



Human Rights
Institute

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

Item: Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances

Date: 20 September 2022

Speaker: Catherine Morris

Oral Statement to the 51st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), and Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), NGOs in special consultative status

China: Widespread pattern of enforced disappearances including of lawyers and human rights defenders

Thailand: Ratify and implement the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance without further delay

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, and Lawyers for Lawyers are alarmed by the scale of enforced disappearances in many countries.¹

In light of **Thailand's** numerous enforced disappearances, including of human rights defenders and lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit, we welcome Thailand's adoption of legislation on torture and enforced disappearance. We call on Thailand to address remaining shortcomings in the law and to implement it promptly in full compliance with international law and standards. We look forward to Thailand's promised ratification of the Convention on Enforced Disappearance without further delay.

We are dismayed by **China's** continued refusal to cooperate with the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council in the face of allegations of numerous enforced disappearances² in Xinjiang and Tibet, and the systematic practice of Residential Surveillance in a Designated Location³ to which numerous defenders including lawyers are subjected.⁴ We urge China, a member of this Council, to immediately accept the Working Group's 2013 request for an invitation for a country visit. We call on the Council to create an independent mechanism to thoroughly and promptly investigate allegations of gross, widespread and systematic human rights violations in China reported by dozens of Special Procedures mandate holders⁵ and the OHCHR.⁶

Thank you.

¹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, A/HRC/51/31, 12 August 2022, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/51/31>; Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, A/HRC/51/4, 12 July 2022, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/51/4>.

² Civil society call to end enforced disappearances in China, Joint Statement of 33 human rights organizations, including IBAHRI, LRWC, L4L and others, 30 August 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/civil-society-call-end-enforced-disappearances-china>.

³ *Ibid*; See also Lawyers for Lawyers and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Mid-term Report - Review of the implementation of recommendations with respect to the rule of law and the role of human rights defenders accepted by China during the UPR in 2018, August 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/NGOsMidTermReports/Final-mid-term-review-China-L4L-LRWC.pdf>. Also available at <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/en/china-upr-mid-term-report/> or <https://www.lrwc.org/china-universal-periodic-review-mid-term-report-joint-report/>, and Lawyers for Lawyers' interventions, e.g. <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/lawyers-for-lawyers-monitored-first-hearing-in-trial-of-berrak-caglar/> and <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/lawyers-for-lawyers-monitored-hearing-in-the-trial-against-the-lawyers-of-the-ohd/>

⁴ Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet after official visit to China, 28 May 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/05/statement-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-michelle-bachelet-after-official>

⁵ OHCHR, "Xinjiang report: China must address grave human rights violations and the world must not turn a blind eye, say UN experts," 7 September 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/xinjiang-report-china-must-address-grave-human-rights-violations-and-world>.

⁶ OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China, 31 August 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ohchr-assessment-human-rights-concerns-xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region>