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THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL PERSONS FROM ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL RATIFICATION

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INTRODUCTION

The Convention: an essential tool to fight enforced disappearance

Enforced disappearance, one of the worst and most serious crimes, continues to be practiced in all regions of the world. It has devastating consequences not only for the families of the disappeared but for whole societies. The adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED or Convention) by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 2006 represented a major step in the fight against this heinous crime. The Convention is the first legally binding instrument concerning enforced disappearance at the universal level. It is aimed at preventing and eradicating enforced disappearance across the world.

The Convention sets out the absolute right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance. States parties are obliged to prevent and punish this crime, and to protect victims' rights. In addition, the Convention establishes an expert international body – the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED or Committee) – to guide States parties on the fulfilment of their Convention obligations and support victims of this crime. Amongst its various functions, the innovative 'urgent action' procedure is tailored to the specific crime of enforced disappearance and aims to locate and protect a disappeared person.

One of the least ratified treaties

Despite efforts from its promoters,¹ the Convention is one of the least ratified of the core UN human rights treaties. To date, only 72 States are parties. The global reach of the Convention is severely limited, and the vital assistance provided by the CED is restricted to these States. A further 41 States have indicated their intention to be bound by the Convention through signature, but this is yet to come to fruition. In fact, 23 of these 41 States signed the CPED on the day it was opened for signature in 2007 – demonstrating an early commitment to the ideal of eradicating enforced disappearance – but they are yet to take the next step of ratification.

Under Article 31 of the Convention, States parties can also recognise the competence of the Committee to receive individual communications from or on behalf of victims of enforced disappearance. To date, 29 of the 72 States parties have accepted that the Committee can receive such communications. 28 States parties have recognised the competence of the Committee to consider communications from other States parties as provided for under Article 32 of the Convention.

The low level of ratification hampers the fight to eradicate enforced disappearance. The Convention's aims cannot be fully realised without formal commitment from States. Furthermore, the Committee's ability to exercise its role in preventing and combating enforced disappearances globally is severely limited. The insufficient number of States that have accepted the competence of the Committee to consider individual and inter-State complaints means that many victims do not have access to this procedure to seek justice and reparations.

Identifying opportunities for progress towards universal adherence

This study reviews the current status of the Convention worldwide, detects gaps in ratification, and aims to identify the reasons for the low number of States parties and opportunities to increase this number. It has been prepared in the context of the ongoing multi-actor efforts to promote the Convention and its objective of ending enforced disappearances, including the project to organise a World Congress on Enforced Disappearances.²

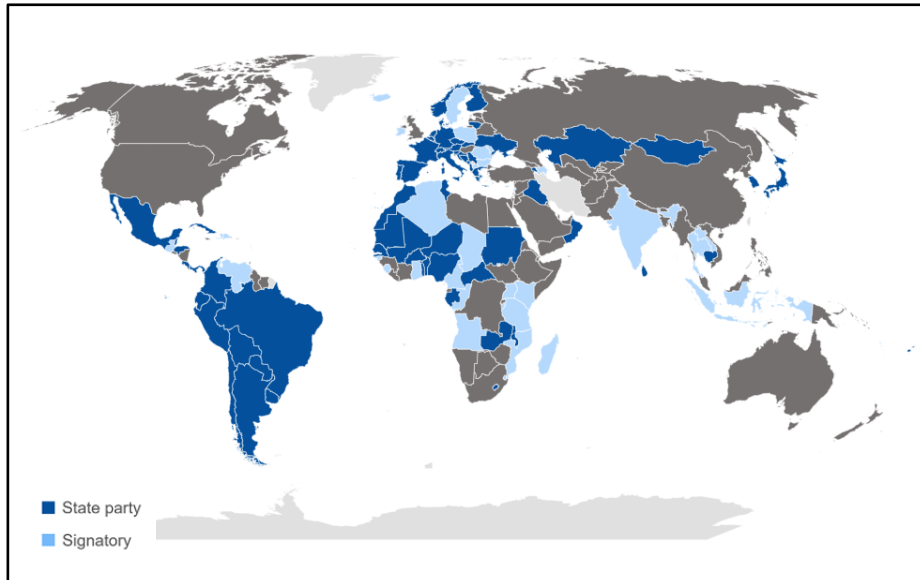
The findings are based on publicly available information and responses to a questionnaire sent to all State Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva.³

The first section maps out the regions and countries where the Convention has been ratified or signed. It also sets out which States have accepted the competence of CED to consider individual and inter-State communications. Gaps in protection and opportunities for encouraging ratification or accession are highlighted. The second section sets out obstacles to ratification or accession, as well as how States parties have overcome these. The third section identifies why States parties have failed to recognise the competence of CED to receive communications. Looking forward, the report concludes by identifying opportunities for all promoters of the Convention to make progress towards the goal of universal adherence.⁴

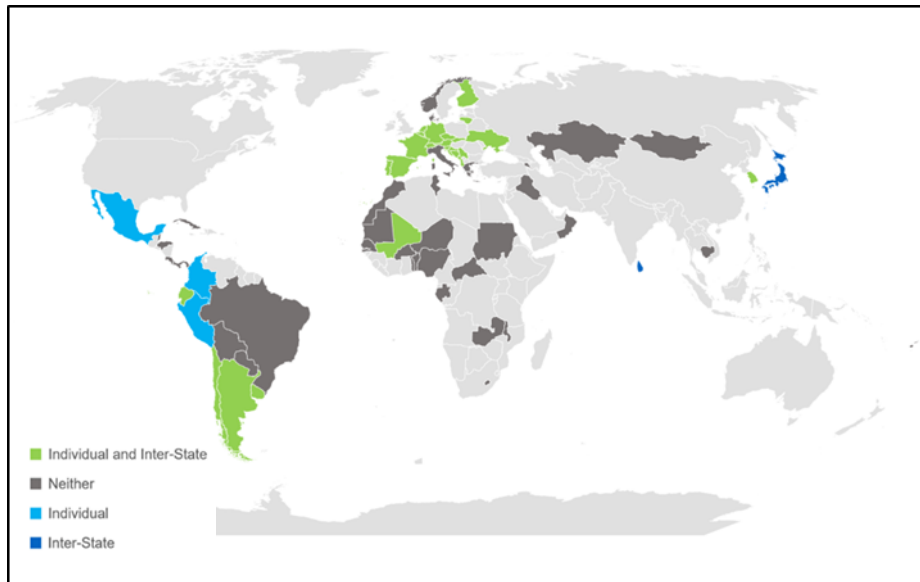
1. THE STATUS OF THE CONVENTION WORLDWIDE

a) Ratification of the Convention

72 of the 193 UN Member States are parties to the CPED. The distribution is indicated in the map below. A further 41 States have signed the Convention. (See Annex I for a full list of parties and signatories.)



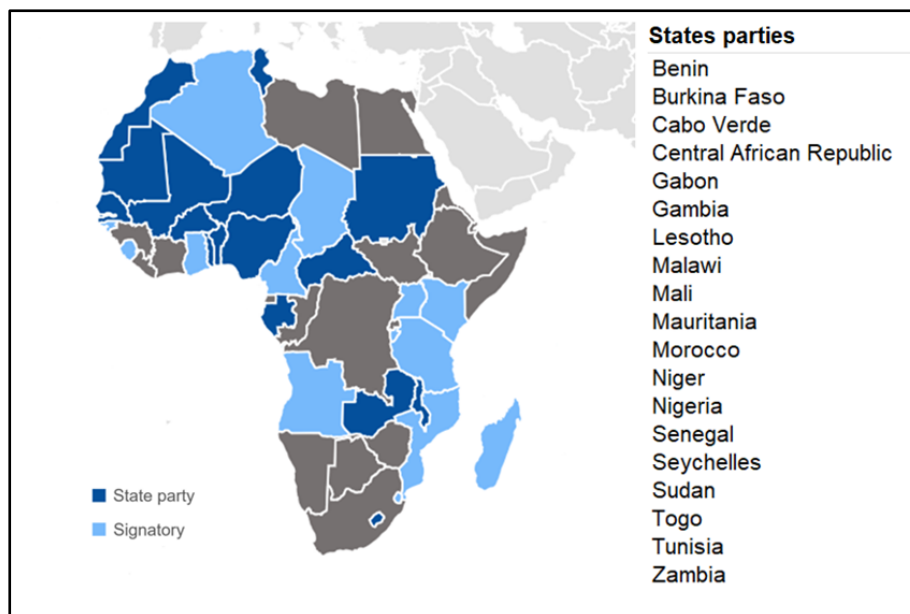
b) Acceptance of communications procedures



Of the 72 States parties to the Convention, 26 have accepted the competence of the CED to consider both individual and inter-State communications pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the Convention. 3 States parties have accepted CED's competence to receive individual communications only (Colombia, Mexico, and Peru), whilst 2 have only accepted its competence to receive inter-State communications (Japan and Sri Lanka). 41 States parties have not recognised the competence of Committee to receive any communications.

c) Regional breakdown

i. Africa



Of the 54 UN Member States in Africa, 19 are parties to the CPED. A further 15 States have signed the Convention but are yet to ratify it: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Eswatini, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania.

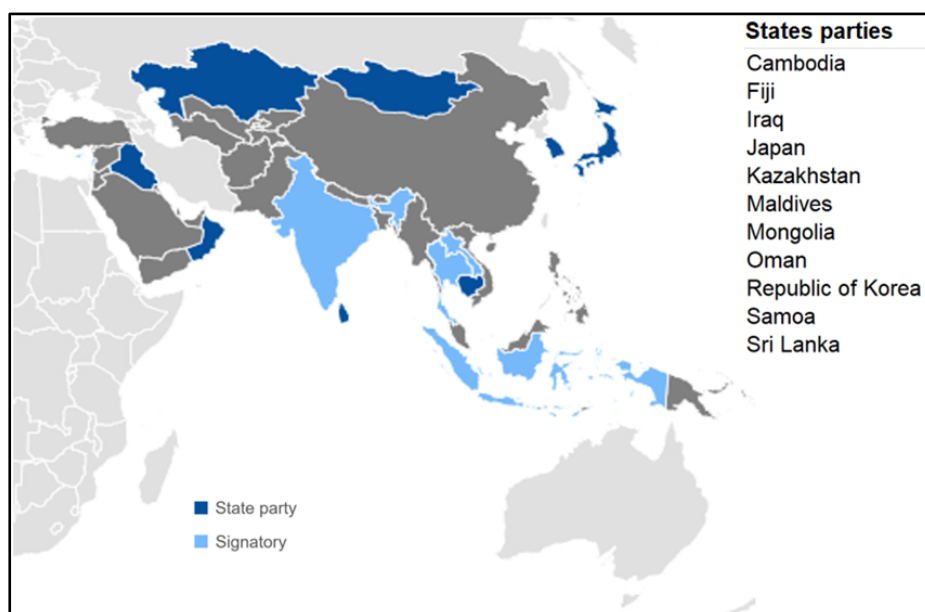
Some of these signatories have indicated that they are moving towards ratification of the Convention. In 2018, **Cameroon** accepted a number of recommendations during its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to become a party to the CPED,⁵ and this was repeated in its election pledges for membership of the Council in 2021.⁶ In its third UPR in 2019, **Angola** accepted various recommendations to ratify the Convention.⁷ In 2020, during its third UPR, **Guinea Bissau** reported that political instability in the country had led to delays in improving the human rights situation. However, it did go on to accept recommendations to ratify the Convention.⁸ **Ghana** also accepted several UPR recommendations in 2023 that called for ratification of the CPED.⁹

A number of other African States have shown a willingness to ratify or accede to the Convention and indicated that progress has been made towards this goal. In 2018, during its third UPR, **Djibouti** confirmed that consultations had been had with relevant stakeholders with a view to ratifying the Convention and committed to making further efforts in terms of legal reforms to facilitate this.¹⁰ **Libya** expressed a readiness to accede to the CPED during its third UPR.¹¹ In its fourth UPR in 2022, **South Africa** indicated that the Parliament has approved ratification of the Convention, and it will be undertaking this soon.¹² In 2020, **Côte d'Ivoire** confirmed that it was considering becoming a party to the Convention in its Human Rights Council election pledges,¹³ having accepted UPR recommendations to this effect in 2019.¹⁴ During an online Human Rights Council election pledge event in September 2023, the State confirmed that the ratification process was nearing its end. Other African States that have accepted UPR recommendations to ratify or accede to the Convention include **Liberia** (2020),¹⁵ **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (2019),¹⁶ **Equatorial Guinea** (2019),¹⁷ **Ethiopia** (2019),¹⁸ and **Guinea** (2019).¹⁹

11 African States are yet to make any commitment to become a party to the Convention. These are Botswana, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Only Mali has accepted the competence of the CED to receive individual and inter-State communications. Of the 18 African States that have ratified the Convention but not accepted CED's competence to receive communications, 14 have accepted the Human Rights Committee's role under the ICCPR-OP1 and 5 of these have also agreed that the Committee against Torture may receive individual communications pursuant to Article 22 of the UNCAT (Morocco, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and Tunisia). In its 2016 Human Rights Council election pledges and during its constructive dialogue with the Committee that took place in the same year, **Tunisia** indicated that it is working through the constitutional processes prior to accepting the competence of CED to receive communications.²⁰ During its constructive dialogue with the Committee in 2022, **Niger** stated that it would recognise the competence of the Committee to consider individual communications 'in the near future'²¹ and in its 2023 dialogue **Zambia** confirmed that there were ongoing consultations regarding recognising the Committee's competence to receive communications.²²

ii. Asia



Of the 54 UN Member States in Asia, 11 are parties to the Convention. A further 8 have signed the Convention but are yet to ratify it. These are: Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Palau, Thailand, and Vanuatu.

3 of these signatory States have indicated a willingness to proceed to ratification. In November 2022, **Indonesia** confirmed during its UPR that the process for ratifying the CPED is underway and it accepted several recommendations that called for it to continue with this process.²³ In 2019, the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** accepted a number of UPR recommendations to ratify the Convention.²⁴ In 2019, **Lebanon** indicated that constitutional processes were being followed in order to ratify the Convention: a draft bill had been presented to Parliament but it was yet to be adopted.²⁵

A number of other States have indicated that they are considering the implications of becoming a party to the Convention. In 2021, in its election pledges accompanying its candidature for the Human Rights Council, **Qatar** indicated that a working group had been established to consider acceding to the Convention.²⁶ Similarly, the **Marshall Islands** also expressed an

intention to undertake high-level political consideration of the CPED in its 2019 Human Rights Council election pledges²⁷ and accepted a number of UPR recommendations in its third cycle review that called for ratification of the Convention, whilst also pointing out that limited resources would mean that implementation would be challenging.²⁸ In 2018, both **Uzbekistan**²⁹ and **Yemen**³⁰ accepted UPR recommendations to sign, ratify or accede the CPED. **Turkmenistan**, during its third UPR in 2018, confirmed that national experts had examined the question of accession to the Convention and accepted several recommendations to ratify or adhere to the CPED.³¹ **Kyrgyzstan** has indicated that ratification of the Convention is under consideration, but would not accept recommendations to ratify the CPED during its third UPR in 2020.³²

29 Asian States are yet to make a commitment to become a party to the Convention. These are: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Malaysia, Federated States of Micronesia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Türkiye, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, and Viet Nam.

Of those States that are party to the Convention, only the Republic of Korea has accepted that the CED is competent to receive both individual and inter-State communications. Japan and Sri Lanka have accepted that the CED is competent to receive inter-State communications. Sri Lanka has agreed to comparable individual complaints procedures, having accepted the competence of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee Against Torture to receive individual communications. Cambodia and Mongolia have accepted the Human Rights Committee is competent to receive individual communications, whilst Kazakhstan has accepted that both the Human Rights Committee and the Committee Against Torture can receive individual communications. During its constructive dialogue with the Committee in 2021, **Mongolia** indicated that there was an ongoing consultation on making the declarations provided for in Articles 31 and 32 of the Convention, and the National Human Rights Commission had recommended that the declarations be made.³³

iii. Eastern European Group



Of the 23 States that are members of the Eastern Europe Group (EEG), 11 are parties to the CPED. 4 States have signed the Convention but are yet to ratify it: Bulgaria, Poland, Republic of Moldova, and Romania. Notably, **Romania**, during its third UPR in 2018, accepted several recommendations to ratify the CPED.³⁴

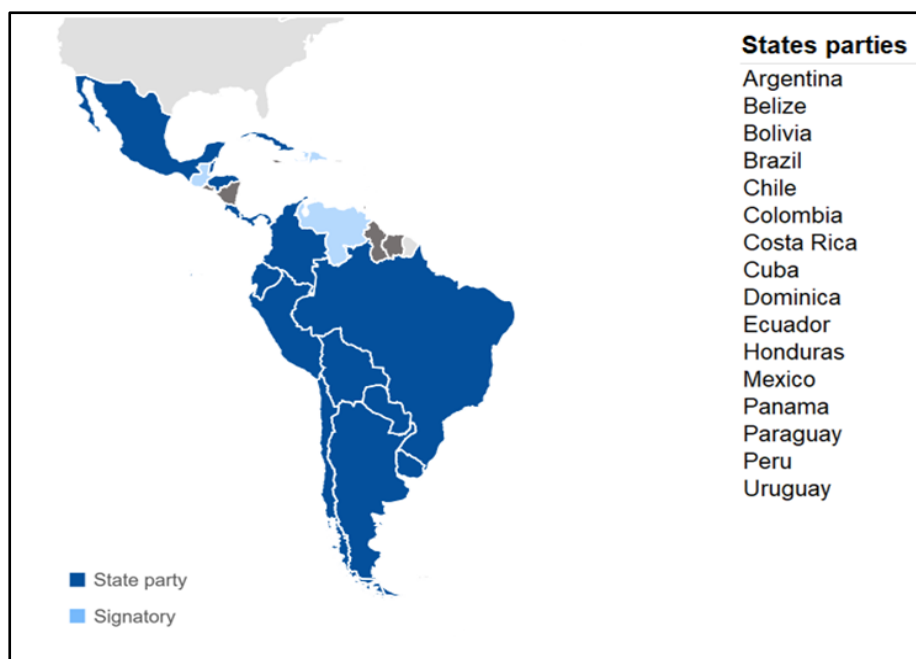
In its third UPR in 2018, **North Macedonia** accepted recommendations to ratify the Convention.³⁵ In 2017, in a response to a request for information from the UN Secretary-General for information, **Hungary** indicated that inter-ministerial consultations and the

required review of legislation were being undertaken with a view towards implementation of Convention obligations and ultimately ratification.³⁶

6 EEG States are yet to make any commitment to ratify the CPED. These are: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, and the Russian Federation.

Armenia is the only EEG State party to the Convention that has not recognised the competence of the CED to receive communications, although it did indicate in its constructive dialogue with the Committee in 2015 that this was under consideration.³⁷ All other EEG States parties have accepted that the CED may receive individual and inter-State communications pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the Convention.

iv. Group of Latin American and Caribbean States



Of the 33 UN Member States that are members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), 16 are parties to the CPED. A further 6 States have signed the Convention but are yet to ratify it. These are: the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

During its third UPR in 2020, **Grenada** accepted several recommendations to ratify the Convention.³⁸ In 2016, **Guatemala** confirmed that it had been considering ratifying the Convention since 2007 when a draft law had been presented to Congress.³⁹ In 2016, the draft law was under review with the Congress' Commission on Human Rights and in 2018, it confirmed during its third UPR that there was a significant degree of approval in Congress for ratification and that the ratification process was ongoing.⁴⁰ However, during its fourth UPR in 2023, the State did not accept recommendations to ratify the Convention.⁴¹

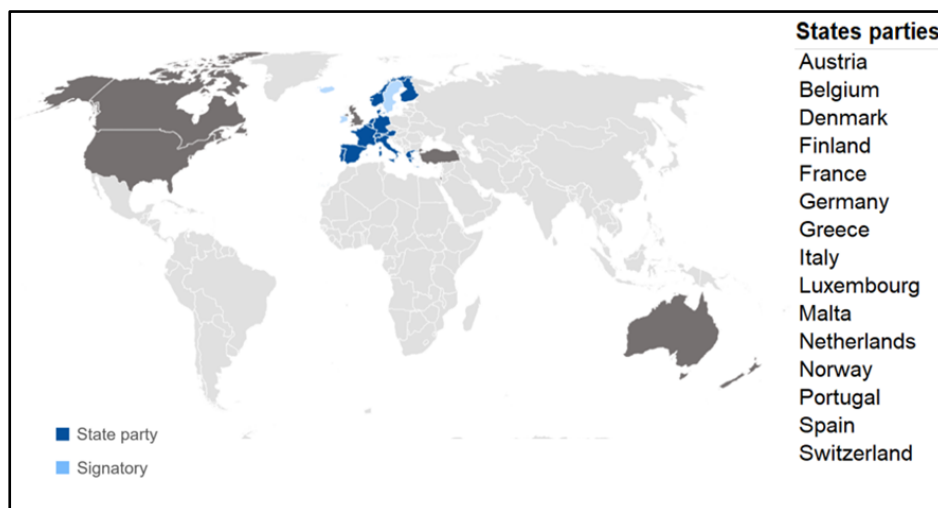
In response to a request for information from the UN Secretary-General, **El Salvador** indicated in 2019 that the Legislative Assembly was studying an initiative to ratify the Convention.⁴²

10 GRULAC members have made no commitment to ratify or accede to the Convention: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

4 of the GRULAC parties to the Convention have recognised that the CED may receive individual and inter-State communications pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the CPED. These are: Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Uruguay. A further 3 States – Colombia, Mexico, and Peru – have recognised that the CED may receive individual communications only. Of the remaining 9 GRULAC members that have ratified the Convention, 5 have accepted that the Human Rights Committee and the Committee Against Torture may receive individual communications. These are: Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, and Paraguay. Honduras has ratified the ICCPR-OP1 and so accepts that the Human Rights Committee can receive individual communications, but it has not accepted the same for the Committee Against Torture.

In 2017, in a response to a request for information from the UN Secretary-General, **Cuba** indicated that it continues to evaluate the possibility of accepting the procedures in Articles 31 and 32 of the CPED.⁴³ However, during its constructive dialogue with the Committee in the same year, the State indicated that it had not considered it necessary to consider accepting the procedures because sufficient mechanisms existed locally for individuals to bring complaints.⁴⁴ **Costa Rica** indicated during its constructive dialogue with the Committee in 2023 that it would take the necessary measures to accept the individual communications provisions.⁴⁵ During their constructive dialogues with the Committee, **Bolivia** in 2019⁴⁶ and **Brazil** in 2021⁴⁷ indicated that they were examining the possibility of making declarations pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the Convention.

v. Western Europe and Others Group



15 of the 29 members of the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) are State parties to the Convention. A further 5 States have signed the Convention but have yet to ratify it. They are: Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and Sweden.

Sweden has indicated that, although it believes its legislation is generally compliant with the CPED, an analysis of required legislative amendments needs to take place prior to ratification.⁴⁸ However, it has not committed to ratifying the Convention and noted several recommendations calling for this action during its 2020 UPR.⁴⁹ In 2018, during its third UPR, **Monaco** stated that a review of the Convention’s provisions revealed incompatibilities with provisions of the Monegasque law and a further in-depth study was under way. However, it would not commit to ratifying the CPED.⁵⁰

7 WEOG States are yet to make any commitment regarding ratification or accession to the Convention. These are: Andorra, Australia, Israel, San Marino, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. **New Zealand** indicated in its third UPR in 2019 that it will consider ratifying the Convention but it will not

make a commitment to do so until its domestic processes considering the implications are completed.⁵¹ **Canada** indicated in 2018 that its federal, provincial and territorial governments were in the process of analysing the Convention and implications of ratification. However, it did not commit to ratification.⁵²

10 of the WEOG States parties have accepted that the CED can receive both individual and inter-State communications having made declarations pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the CPED. All the remaining 5 States parties – Denmark, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Norway - have accepted that the Human Rights Committee and Committee Against Torture are competent to receive individual communications. Notably, in its third UPR in 2019, **Italy** accepted recommendations that called for it to recognise the competence of the CED to receive individual and inter-State communications.⁵³

2. OBSTACLES TO RATIFICATION, GOOD PRACTICES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

8 broad issues have been identified as posing challenges to ratification of the CPED. Some of these have led to delays in ratification, whilst others are cited by States as reasons for non-ratification of the Convention.

1. Legal reform

The most common reason given for delay in ratification is the need for comprehensive legal reform in order to ensure that the State is compliant with the Convention. Whilst some States point to the fact that they have a dualist legal system (eg the Maldives, Kenya and New Zealand), this reason is also given by States who have a legal system underpinned by a monist legal tradition (eg Madagascar). Commitment to the treaty will only be undertaken once domestic law is compliant with the Convention. Some States have embarked on careful and detailed – but sometimes time-consuming – reviews of existing legislation and then sought to amend relevant existing legislation. Other States have sought to adopt new legislation criminalising enforced disappearance and implementing other Convention obligations. There may also be a need for changes to the national Constitution to facilitate ratification.

Whilst legislation is an essential element of meaningful implementation of the Convention, States do not need to have perfectly compliant national legislation and processes in place prior to ratification. For example, Honduras ratified the Convention in 2008, and later amended its Criminal Code in 2012 to include the crime of enforced disappearance and harmonise domestic legislation with the Convention.⁵⁴ It is important that States considering ratification are aware that national law can be refined and developed over time and that the Committee on Enforced Disappearances can provide expert guidance in this regard. Technical assistance has also been provided by the OHCHR. For example, Sri Lanka received advice from the OHCHR on the integration of the Convention into national law in 2017 after it had ratified the CPED in May 2016.⁵⁵

Furthermore, the role of the Committee is to provide guidance and support to States parties in order to achieve the end goal of ending enforced disappearance across the globe. For example, prior to ratification of the Convention, various Lithuanian institutions engaged in an evaluation of the legal order and on ratification amendments to the Criminal Code were implemented. However, following consideration of Lithuania's first periodic report on implementation of the Convention, the Committee concluded that Lithuania's legislation was not fully in line with its obligations under the CPED and that further amendments were required. These were implemented subsequently.⁵⁶

2. Study of implications of ratification

Some States have indicated that they are 'studying the implications' of ratifying the Convention. This appears to be distinct from studies related to legislative change, focussing more on broader implications of ratification. This is often facilitated through broad-based consultations. Some States have indicated a need to consult federal, provincial and territorial governments prior to making any decision on ratification (eg Canada). In some circumstances, such studies have revealed incompatibilities with current practices, and the ratification process has slowed (eg Monaco). The resources (including time) required for such studies and consultations has been cited as a reason for a delay in ratifying the Convention by Kenya.⁵⁷

Finland engaged in a significant public consultation on the adoption and implementation of the CPED, inviting all relevant stakeholders – including civil society, government actors and ministries, as well as law practitioners (lawyers and judges) – to comment on the proposal. Careful consideration was given to the implications of ratification, which resulted in Finland

entering a reservation in respect of Article 25(4) of the Convention relating to the obligation to annul any adoption of children that originated in an enforced disappearance.⁵⁸

3. Identifying an appropriate coordinator at the State level

Some States have indicated that identifying the primary national authority to champion ratification has been a challenge. The multiplicity of State institutions – from ministries to members of parliament – that are involved in the process of becoming a party to the Convention has meant that there is no obvious national governmental sponsor for the ratification process. This issue also comes to the fore when it comes to implementing the Convention locally and fulfilling the obligation to submit a national report to the Committee.

4. Lack of resources to implement the Convention

The resources required to implement the obligations set out in the CPED has been considered an obstacle to ratification. This ranges from financial resources to technical capacity requirements to meet treaty obligations, including the obligations to report to the Committee.⁵⁹

However, support is available. From the moment they embark upon the ratification journey, States join a community of practice and can benefit from the experience and guidance of international partners such as other States parties,⁶⁰ the OHCHR Treaty Body Capacity-Building Programme,⁶¹ the Committee,⁶² and civil society organisations. For example, Costa Rica has benefitted from technical assistance with implementing Convention obligations from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Country Team in the country, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁶³ Support has also been provided to States parties by the OHCHR to assist with meeting reporting requirements.

5. Existing national protections are sufficient

States have suggested that they do not need to ratify the CPED because there is sufficient protection from enforced disappearance in existing national law. Thus, there is no benefit to ratifying the Convention. Poland, in its third UPR in 2017, confirmed that its Ministry of Justice was analysing the possibility of ratifying the Convention and accepted recommendations that called for ratification.⁶⁴ However, by its fourth UPR in 2023, it confirmed that ratification of the Convention was not necessary in order to protect the rights guaranteed by the Convention because Polish law is consistent with the Convention and stipulates severe criminal penalties for enforced disappearance or aiding or abetting in it, whether the individual act constitutes a crime against humanity or falls short of the definition. As such, ratification of the Convention would not increase protection offered.⁶⁵ Similarly, the United Kingdom has indicated that its legislation prohibiting arbitrary arrest provides sufficient protection against enforced disappearance.⁶⁶

States who rely on this justification do not appear to appreciate that there may be significant political gain to be had by showing a commitment to the international rule of law. Furthermore, these States have not appreciated that criminalisation is only one element of the Convention's regime. There are also obligations to investigate enforced disappearances and protect witnesses, to cooperate internationally with investigations, and to extradite and/or prosecute suspects without impunity. There are obligations of prevention, such as ensuring that there is no secret detention and keeping registers of individuals deprived of their liberty. And there are obligations to ensure that victims have the right to reparation and compensation. Ratification and engagement with the Committee can direct States to fully implement the entire Convention regime.

6. Enforced disappearance is not an issue within the State

The absence of reported cases of enforced disappearance has been cited as a reason for non-ratification. Put simply, it is suggested that there is no need to ratify the Convention if there are no/very few cases of enforced disappearance within the State. One State – San Marino – has suggested that because there have been no enforced disappearances in the country and ratification of the Convention would require significant levels of legislative activity, it does not see becoming party to the CPED as a priority.⁶⁷

It is worth pointing out that, as of May 2023 the Working Group on Enforced Disappearance has transmitted allegations of enforced disappearance to 112 States, constituting nearly 60% of all UN Member States.⁶⁸ It is a widespread practice. Even those States for whom enforced disappearance is not an issue can contribute to its eradication by ratifying the Convention, a treaty that protects universal rights. The CPED sets out an international criminal law regime, which includes obligations of international cooperation and mutual assistance to ensure that no perpetrators of enforced disappearance can escape prosecution. Universal adherence is necessary for the Convention to be fully operational. Moreover, ratification sends a strong message that the State is committed to the eradication of enforced disappearance wherever it may occur. It also demonstrates a State's commitment to strengthening the rule of law and the international human rights protection system.

7. National priorities/ political will

The COVID-19 pandemic and significant domestic and international events have diverted governmental resources away from considering ratification of the CPED.⁶⁹ Political instability can hinder progress in terms of improving the human rights situation in a State. For example, Guinea-Bissau has indicated that the situation in the country since 2015 has delayed some governmental action in the human rights arena.⁷⁰ There has also been speculation from civil society that some governments are unwilling to commit to ratifying the Convention out of a fear that political leaders will face prosecution.⁷¹

For some States, ratification of other human rights instruments is seen as a greater priority. For example, in 2023, Liechtenstein confirmed that it had signed the Convention, but that ratification was not a priority and attention had been focused on ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.⁷²

There have been campaigns to increase awareness of the issue of enforced disappearance at the national level and the importance of becoming a party to the CPED. For example, in Madagascar, the OHCHR has been holding sensitization sessions for parliament to advocate for ratification of the Convention.⁷³ Similarly, the UN Country Team in Lebanon led a project in 2021 entitled 'Dealing with the past' which includes an element promoting ratification of the Convention.⁷⁴

8. The Committee's temporal competence

Enforced disappearance is a continuous violation, which starts at the moment at which victims are deprived of liberty (ie abduction) and only ceases when the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared persons are determined with certainty. In practice, this happens when disappeared persons are found alive, in the event of death when their remains are found and identified, or when the identity of a child subjected to wrongful removal is restored.

In a 'Statement on the *ratione temporis* element in the review of reports submitted by States parties under the Convention', the Committee clarified the temporal scope of application of the

Convention. With regard to individual communications, the Committee considers that it cannot consider cases of enforced disappearances that commenced before the entry into force of the Convention. In terms of the reporting process, the Committee takes into consideration the current obligations of the State concerned, which, depending on the circumstances, might relate to enforced disappearances that commenced before the Convention entered into force in the State party concerned.⁷⁵

In 2015, Spain suggested that the Committee's interpretation of its temporal competence as set out in its 'Statement' may be contributing to a decline in the rate of ratifications. Specifically, Spain expressed a concern that the Committee had suggested it was competent to take into account situations/ events that had taken place prior to the entry into force of the Convention for the relevant State party. Spain considered that this interpretation 'poses, on the one hand, a matter of legal uncertainty that could be the origin of the slowdown in the rate of ratifications as observed in the last two years and, at the same time, it could create an additional difficulty in the promotion of ratification of the Convention.'⁷⁶

However, the Committee's interpretation is in line with the relevant rules of international law regarding continuous violations and the interpretation that other human rights bodies have taken.⁷⁷ Furthermore, no State has clearly indicated that this is a reason for non-ratification.

3. RECOGNITION OF THE COMMITTEE'S COMPETENCE TO CONSIDER INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 31

a) Reasons for not accepting the Committee's competence under Article 31

As an optional mechanism, only a few States have given reasons for not accepting the competence of the Committee to receive and examine individual communications. Our study has identified three main reasons.

1. Subject to review

Some States have indicated that they are investigating the legal implications of recognising the competence of the Committee (eg Denmark,⁷⁸ Japan,⁷⁹ and Brazil⁸⁰).

2. Premature

Togo has suggested that it is still raising awareness of the Convention and its obligations with relevant actors and so it would be premature to allow individuals to complain to the Committee until this knowledge and awareness has been embedded.⁸¹ Lebanon, a signatory but not yet a State party, has indicated that it was premature to accept the competence of the Committee because it has experienced a civil war that has resulted in numerous cases of disappearance.⁸²

3. Duplication of efforts of other international bodies

In 2017, Mexico stated that it deals with cases of disappearance before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Furthermore, it indicated that it had accepted that the UN Human Rights Committee may accept individual communications and so there were sufficient international and regional quasi-judicial and judicial mechanisms to respond to complaints and there was no need to recognise the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.⁸³ However, in 2020, the Mexican Senate finally approved acceptance of the competence of the Committee to examine individual complaints following lobbying from families of victims, the Committee, OHCHR, as well as other human rights organisations. Mexico now recognises the Committee's competence in this regard. Other States have drawn attention to the fact that they cooperate with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

4. Sufficient national mechanisms

Cuba indicated during its constructive dialogue with the Committee in 2017 that there was a broad 'inter-institutional' system to consider all complaints and reports of human rights violations generally. Furthermore, individuals deprived of their liberty could make complaints to relevant authorities. Given the various domestic mechanisms in place, Cuba stated that it 'had not considered it necessary' to accept the competence of the Committee to receive communications.⁸⁴

b) The importance of the individual communications procedure in the fight against enforced disappearance

As for all 'core' UN human rights treaties, the Convention provides the option for States parties to recognise the competence of the Committee to consider individual communications. This procedure aims to enforce the rights enshrined in the Convention. Where a State party has declared that it recognises the Committee's power to receive and consider such communications, any individual claiming to be a victim of violations of the rights protected

under the Convention at the hands of that State can submit a complaint to the Committee. The Committee will determine whether Convention rights have been violated and recommend remedial action. This procedure gives *further* practical effect to the Convention. States that accept the individual communications procedure indicate their commitment to ensuring justice for victims and a commitment to the international rule of law. It is important to appreciate that the procedure is subsidiary to local remedies; it is only to be used where domestic remedies have been exhausted or are insufficient.

It should be noted that the Committee's mandate in terms of individual communications is different to that of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance.⁸⁵ The Working Group has a humanitarian mandate. It assists families in determining the fate or whereabouts of their family members who have disappeared. The Working Group does not have a mandate to adjudicate individual cases. Therefore, rather than the perceived duplication of international procedures, States should consider the complementarity and cooperation between the various mechanisms.⁸⁶

5. CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES AND HOW TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS

The analysis above suggests that there is scope to increase the number of ratifications of the Convention significantly.

26 States have publicly committed to ratify the Convention. These are:

Africa	Asia	EEG	GRULAC	WEOG
Angola	Indonesia	Hungary	El Salvador	
Cameroon	Lao People's Democratic Republic	North Macedonia	Grenada	
Cote d'Ivoire	Lebanon	Romania		
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Marshall Islands			
Djibouti	Qatar			
Ethiopia	Turkmenistan			
Equatorial Guinea	Uzbekistan			
Ghana	Yemen			
Guinea				
Guinea Bissau				
Liberia				
Libya				
South Africa				

It is suggested that the following actions should be taken to encourage ratification of the Convention:

- *Make the fight against enforced disappearance a foreign policy priority*

States Parties to the Convention should be encouraged to follow the examples of France and Argentina and make combatting enforced disappearance a foreign policy priority. They can further demonstrate their commitment to the international rule of law, the elimination of enforced disappearance and justice for victims by accepting the competence of the Committee to receive communications.

- *Call on States who have publicly committed to ratify the Convention to honour their pledges*

There should be sustained efforts to call on States to honour their pledges to ratify the Convention. Whilst some delays in ratification are to be expected as constitutional and national processes are followed, consistent international and domestic pressure can be used fruitfully to ensure that these processes do not stall.

- *Take advantage of the UPR process to call on all non-States parties to adhere to the Convention*

The UPR provides a good opportunity to promote the Convention: many public commitments to ratification of the Convention have been made in the context of this review process. All

States parties to the Convention should systematically recommend that non-States parties ratify the Convention.

- *Address misconceptions*

It is important to confirm that full compliance with the Convention is not a pre-requisite for ratification. Provision of technical and other assistance from UN entities, other States and international partners may assist the ratification process for some States.

Misconceptions regarding the Convention should be addressed to convince other States to ratify. It is important to consistently reiterate the importance of the Convention for eliminating enforced disappearance across the globe and ensuring there is no impunity for those who commit this international crime.

- *Identify appropriate sponsors at the State level to coordinate ratification and implementation processes*

Ratifying and implementing the Convention involves various State institutions, and ideally other actors involved in the fight against enforced disappearances, including civil society. When promoting the Convention, it is important to identify the most appropriate body to facilitate the process of ratification and implementation.

- *Highlight the positive impact of the Convention*

Promoters of the Convention should use every opportunity to highlight the positive impact of the Convention for States, victims and their families and, more broadly, for the whole society.

The best example of the Convention's positive impact is the number of cases where disappeared persons have been found. Thanks to the urgent action procedure – applicable to all States parties – 429 victims of enforced disappearances have been found, 407 of them alive.⁸⁷ In a meeting with civil society organisations and victims during its 2021 visit to Mexico, the Committee heard this first-hand testimony:

I really want to thank the Committee for being here today, for listening to us. But I also want to thank them because I am here and alive. I was disappeared by security agents in 2015. My partner requested an Urgent Action and within 24 hours, she got a letter saying that the Urgent Action had been registered. 48 hours later, those who were keeping me pulled me out of the room and made me enter into a car. They said: 'You are lucky bastard. We got instruction to kick you out of here.' After driving some time, they threw me on the way, leaving me handcuffed and face covered in a ditch. A man found me a few hours later and took me with him. And here I am, today. And I want to thank you.⁸⁸

Ratification of the Convention demonstrates a commitment to the rule of law and signals that enforced disappearance will not be tolerated wherever it is committed and that there is no impunity for this abhorrent crime. The Convention calls for criminalisation of enforced disappearance and the adoption of preventive measures, such as maintaining official registers and records of persons deprived of liberty. All persons will benefit from these actions. In those States where enforced disappearance has taken place, ratification of the Convention symbolises a commitment to truth, justice, memory, reconciliation and reparation and a step away from past practices.

¹ The adoption of the Convention and the subsequent campaigns for its ratification have been the result of efforts from its promoters, notably friendly States, civil society organisations, including associations of relatives of disappeared persons and the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED), experts and the relevant United Nations human rights bodies.

² CED agenda item 5(f): 'Proposed world forum to promote the ratification of the Convention', UN Doc. CED/C/24/1 (2022). More information is available at: <https://www.cedi193.org/world-forum-on-enforced-disappearances>.

³ We are grateful to those States that responded to the questionnaire: Argentina, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, France, Lithuania, the Maldives, Mexico, and Poland.

⁴ The goal of universal adherence is recalled consistently by the UN General Assembly in its biennial resolution on the Convention. See UNGA Resolution 76/158, *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*, UN Doc. A/RES/76/158 (2021), paras 1, 2, and 4.

⁵ UN Doc. A/HRC/39/15 (2018); UN Doc. A/HRC/39/15/Add.1 (2018).

⁶ UN Doc. 1/76/280 (2021), para 21.

⁷ UN Doc. A/HRC/43/11 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/43/11/Add.1 (2019), para 1.

⁸ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/11 (2020), para 10; UN Doc. A/HRC/44/11/Add.1 (2020).

⁹ UN Doc. A/HRC/53/7 (2023); UN Doc. A/HRC/53/7/Add.1 (2023).

¹⁰ UN Doc. A/HRC/39/10 (2018), para 7; UN Doc. A/HRC/39/10/Add.1 (2018), para 5.

¹¹ UN Doc. A/HRC/46/17 (2021), paras 18 and 48; UN Doc. A/HRC/46/17/Add.1 (2021).

¹² UN Doc. A/HRC/52/17 (2023), para 11; UN Doc. A/HRC/52/17/Add.1 (2023), para 5.

¹³ UN Doc. A/75/68/Rev.1 (2020), para 13.

¹⁴ UN Doc. A/HRC/42/6 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/42/6/Add.1 (2019).

¹⁵ UN Doc. A/HRC/46/6 (2020); UN Doc. A/HRC/46/6/Add.1 (2020).

¹⁶ UN Doc. A/HRC/42/5 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/42/5/Add.1 (2019).

¹⁷ UN Doc. A/HRC/42/13 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/42/13/Add.1 (2019).

¹⁸ UN Doc. A/HRC/42/14 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/42/14/Add.1 (2019).

¹⁹ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/5 (2020); UN Doc. A/HRC/44/5/Add.1 (2020).

²⁰ UN Doc. A/71/92 (2016) at 4; UN Doc. CED/C/SR.158 (2016), para 4.

²¹ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.385 (2022), para 13.

²² UN Doc. CED/C/SR.424 (2023), para 5.

²³ UN Doc. A/HRC/52/8 (2022), paras 12 and 94; UN Doc. A/HRC/52/8/Add.1 (2022).

²⁴ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/6 (2020); UN Doc. A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 (2020).

²⁵ UN Doc. A/74/213 (2019), paras 28-29.

²⁶ UN Doc. A/76/67 (2021) at 18.

²⁷ UN Doc. A/74/334 (2019), para 14.

²⁸ UN Doc. A/HRC/46/14 (2020); UN Doc. A/HRC/46/14/Add.1 (2021).

²⁹ UN Doc. A/HRC/39/7 (2018); UN Doc. A/HRC/39/7/Add.1 (2018).

³⁰ UN Doc. A/HRC/41/9 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/41/9/Add.1 (2019).

³¹ UN Doc. A/HRC/39/3 (2018), para 14; UN Doc. A/HRC/39/3/Add.1 (2018).

³² UN Doc. A/HRC/44/4/Add.1 (2020), para 8.

³³ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.348 (2021), para 19.

³⁴ UN Doc. A/HRC/38/6 (2018); UN Doc. A/HRC/38/6/Add.1 (2018).

³⁵ UN Doc. A/HRC/41/11 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/41/11/Add.1 (2019).

³⁶ UN Doc. A/72/280 (2017), para 8.

³⁷ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.122 (2015), para 20.

³⁸ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/13 (2020); UN Doc. A/HRC/44/13/add.1 (2020).

³⁹ UN Doc. A/71/278 (2016), para 16.

⁴⁰ UN Doc. A/HRC/37/9 (2018), para 14; UN Doc. A/HRC/37/9/Add.1 (2018), para 9.

⁴¹ UN Doc. A/HRC/53/9 (2023); UN Doc. A/HRC/53/9/Add.1 (2023).

⁴² UN Doc. A/74/213 (2019), para 12.

⁴³ UN Doc. A/72/280 (2017), para 5.

⁴⁴ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.199 (2017), para 25.

⁴⁵ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.427 (2023), para 29.

⁴⁶ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.297 (2019), para 26.

⁴⁷ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.362 (2021), para 29.

⁴⁸ UN Doc. A/72/280 (2017), para 18.

⁴⁹ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/12 (2020), para 69; UN Doc. A/HRC/44/12/Add.1 (2020), para 5.

⁵⁰ UN Doc. A/HRC/40/13 (2018), para 72; UN Doc. A/HRC/40/13/Add.1 (2019), paras 44-45.

⁵¹ UN Doc. A/HRC/41/4 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/41/4/Add.1 (2019), paras 5 and 6.

⁵² UN Doc. A/HRC/39/11/Add.1 (2019), para 6.

⁵³ UN Doc. A/HRC/43/4 (2019); UN Doc. A/HRC/43/4/Add.1 (2020).

⁵⁴ Legislative Decree No. 49-2012 of 17 April 2012, introducing Article 333-A to the Penal Code.

⁵⁵ UN Doc A/72/280 (2017), para 42.

⁵⁶ Lithuania Response to Questionnaire (on file with authors). See UN Doc. CED/C/LTU/CO/1 (2017). Reforms were implemented through the adoption of Law No. XIV-2085 of the Republic of Lithuania on Amendments to the Articles 100-1, 100-3 and 113-1 of the Criminal Code.

⁵⁷ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/9/Add.1 (2020), paras 9-10.

⁵⁸ Finland Response to Questionnaire (on file with authors); the consultation webpage can be found here: <https://www.lausuntopalvelu.fi/FI/Proposal/ShowAllProposalAnswers?proposalId=3256ab0c-4815-44f1-91f2-e4e104ced879>. Finland's reservation reads: 'Emphasizing the importance of prior verification of the conditions for adoption, in the best interests of the child, and thus having reservations about a separate procedure for annulling adoption but recognizing, however, the possibility of reviewing adoption in exceptional cases, the Republic of Finland considers that it is not bound by the provisions of Article 25, paragraph 4 of the Convention in respect of annulling the adoption of the children referred to in Article 25, paragraph 1, subparagraph (a) of the Convention.'

⁵⁹ eg Bhutan has indicated that it is 'constrained by the lack of adequate financial resources and technical capacity to meet the various obligations of the treaties/conventions.' UN Doc. A/HRC/42/8/Add.1, para 2.

⁶⁰ eg Honduras received technical cooperation assistance from Paraguay. See UN Doc. A/74/213 (2019), para 19.

⁶¹ More information available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/treaty-body-capacity-building-programme>.

⁶² OHCHR has developed several tools, including the OHCHR Training Guide on Reporting under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2022) available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/training-and-education-publications/ohchr-training-guide-reporting-under-international>.

⁶³ UN Doc. A/74/213 (2019), paras 9-11.

⁶⁴ UN Doc. A/HRC/36/14 (2017), para 96.

⁶⁵ UN Doc. A/HRC/52/15/Add.1 (2023), Annex.

⁶⁶ UN Doc. A/HRC/52/10 (2023), para 26; UN Doc. A/HRC/36/9 (2017), para 48.

⁶⁷ UN Doc. A/HRC/4/4/9/Add.1 (2020), para 8.

⁶⁸ UN Doc. A/HRC/54/22 (2023).

⁶⁹ eg Laikram and Pathak, 'Essentialities of Ratifying CED in Thailand: Human Rights amid Covid-19 Pandemic' (2022) 6 *Emerging Science Journal* 57.

⁷⁰ UN Doc. A/HRC/44/11 (2020), paras 8-10.

⁷¹ eg Purba, 'The Ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance by Indonesia: The Long-Awaited Promise...', March 2011, at: www.disappeared-asia.org/voice/march2011/nf_ratification.htm.

⁷² UN Doc. A/HRC/54/17 (2023), para 52.

⁷³ UN Doc. A/74/213 (2019), para 60.

⁷⁴ UN Doc. A/76/315 (2021), para 25.

⁷⁵ See also Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, 'General Comment on Enforced Disappearance as a Continuous Crime', UN Doc. A/HRC/16/48 (2011) at 10.

⁷⁶ UN Doc. A/70/261 (2015), para 26.

⁷⁷ 'The breach of an international obligation by an act of a State having a continuing character extends over the entire period during which the act continues and remains not in conformity with the international obligation', International Law Commission, Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Art 14(2). The UN Human Rights Committee, since the 1980s, has accepted communications concerning violations that occurred before the entry into force of its complaint mechanism, provided that the violations continued to have effects after that date, including in cases of enforced disappearance. See G. Baranowska, 'How long does the past endure? "Continuing violations" and the "very distant past" before the UN Human Rights Committee' (2023)

41 *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 97.

⁷⁸ UN Doc. A/72/280 (2017), para 6.

⁷⁹ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.257 (2018), para 32.

⁸⁰ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.362 (2021), para 29.

⁸¹ UN Doc. A/72/280 (2017), para 22.

⁸² UN Doc. A/74/213 (2019), para 30.

⁸³ UN Doc. A/72/280 (2017), paras 9 and 11.

⁸⁴ UN Doc. CED/C/SR.199 (2017), para 25.

⁸⁵ See *The CED and the WGEID in a nutshell* (OHCHR, 2023): <https://www.oacnudh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/WGEID-CED-InglesWEB.pdf>.

⁸⁶ See 'Roadmap on the coordination between the UN CED and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' (2021), which includes cross-referencing of jurisprudence and confirms the mutually reinforcing nature of the two mechanisms: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Roadmap-CED-IACHR-Rev10.pdf>.

⁸⁷ As of 30 March 2023: 'Opening speech by the Chairperson of the Committee at its 24th session' (in Spanish): https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCED%2FSTA%2F24%2F35269&Lang=en.

⁸⁸ 'Treaty bodies: Human Rights Impact Stories' 2022, at 5:

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/treaty-bodies/2022-11-04/good-stories.pdf>.

ANNEX 1

STATES PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES TO THE CONVENTION

States Parties			
	<i>Date of Ratification/ Accession</i>	<i>Individual communications accepted</i>	<i>Inter-State communications accepted</i>
Albania	08-Nov-07	08-Nov-07	08-Nov-07
Argentina	14-Dec-07	11-Jun-08	11-Jun-08
Armenia	24-Jan-11		
Austria	07-Jun-12	07-Jun-12	07-Jun-12
Belgium	02-Jun-11	14-Jun-21	14-Jun-21
Belize	14-Aug-15		
Benin	02-Nov-17		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	17-Dec-08		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	30-Mar-12	13-Dec-12	13-Dec-12
Brazil	29-Nov-10		
Burkina Faso	03-Dec-09		
Cabo Verde	20-Dec-22		
Cambodia	27-Jun-13		
Central African Republic	11-Oct-16		
Chile	08-Dec-09	08-Dec-09	08-Dec-09
Colombia	11-Jul-12	07-Sep-22	
Costa Rica	16-Feb-12		
Croatia	31-Jan-22	31-Jan-22	31-Jan-22
Cuba	02-Feb-09		
Czech Republic	08-Feb-17	08-Feb-17	08-Feb-17
Denmark	13-Jan-22		
Dominica	13-May-19		
Ecuador	20-Oct-09	20-Oct-09	20-Oct-09
Fiji	19-Aug-19		
Finland	24-Mar-23	24-Mar-23	24-Mar-23
France	23-Sep-08	09-Dec-08	09-Dec-08
Gabon	19-Jan-11		
Gambia	28-Sep-18		
Germany	24-Sep-09	24-Sep-09	24-Sep-09
Greece	09-Jul-15		
Honduras	01-Apr-08		
Iraq	23-Nov-10		
Italy	08-Oct-15		
Japan	23-Jul-09		23-Jul-09
Kazakhstan	27-Feb-09		

Lesotho	06-Dec-13		
Lithuania	14-Aug-13	14-Aug-13	14-Aug-13
Luxembourg	01-Apr-22	20-Feb-23	20-Feb-23
Malawi	14-Jul-17		
Maldives	31-Jul-23		
Mali	01-Jul-09	02-Feb-10	02-Feb-10
Malta	27-Mar-15		
Mauritania	03-Oct-12		
Mexico	18-Mar-08	02-Oct-20	
Mongolia	12-Feb-15		
Montenegro	20-Sep-11	20-Sep-11	20-Sep-11
Morocco	14-Mar-13		
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	23-Mar-11	23-Mar-11	23-Mar-11
Niger	24-Jul-15		
Nigeria	27-Jul-09		
Norway	22-Aug-19		
Oman	12-Jun-20		
Panama	24-Jun-11		
Paraguay	03-Aug-10		
Peru	26-Sep-12	22-Jul-16	
Portugal	27-Jan-14	27-Jan-14	27-Jan-14
Republic of Korea	04-Jan-23	04-Jan-23	04-Jan-23
Samoa	27-Nov-12		
Senegal	11-Dec-08		
Serbia	18-May-11	18-May-11	18-May-11
Seychelles	18-Jan-17		
Slovakia	15-Dec-14	15-Dec-14	15-Dec-14
Slovenia	15-Dec-21	15-Dec-21	15-Dec-21
Spain	24-Sep-09	24-Sep-09	24-Sep-09
Sri Lanka	25-May-16		25-May-16
Sudan	10-Aug-21		
Switzerland	02-Dec-16	02-Dec-16	02-Dec-16
Togo	21-Jul-14		
Tunisia	29-Jun-11		
Ukraine	14-Aug-15	14-Aug-15	14-Aug-15
Uruguay	04-Mar-09	04-Mar-09	04-Mar-09
Zambia	04-Apr-11		

ANNEX 2

STATES PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES TO THE CONVENTION BY REGIONAL GROUP

AFRICA		
<i>States parties</i>		
Benin	Burkina Faso	Cabo Verde
Central African Republic	Gabon	Gambia
Lesotho	Malawi	Mali*
Mauritania	Morocco	Niger
Nigeria	Senegal	Seychelles
Sudan	Togo	Tunisia
Zambia		
<i>Signatories</i>		
Algeria	Angola	Burundi
Cameroon	Chad	Comoros
Eswatini	Ghana	Guinea-Bissau
Kenya	Madagascar	Mozambique
Sierra Leone	Uganda	United Republic of Tanzania

ASIA		
<i>States parties</i>		
Cambodia	Fiji	Iraq
Japan***	Kazakhstan	Mongolia
Oman	Republic of Korea*	Samoa
Sri Lanka***		
<i>Signatories</i>		
Cyprus	India	Indonesia
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Lebanon	Palau
Thailand	Vanuatu	

EASTERN EUROPEAN GROUP		
<i>States parties</i>		
Albania*	Armenia	Bosnia and Herzegovina*
Croatia*	Czech Republic*	Lithuania*
Montenegro*	Serbia*	Slovakia*
Slovenia*	Ukraine*	
<i>Signatories</i>		
Bulgaria	Poland	Republic of Moldova
Romania		

GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES		
<i>States parties</i>		
Argentina*	Belize	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Brazil	Chile*	Colombia**
Costa Rica	Cuba	Dominica
Ecuador*	Honduras	Mexico**
Panama	Paraguay	Peru**
Uruguay*		
<i>Signatories</i>		
Dominican Republic	Grenada	Guatemala
Haiti	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS GROUP		
<i>States parties</i>		
Austria*	Belgium*	Denmark
Finland*	France*	Germany*
Greece	Italy	Luxembourg*
Malta	Netherlands (Kingdom of)*	Norway
Portugal*	Spain*	Switzerland*
<i>Signatories</i>		
Iceland	Ireland	Liechtenstein
Monaco	Sweden	

* Accepted both individual and inter-State communications.

** Accepted individual communications.

*** Accepted inter-State communications.