



**United Nations Human Rights Council  
39<sup>th</sup> Regular Session  
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Agenda Item 3**

**Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on enforced disappearances**

**Joint Oral Statement of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and a  
collation of Syrian lawyers and organisations**

**10 September 2018**

Mr. President;

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and a coalition of Syrian lawyers and organisations, thank the Working Group on enforced disappearances for its report. We share the grave concerns of the Working Group about the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and echo its statement that no circumstances whatsoever may be invoked to justify enforced disappearances.

For many years, the Syrian authorities have adopted a policy of systematic use of enforced disappearance, often associated with torture, sexual violence, and extrajudicial killings. Thousands have disappeared in Syrian detention centres without any information about their whereabouts and fate.

Recently, the Syrian authorities have confirmed the death of hundreds who disappeared. Families were not directly informed and heard about the fate of their family members by consulting the civil registry. To date, none of them have received any information on the actual cause of death or location of the bodies. The civil registry merely indicates that the individuals died of heart attack. No investigations have been conducted.

These notifications not only confirm that several persons who disappeared years ago, died in Syrian detention centres, but also that enforced disappearance and killings were widespread. The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria found that the use of enforced disappearance by the Syrian authorities may amount to a crime against humanity.

**We invite the Council to urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to:**

- a. Prevent and terminate acts of enforced disappearance;**
- b. Publish a list of all the persons currently in Syrian detention centres and the location of these centres;**



- c. **Ensure that accurate information on the detention of disappeared persons and their place of detention is made available to their family members, their counsel or to any other persons having a legitimate interest in the information;**
- d. **Conduct effective investigations when a person has been subjected to enforced disappearance and in cases of death, including causes of death and the restitution the remains;**
- e. **Ensure that competent international and national authorities have access to all places where persons deprived of their liberty are being held; and**
- f. **criminalise enforced disappearance and ratify the Convention on Enforced Disappearance.**

**This statement was delivered by:**

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