

Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Friday, 12 September 2014, Geneva

Statement by Ireland

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland would like to welcome the Chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and thanks him for the presentation of the Group's report to the Council today.

Ireland would like to acknowledge the important work of the Working Group, whose humanitarian mandate allows it to serve as an essential channel of communication between family members of victims of enforced disappearance and the governments concerned.

Whilst the annual report illustrates that, in general, the period 1980 to 2014 has seen a gradual reduction in the number of cases transmitted by the Working Group to governments, Ireland supports the report's conclusion that enforced disappearance is not a crime of the past. Regrettably, enforced disappearances continue to be carried out under the pretext of preserving national security and combatting terrorism. We believe that no circumstances whatsoever may be invoked to justify enforced disappearances.

We share, in particular, the Working Group's concerns about reprisals and acts of intimidation against human rights defenders acting against enforced disappearances and relatives of disappeared persons. It is imperative that those who defend human rights are able to work in a safe and enabling environment, free from fear of persecution. We recall Human Rights Council resolution 21/4, which urges all states to take steps to provide adequate protection to, *inter alia*, human rights defenders working on this issue and the families of disappeared persons against any intimidation, persecution, reprisals or ill-treatment.

Ireland also expresses concern about the gravity of enforced disappearances in certain countries, and the pattern of short-term enforced disappearances in others. We call on all states to take strengthened measures to eliminate impunity and to ensure all perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. We also note the lack of cooperation by some governments with the Working Group. We encourage all governments to fully cooperate and engage constructively with the mechanism, in line with Human Rights Council resolution 21/4, including by permitting visits of the Working Group, responding to its communications, and acting on the recommendations contained in its opinions.

Mr. President,

The annual report highlights cases of reprisals against human rights defenders and the effects of restrictions on the work of civil society in the reporting of enforced disappearances. *In this regard, we invite the Working Group to elaborate on how the creation and maintenance of a safe and enabling environment for civil society can contribute to the prevention of enforced disappearances?*