

International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances 2022: Joint statement to the OSCE

Mr Chair,

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of Albania, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Norway, San Marino, Ukraine and my own country, the United Kingdom.

30 August marked the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. We want to take this opportunity to strongly condemn instances of enforced disappearances and to reaffirm our commitments to the prevention and eradication of this serious human rights violation. We also reiterate our shared commitments in adopting the [2020 Tirana Ministerial Council Decision on the Prevention and Eradication of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#).

Enforced disappearance is used to spread terror, fear and anxiety. Victims of enforced disappearance are often tortured or killed. Those who survive this abhorrent practice, and their loved ones, live in trauma – the physical and psychological scars are often irreparable.

Mr Chair, we condemn enforced disappearance whenever and wherever it occurs. Today, we are making this statement in the devastating context of Russia's heinous and systematic use of this tactic as part of its unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

The first and second reports of the Moscow Mechanism on the violations and abuses committed in Ukraine have found credible evidence of abductions and abuse of Ukrainian activists, human rights defenders, volunteers, journalists, health-care workers and government representatives in the areas of Ukraine under control of the Russian army. The [report](#) highlights that Ukrainian civilians in Russian-controlled areas are increasingly being subjected to so-called "filtration", a systematic operation designed to identify and brutally suppress dissent. Those who pass through filtration are often transferred, with their consent or without it, to Russian territory, while those who fail are transferred to the so-called 'People's Republics', where their whereabouts are largely unknown. Some are detained indefinitely in detention centres. Some disappear altogether. We have also heard about the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances of 21 journalists and civil society activists who vocally opposed the invasion in Kyiv, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia regions. We vehemently condemn Russia's use of enforced disappearance and will continue to hold Russia accountable for serious human rights violations and abuses.

Mr Chair,

We stand in full solidarity with victims and survivors of enforced disappearances in Ukraine and around the world, as well as their families and communities affected.

We also strongly defend the importance of ensuring that credible reports of enforced disappearance lead to independent and transparent investigations and prosecute those responsible, in order to provide justice to victims and their families.

In closing, we jointly reaffirm our commitment to address this egregious practice and to step up our efforts to end enforced disappearance in the OSCE region.