets out how to obtain a declaration that a person is absent, including in a state of national emergency.

Morocco

24. Morocco adopted a new Constitution on 1 July 2011 that affirms the supremacy of duly ratified international conventions in relation to national laws. Article 25 of the Constitution criminalizes enforced disappearance. The draft criminal code defines the crime of enforced disappearance in compliance with the Convention.

25. During the high-level segment of the nineteenth session of the Human Rights Council, the Minister of Justice reiterated Morocco's commitment to ratifying the Convention. In that regard, on 1 March 2012, the Council of Ministers approved the decision to ratify the Convention and on 19 June 2012, the Parliamentary Commission on Justice, Legislation and Human Rights unanimously adopted draft law 20.12 on the approval of the Convention for ratification.

Paraguay

26. Paraguay promulgated Law 3977 approving the Convention which, in article 6 (2) established that no order or instruction of public authority, whether civil or military or of other nature, might be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance. Paraguay also referred to its Law 3458/2008, which promulgated the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity.

Peru

27. On 23 January 2012, the Government published resolution No. 017-2012-RE, whereby it submitted its opinion to Congress that the ratification of the Convention would be in line with Peru's interests. The document was registered with the Congress on 13 March 2012. Peru informed that in considering ratification of the Convention, the Congress would also examine the issue of the Committee's competence under article 31. Peru also noted that it is a party to the Inter-American Convention on Enforced Disappearance of Persons.

Romania

28. Romania informed that it had signed the Convention on 3 December 2008 and that the competent authorities would decide upon the ratification pending further analysis relating to legal and financial implications. Romania noted that no cases of enforced disappearance had been reported in the country.

Slovakia

29. Slovakia stated that the National Council had approved in 2011 the amendment of the Criminal Code in order to criminalize and enact sanctions for enforced disappearance, thus creating the legal conditions for ratification of the Convention. It reiterated its willingness to become a party to the Convention and to recognize the competence of the Committee under articles 31 and 32. Slovakia announced that the

decision on ratification of the Convention should be taken by the end of August 2012 and that the ratification itself should take place during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly in September 2012.

Switzerland

30. Switzerland signed the Convention on 19 January 2011 and informed that the process for its ratification was under way and that the concerned federal offices were examining the consequences that the Convention could have on federal and cantonal law. The opening of a consultation process among those concerned in view of the ratification of the Convention was one of the objectives of the Federal Council in 2012.

Uruguay

31. Uruguay ratified the Convention on 4 March 2009 and accepted the competence of the Committee under articles 31 and 32. Uruguay informed that it had been active in encouraging the ratification of the Convention by other Member States, including by participating in an informal network of countries which, through their respective embassies, provide information to States that were discussing the possibility of ratification. Uruguay further noted that, as part of its strong commitment to the Convention, it supported the nomination and election of Álvaro Garcé Garcia y Santos to the Committee.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

32. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela informed that it was evaluating the ratification of the Convention and that in that regard the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had consulted the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Interior and Justice and the General Prosecutor. Some amendments had also been introduced in the criminal legislation in order to implement the Convention. The Prosecutor General was evaluating articles 31 and 32 of the Convention in order to determine when to make a declaration to that effect.

IV. Activities of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

33. In paragraph 5 of resolution 66/160, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continue their intensive efforts to assist States in becoming parties to the Convention, with a view to achieving universal adherence. To that end, OHCHR has undertaken a series of steps to promote the implementation of the resolution.

34. In that regard, OHCHR continued its efforts in the fight against enforced disappearance and in realizing universal ratification of the Convention under the thematic priorities of “violence and insecurity” and “support for human rights mechanisms”, as set out in its management plan for 2012-2013. Much of the effort focused on supporting State efforts to ratify the Convention and included the

provision of training and capacity-building assistance to States and civil society, as well as awareness-raising about the Convention.

35. In relation to promoting ratification, the High Commissioner systematically encourages Member States to ratify human rights instruments generally and has supported ratification in several countries. The High Commissioner personally encouraged ratification of the Convention during her missions to Guatemala in March 2012 and Pakistan in May 2012. She also encouraged Colombia to ratify the Convention as soon as possible and accept the competence of the Committee under article 31.

36. The OHCHR country office in Mauritania and the Human Rights Adviser in Rwanda assisted those Governments in initiating consultations with a view to ratifying the Convention. The Council of Ministers of Mauritania approved the bill authorizing ratification on 22 March 2012.

37. The OHCHR country office in Guatemala continued its efforts to encourage the Government to ratify the Convention, and supported monthly meetings of civil society and victims' organizations to promote ratification as well as the creation of a national search plan for victims of enforced disappearance. OHCHR regional offices for South America are taking steps towards the ratification of the Convention by Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) by the end of 2013.

38. The OHCHR country office in Nepal provided analysis and assistance to legal professional groups, civil society organizations and victim's groups to help them advocate for the adoption of a draft penal code and a draft bill for the Commission of Inquiries on Disappearances, which includes a provision to criminalize enforced disappearance. The office also contributed to the capacity-building of the National Human Rights Commission through a joint project with UNDP which, among other activities, successfully coordinated the exhumation, by relevant State actors, of the remains of five people who had allegedly been the victims of disappearance during the conflict in the country. The first four victims were exhumed in 2010 and 2011.

39. The OHCHR country office in Colombia facilitated the creation of a participatory mechanism to support discussion in Congress on a law related to the victims of enforced disappearances, which includes provisions related to land restitution. The office also contributed an analysis on the benefits of and gaps in the law.

40. The OHCHR country office in Mexico released a publication reproducing the text of the Convention and the recommendations made by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances after its mission to Mexico in March 2011.² The publication was launched at a public event in the presence of State authorities and a member of the Working Group in March 2012. Six other regional events were organized in various States in Mexico to present the report, attracting considerable press attention. The office also conducted training workshops on the international standards on enforced disappearance, including on the Convention for federal authorities and members of the military.

41. The Human Rights Adviser in Paraguay provided training, upon the request of the Public Prosecutors Office, to strengthen technical research capacity, procedures

² Available from www.hchr.org.mx/files/Desaparicion%20forzada%20WEB.pdf.

and knowledge about the applicable law relating to enforced disappearance, including the Convention.

42. The OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East delivered human rights training, including on the Convention, at four universities and 30 schools, reaching out to a total of 2,500 students in a six-week period.

43. On the occasion of the first United Nations International Day for the Victims of Enforced Disappearance, on 30 August 2011, the main web page of OHCHR featured a story on the theme “New impetus to eradicate enforced disappearance”, which contained quotations by the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the importance of the Convention, the Committee and the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, as well as the complementarity between the latter two.

44. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded grants to a number of non-governmental entities providing assistance to the families of victims of enforced disappearances and/or documenting cases of enforced disappearances in line with the relevant provisions of the Convention. In particular, the Fund supported a number of projects in Latin America aimed at providing legal assistance to the families of victims of enforced disappearances, including for the identification of disappeared children, through DNA testing. Projects to assist victims in Asian countries also included the collection of documentation for use in possible future legal actions and for the purpose of searching for victims; and promoting empowerment, through healing, for selected family members, who in turn act as healers for the families of other victims.

V. Activities of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances

45. During the reporting period, the Committee held its first and second sessions at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 8 to 11 November 2011 and from 26 to 30 March 2012, respectively. In his opening statements, the Chair emphasized the need for universal ratification of the Convention and the importance of working with States parties, signatories and all Member States since they have the primary responsibility to implement and enforce the Convention.

46. The Committee met with Member States in public meetings on 11 November 2011 and 29 March 2012. The Committee invited the States parties to the Convention to submit their reports as early as possible. It also encouraged States which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention and/or accept the competence of the Committee to consider individual communications. Recalling that article 4 of the Convention requires States parties to criminalize enforced disappearance, the Committee encouraged States parties to amend their national laws accordingly. The Chair updated the States on the initial work of the Committee, including the revision and adoption of the rules of procedure, the adoption of State party reporting guidelines and the development of practical tools, such as the forms to be used under the urgent action procedure and the individual complaints mechanism provided for under articles 30 and 31, respectively.

47. On 29 March 2012, the Committee held a public meeting with representatives of United Nations agencies and other mechanisms, intergovernmental organizations and national human rights institutions, in which representatives of the Working

Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions participated. The participants stressed the importance of the Convention as a tool to prevent enforced disappearances and fight impunity.

48. The Committee also met with representatives of over 30 non-governmental organizations on 11 November 2011 and 29 March 2012. It welcomed their efforts in support of the Convention and underlined the importance of close cooperation in raising awareness about it. During the discussion, the representatives voiced their concern about the limited number of States parties that had accepted the Committee's competence under articles 31 and 32.

49. On 27 March 2012, Committee members participated in a discussion, hosted by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, on the implementation of the Convention and the future challenges of the Committee.

50. During its second session on 28 and 29 March 2012, the Committee held thematic discussions on "non-State actors" and on "women, children and enforced disappearances". The thematic discussion on non-State actors sought to envisage ways to engage States parties on the specific issue of non-State actors and enforced disappearances, as well as to further define and clarify the obligations of States under article 3 of the Convention and determine how those obligations differed from the general obligation of States to investigate and prosecute crimes that fell within the boundaries of domestic criminal law. Representatives of the working group on the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights were invited by the Committee to participate in the meeting. Following the thematic discussion, the Committee decided that it would hold a day of general discussion on the responsibility of States and the role of non-State actors at its third session.

51. The purpose of the thematic discussion on women, children and enforced disappearance was to highlight the specificities of the Convention as they apply to women and children, in particular article 25. At the meeting, the Committee highlighted the gender dimension of enforced disappearance, in respect of women victims and relatives of disappeared persons, and discussed ways to engage States in implementing a gender focus in their reporting obligations. Representatives of UNICEF and of ICRC were invited to attend.

52. The Committee took several steps to promote the Convention. During its first session, the Committee issued a press statement and decided that information on its activities and mandate would be posted on the OHCHR website. In addition, the Committee and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances issued a statement on their joint meeting held on 9 November 2011, noting the intention of the two bodies to convene joint meetings in the future.

53. On 25 January 2012, the Chair of the Committee addressed a letter to all States Members of the United Nations, encouraging them to ratify the Convention and accept the optional mechanisms for communications, provided for in articles 31 and 32. On 20 June 2012, the Chair addressed a letter to the States parties presenting the "Guidelines on the form and content of reports under article 29 to be submitted by States parties to the Convention" (CED/C/2) and inviting them to submit their

reports within two years of having ratified the Convention, as provided for in article 29.

54. During its second session, the Committee discussed a strategy to encourage States to ratify the Convention and accept the optional mechanisms under articles 31 and 32. The members of the Committee agreed to organize and participate in activities in their regions with a view to disseminating information about the Convention and promoting awareness about the Committee's protective functions.

55. On 17 and 19 April 2012, the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Suela Janina, participated in a conference on gender and enforced disappearance, organized by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, held in Addis Ababa, and highlighted the special significance of the crime of enforced disappearance for women and children in the light of article 25 of the Convention. On 25 April 2012, Emmanuel Decaux, Chair of the Committee, one of its members, Rainer Hühle, and its secretariat participated in the Conference on Enforced Disappearances organized by the German Institute for Human Rights, during which the specificities of the Convention, the competence of the Committee and its complementarity with the Working Group were discussed. On 15 May 2012, members of the Committee and its secretariat participated in a conference held in Paris on the theme "International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance: the Issues of Universal and Effective Implementation", organized by the Research Centre on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the University Paris II and sponsored by the Governments of Argentina and France. The President of the Human Rights Council, experts from the Committee and representatives of member States and non-governmental organizations sought to raise awareness about the Convention, stressing its preventive character, which is reflected in its mechanisms for monitoring and early warning, as well as its role in consolidating the rule of law and fighting against impunity in post-crisis contexts.

VI. Activities of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

56. Since its inception, the Working Group has transmitted more than 53,778 individual cases to Governments in more than 90 States. The number of cases under active consideration that have not yet been clarified, closed or discontinued stands at 42,759 and concerns 82 States. The Working Group has been able to clarify 448 cases over the past five years.

57. On 30 August 2011, the Working Group issued a public statement on the occasion of the first United Nations International Day of the Disappeared, in which it stressed the willingness of a number of States to take on the commitment that "no one shall be subjected to enforced disappearance" through the adoption of the Convention. It also stressed that, as with many other thematic human rights issues such as torture, racial discrimination, discrimination against women, the rights of the child and a series of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, the Committee and the Working Group would coexist, cooperating side by side in the fight to prevent and eradicate enforced disappearances wherever they occur around the world.

58. In its 2011 annual report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/19/58/Rev.1, para. 41), the Working Group reiterated its call to States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Convention to do so and to accept the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual and inter-State communications (articles 31 and 32). That recommendation was reiterated in a statement by the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group upon presenting the report of the Working Group to the Council on 5 March 2012.

59. On 25 June 2010, upon the conclusion of its ninety-first session, the Working Group called on all States that had not yet ratified the Convention to do so and to accept the State and individual complaint procedures.

60. In the report of the Working Group on its visit to Mexico, which was conducted from 18 to 31 March 2011, the Working Group recommended that the Government should accept the competence of the Committee concerning complaints from individuals and States, in accordance with articles 31 and 32 of the Convention (A/HRC/19/58/Add.2, para. 82).

61. In the report on its mission to the Congo, which was conducted from 24 September to 3 October 2011, the Working Group recommended, inter alia, the ratification of the Convention (A/HRC/19/58/Add.3, para. 100 (b)).

62. In the report on its mission to Timor-Leste, the Working Group expressed that it looked forward to the ratification by Timor-Leste of the Convention and its acceptance of the competence of the Committee (A/HRC/19/58/Add.1, para. 74).

63. In the follow-up report on its visit to Nepal, the Working Group noted that the Government would not accept the recommendation of the universal periodic review to ratify the Convention (see A/HRC/17/5, para. 109.2) and expressed its hope that the decision would be reviewed by Nepal. It therefore called on the Government to ratify the Convention in the very near future and to accept the competence of the Committee under articles 31 and 32 (A/HRC/19/58/Add.4, para. 28).

64. In the follow-up report on its visit to Colombia, the Working Group welcomed the signature of the Convention and encouraged the Government to continue the process of ratification and to accept the competence of the Committee under articles 31 and 32 (A/HRC/19/58/Add.4, para. 12).

65. The Working Group used every opportunity to promote the ratification of the Convention, including during visits undertaken to different States and bilateral meetings held with its representatives.

VII. Activities of United Nations agencies and organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

66. A number of United Nations agencies and organizations, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have undertaken great efforts at the national, regional and universal levels to disseminate information on the Convention, promote understanding of it, prepare for its entry into force and assist States parties in implementing their obligations under the instrument.

67. UNHCR has referred to the Convention in a number of publications and reports, which are accessible on its online *Refworld* database.

68. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regularly provides information through publications, included on its website, on the status of ratification of international human rights instruments, including the Convention.

69. During the reporting period, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States passed resolutions that include a call to Member States to sign and/or ratify the Convention and assist the families of the victims of enforced disappearance (for example, AG/RES.2651 (XL-O/11)).

70. The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights noted that it had not taken any specific measures to disseminate information about the Convention over the reporting period. However, the Commission, as well as certain of its thematic mandates, such as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in Africa, covered the issue of enforced disappearances as articulated in the Convention. Moreover, the Commission noted that it drew inspiration from all international law on human and peoples' rights, including United Nations instruments, and sought to advance the principles articulated in such instruments within the context of its mandates.

71. Regarding civil society, Amnesty International published a checklist in November 2011 entitled "No impunity for enforced disappearances", which provides guidelines to States parties on how to implement in law and practice their obligations under the Convention. It was published in English and translated into Arabic, Bahasa (Indonesia), Chinese and Spanish. Amnesty International also continued its advocacy work, publishing various press materials, both thematic and country-related and raising awareness about the Convention. It also continued to urge the authorities of the States to ratify the Convention and recognize the competence of the Committee.

72. The International Commission on Missing Persons organized seminars, conferences and workshops to implement the provisions of the Convention in Iraq and issued a press release urging the Government of Libya to ratify the Convention. It also participated in several other activities intended to promote the Convention.

73. The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances, which comprises 41 non-governmental organizations from Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Euro-Mediterranean region and the United States of America, has undertaken a number of activities to promote the Convention, including by sending letters to Governments; coordinating national campaigns; participating in conferences, dialogues and forums all over the world; publishing quarterly e-newsletters; commemorating the International Week of the Disappeared; and maintaining two websites. From 7 to 9 November 2011, the Coalition and 28 of its member organizations convened in Geneva to participate in the first session of the Committee and met with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. In addition, the individual member organizations of the Coalition undertook a series of activities to promote the Convention.

74. TRIAL (Swiss Association against Impunity), which is also a member of the Coalition, monitored the process of the ratification of the Convention and the acceptance of the competence of the Committee in several countries, in particular during the reporting period on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nepal and Switzerland, as well as through participation in international conferences. TRIAL raised awareness

about the Convention and the obligations of relevant States in a number of alternative reports to the Committee against Torture, in respect of Mexico, and the Human Rights Committee and the Committee against Torture, in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Annex

**States that have signed, acceded to or ratified the
Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced
Disappearance, as at 23 July 2012**

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Accession/ratification</i>
Albania ^a	6 February 2007	8 November 2007
Algeria	6 February 2007	
Argentina ^a	6 February 2007	14 December 2007
Armenia	10 April 2007	24 January 2011
Austria ^a	6 February 2007	7 June 2012
Azerbaijan	6 February 2007	
Belgium ^a	6 February 2007	2 June 2011
Benin	19 March 2010	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	6 February 2007	17 December 2008
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6 February 2007	30 March 2012
Brazil	6 February 2007	29 November 2010
Bulgaria	24 September 2008	
Burkina Faso	6 February 2007	3 December 2009
Burundi	6 February 2007	
Cameroon	6 February 2007	
Cape Verde	6 February 2007	
Chad	6 February 2007	
Chile ^a	6 February 2007	8 December 2009
Colombia	27 September 2007	11 July 2012
Comoros	6 February 2007	
Congo	6 February 2007	
Costa Rica	6 February 2007	16 February 2012
Croatia	6 February 2007	
Cuba ^a	6 February 2007	2 February 2009
Cyprus	6 February 2007	

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Accession/ratification</i>
Denmark	25 September 2007	
Ecuador ^a	24 May 2007	20 October 2009
Finland	6 February 2007	
France ^a	6 February 2007	23 September 2008
Gabon	25 September 2007	19 January 2011
Germany ^a	26 September 2007	24 September 2009
Ghana	6 February 2007	
Greece	1 October 2008	
Grenada	6 February 2007	
Guatemala	6 February 2007	
Haiti	6 February 2007	
Honduras	6 February 2007	1 April 2008
Iceland	1 October 2008	
India	6 February 2007	
Indonesia	27 September 2010	
Iraq		23 November 2010 ^b
Ireland	29 March 2007	
Italy	3 July 2007	
Japan ^a	6 February 2007	23 July 2009
Kazakhstan		27 February 2009 ^b
Kenya	6 February 2007	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	29 September 2008	
Lebanon	6 February 2007	
Lesotho	22 September 2010	
Liechtenstein	1 October 2007	
Lithuania	6 February 2007	
Luxembourg	6 February 2007	
Madagascar	6 February 2007	
Maldives	6 February 2007	

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Accession/ratification</i>
Mali ^a	6 February 2007	1 July 2009
Malta	6 February 2007	
Mauritania	27 September 2011	
Mexico	6 February 2007	18 March 2008
Monaco	6 February 2007	
Mongolia	6 February 2007	
Montenegro ^a	6 February 2007	20 September 2011
Morocco	6 February 2007	
Mozambique	24 December 2008	
Netherlands	29 April 2008	23 March 2011
Niger	6 February 2007	
Nigeria		27 July 2009 ^b
Norway	21 December 2007	
Palau	20 September 2011	
Panama	25 September 2007	24 June 2011
Paraguay	6 February 2007	3 August 2010
Portugal	6 February 2007	
Republic of Moldova	6 February 2007	
Romania	3 December 2008	
Samoa	6 February 2007	
Senegal	6 February 2007	11 December 2008
Serbia ^a	6 February 2007	18 May 2011
Sierra Leone	6 February 2007	
Slovakia	26 September 2007	
Slovenia	26 September 2007	
Spain ^a	27 September 2007	24 September 2009
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	29 March 2010	
Swaziland	25 September 2007	
Sweden	6 February 2007	

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Accession/ratification</i>
Switzerland	19 January 2011	
Thailand	9 January 2012	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	6 February 2007	
Togo	27 October 2010	
Tunisia	6 February 2007	29 June 2011
Uganda	6 February 2007	
United Republic of Tanzania	29 September 2008	
Uruguay ^a	6 February 2007	4 March 2009
Vanuatu	6 February 2007	
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) ^a	21 October 2008	
Zambia	27 September 2010	4 April 2011

^a States that have made declarations recognizing the competence of the Committee under articles 31 and/or 32 of the Convention. The full texts of the declarations and reservations made by States parties are available from <http://treaties.un.org>.

^b States that have acceded to the Convention.