



**International Convention for
the Protection of All Persons
from Enforced Disappearance**

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Committee on Enforced Disappearances

Nineteenth session

Summary record of the second part (public)* of the 336th meeting

Held via videoconference on Wednesday, 25 November 2020, at 4.55 p.m. Central European Time

Chair: Mr. Ayat

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* The summary record of the first part (closed) of the meeting appears as document [CED/C/SR.336](#).

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The public part of the meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

Closure of the session

1. **The Chair** said that the Committee had held its nineteenth session entirely online between 7 September and 25 November 2020. The exceptional duration of the session was a direct consequence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, unexpected changes to the Committee's programme of work and its having had only limited access to the online platform for simultaneous interpretation, Interpretfy, which had to cover the combined needs of all the treaty bodies whose sessions overlapped.

2. In that regard, he wished to recall that, in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure (CED/C/1), the Committee was to hold such sessions as might be required for the effective performance of its functions in accordance with the Convention, and that regular sessions of the Committee were to be convened on dates decided upon by the Committee in consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, taking into account the calendar of conferences and meetings.

3. During the period in question, the Committee had held 22 virtual meetings, the majority of which had taken place between 7 and 25 September 2020, and more sporadically thereafter, depending on the availability of conference services. It had adopted lists of issues in relation to the reports submitted by Czechia, Greece and the Niger, and a list of issues on Mali in the absence of a report. The Committee had likewise adopted its report on follow-up to concluding observations (CED/C/19/4), its report on requests for urgent action (CED/C/19/2) and its report on the follow-up to its Views on communication No. 1/2013 (*Yrusta v. Argentina*) (CED/C/19/3). Moreover, it had considered, and adopted a decision in respect of, communication No. 3/2019 (*E.L.A. v. France*), held a virtual dialogue with Iraq on the additional information submitted by the State party under article 29 (4) of the Convention and adopted follow-up observations in that connection.

4. The dialogue with Iraq had taken place despite the serious restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, marking the first time in the history of the treaty bodies that a dialogue with a State party had been held online. He wished to reiterate that the additional information procedure was unique to the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, which was the only treaty body that did not follow a periodic reporting system. The aim of the procedure was to allow the Committee to monitor closely the implementation by States parties of its recommendations and of Convention principles, and to schedule follow-up dialogues at intervals determined according to the situation regarding enforced disappearance in each country.

5. In keeping with the Committee's new methodology for considering additional information submitted by States parties under article 29 (4), which was still being refined, the virtual dialogue with Iraq had focused on three main areas and had taken less time to complete than dialogues involving the consideration of States parties' initial reports. He wished to thank all stakeholders for the part that they had played in making the virtual dialogue a success.

6. However, he wished to recall that such virtual working methods had been adopted as a temporary solution to allow the Committee to continue to fulfil its mandate under the current exceptional circumstances and should remain as such. While it might be necessary to hold further virtual dialogues in the future, they must not be viewed as a long-term solution, as direct, in-person engagement remained the best way to support stakeholders in combating enforced disappearance.

7. During the current session, the Committee had met virtually with representatives of the Missing Persons Project of the International Committee of the Red Cross to discuss mutual cooperation and had held a virtual meeting and participated in two joint webinars with the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances to mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Working Group. The webinars had been attended by more than 150 people from across the globe and the testimonies shared and questions posed on that occasion had, once again, underscored the importance of stakeholders' continuing to pool their efforts

to prevent enforced disappearance, search for disappeared persons, investigate disappearances, punish perpetrators and provide redress to victims.

8. Although the session had been fraught with difficulties, the Committee had successfully pursued its activities and had, once again, demonstrated its commitment to supporting States parties in their efforts to combat enforced disappearance and to assisting victims. The Committee's twentieth session was scheduled to take place in April 2021. In the interim, the Committee would continue its work under its urgent action and individual communications procedures and continue to develop its working methods, particularly its new methodology for considering additional information submitted by States parties under article 29 (4) of the Convention.

9. After the customary exchange of courtesies, he declared the nineteenth session of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances closed.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.