



# **GOMUN 2024 OFFICIAL DOCUMENT**

## **Study Guide**

**Human Rights Council**

Kateřina Dlouhá and Thao Anh Phuong Tranová

Released October 2024, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition

## **COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION**

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

## **First Topic: Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen**

Thao Anh Phuong Tranová

### **TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is one of the most severe and complex emergencies in recent history. Caused by a civil war that began in 2014, when Houthi rebel forces overtook the capital Sana'a, the conflict has resulted in widespread devastation, loss of life, and a collapse of essential services. Millions of Yemenis face acute food insecurity, lack of clean water, and limited access to healthcare. Furthermore, the intervention of forces from other countries brought most of the country to the brink of starvation and growing levels of vaccine hesitancy led to epidemic outbreaks of transmissible diseases, including cholera, measles, and polio.

While the tensions eased in April 2022 and a decrease in civilian casualties and distress across communities followed, the situation remains fragile without a sustainable political settlement. As the crisis deepens, the Human Rights Council shall call for urgent action to end the suffering of Yemeni people by assuring a smooth import of humanitarian aid.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **The Houthi movement**

The Houthi movement, officially known as Ansar Allah (Partisans of God), is a political and armed group from northern Yemen. It emerged in the 1990s, initially focused on promoting the interests of the Zaydi Shia minority and addressing local complaints, including discrimination and economic issues.

The movement gained significant importance in the 2010s, particularly during the Arab Spring, when it addressed widespread dissatisfaction with the Yemeni government. In 2014, the Houthis took control of the capital, Sana'a, leading to a civil war against the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, who had to flee abroad in March 2015. The conflict has drawn in regional powers, notably Saudi Arabia backed by the US, which views the Houthis as an Iranian proxy.

The Houthis have been accused of various human rights violations, including targeting civilians, while they argue they are fighting against foreign intervention and for Yemen's sovereignty.

### **Presidential Leadership Council (PLC)**

The Presidential Leadership Council is the executive body of Yemen's internationally recognized government, formed on 7th April 2022. It was created to replace the former government led by President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, who transferred power to the council.

The PLC aims to address key issues such as governance, security, and economic stability. Its formation received international backing, particularly from Saudi Arabia and the United States, as part of efforts to facilitate negotiations and reach a political resolution to the conflict.

### **Supreme Political Council (SPC)**

Supreme Political Council is an executive body formed by the Houthi movement in 2016. Currently, the SPC carries out the functions of the head of state in Yemen and is to manage Yemen's state affairs. The court aims to address issues related to political disapproval, terrorism, and actions against the Houthi authorities. However, it has been criticized for lacking independence and fairness, often seen as a tool for the Houthis to consolidate power and suppress opposition.

Moreover, the SPC remains internationally unrecognized and is acknowledged only by Iran, with the Houthis placing an ambassador to Iran in August 2019. United Nations officially described the act as "a clear violation of the Yemeni constitution" and denounced the council for sabotaging the Yemeni peace process.

### **The Saudi-led coalition**

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia and a coalition of other Arab allies (notably the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Kuwait, Sudan, and Bahrain) launched a military intervention to restore the authority of Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, who was earlier ousted by the Houthis. The coalition's intervention has involved airstrikes, ground operations, and logistical support, targeting Houthi positions and infrastructure.

The coalition's actions have been, however, controversial, facing widespread criticism for causing significant civilian casualties and aggravating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Reports from various human rights organizations have highlighted issues such as indiscriminate bombings, blockade tactics, and restrictions on humanitarian aid.

### **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional, intergovernmental, political, and economic union comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The council made the first significant international effort to stabilize Yemen. The GCC Initiative was designed to facilitate a peaceful transition of power from President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled Yemen for over 30 years, to his vice president, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

### **Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests and uprisings that spread across the Arab world beginning in late 2010 and continuing into the early 2010s. However, the outcomes of the Arab Spring varied significantly by country. While some nations experienced political reforms, others descended into chaos and violence, as seen in Syria and Yemen, where civil wars ensued.

## **TOPIC OVERVIEW**

### **The beginning of the conflict**

Yemen has long suffered from the effects of European colonisation as well as religious and cultural differences between its north and south. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, in the south, backed by the Soviet Union, and the Yemeni Arab Republic, in the north, supported by the United States and Saudi Arabia, united to form the modern state of Yemen in 1990 thanks to the discovery of oil and natural gas in the region around the city of Marib, which was located in between the two states. The new nation was commanded by military officer Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had governed North Yemen since 1978. However, the country remained politically unstable with Saleh as its president.

For years, Saleh's government had failed to meet the demands of the unsettled Shiite population of Zawidi, whose resistance to the military regime laid the foundation for the Houthi movement that emerged in the early 2000s. Saleh also struggled to maintain the support of southern factions and Sunni Islamists who feared that Saleh's government was conceding too much in the name of unification.

### **The Arab Spring**

Following the popular uprising in Tunisia in 2011, a wave of similar protests and revolutions occurred in several other Arab nations, overthrowing a number of long-standing rulers. Unlike the protests in Egypt and Tunisia, the Yemeni uprisings appeared to have been organized by a diverse coalition of Yemeni opposition groups, including the Houthi rebels and Sunni Islamists. After months of unrest, Saleh finally stepped down as the president and the only candidate, former vice president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, succeeded him. Yet, even without Saleh, Yemen remained

deeply divided and economically weak. Much of the country faced shortages of food, water, and basic goods.

### **The civil war**

Yemen's civil war began in 2014 when Houthi rebels with links to Iran took control of Yemen's capital and largest city, Sanaa, demanding lower fuel prices and a new government. Following failed negotiations, the rebels seized the presidential palace in January 2015, leading President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government to resign. The president fled to Saudi Arabia later then. The Houthi movement formalized their power, dissolved the parliament and announced a five-member presidential council that would form a transitional government.

The UN Security Council later issued a resolution condemning the actions of the Houthi rebels and called upon the movement to return to the transition process that began in 2013. In exile, Hadi later withdrew his resignation, declaring himself the legitimate president.

### **The intervention of other countries**

Saudi Arabia, Yemen's neighbour, was concerned that the Houthis may seize power and turn Yemen into a satellite state for Iran, Saudi Arabia's arch-enemy. Therefore, it decided, with other Arab nations, known as the Saudi-led coalition, to launch an air campaign aimed at ousting the Houthis and restoring Mr Hadi's government. The coalition received logistical and intelligence support from the US, UK, and France.

Despite Saudi successful efforts, dislodging the Houthi fighters from northern Yemen, including Sanaa, proved far more difficult for the coalition. Saudi-led bombing raids caused a

disastrous humanitarian crisis, with several thousand civilians killed, and Yemen's infrastructure damaged. By 2016 more than three-quarters of the population lacked access to water. The UN attempted to establish peace talks and initiated a cease-fire that, while often violated, did achieve some success. The talks were suspended without an agreement in August 2016. While the war worsened, the country began to face the worst outbreak of cholera in history.

The Houthi rebellion remained influential in parts of the port city of Hodeidah, which provided it with access to imports and revenue through cargo taxing. The Saudi-led coalition attempted to gain control over the city, yet was found with disapproval from the UN. The UN implemented a cease-fire in the city in December 2017, seeing as the port also served as one of the key lifelines for humanitarian aid. The cease-fire remained fragile, as the different parties accused one another of breaching the terms of the agreement.

In April 2022 the main belligerents in the conflict declared a two-month cease-fire. A few days later Hadi announced his resignation and handed power over to the Presidential Leadership Council.

In 2023 Saudi Arabia began negotiating more directly with the Houthi rebels. The allocation of Yemen's oil revenue remains the main sticking point in finding a consensus between the sides.

### **Current situation**

Progress was disrupted on October 7, 2023, when Hamas orchestrated the deadliest attack on Israel since that country's independence. The Houthi Rebels support, alongside Iran and other Arab countries, Hamas by launching missiles and drones toward Israel, especially on ships passing



through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea. The attacks also prompted the US to take action by launching dozens of strikes against the Houthi rebels in January 2024 in coalition with the United Kingdom and designating the Houthi movement as a terrorist organization.

The international community has become increasingly concerned about the situation in Yemen, and there have been efforts to solve the conflict on an international level. However, these efforts have been destroyed by the complex web of interests and influences involved in the conflict, as well as the ongoing violence and instability. Despite this, there remains hope that a lasting solution can be found and that the people of Yemen can be rescued from the devastating humanitarian crisis.

### **The humanitarian crisis of today**

In 2024, 21.6 million people in Yemen (more than half of the population) need humanitarian assistance and protection services. Countrywide, 17.6 million people suffer from acute food insecurity. Yemen is also experiencing some of the highest malnutrition rates ever recorded, with nearly half of all children under the age of 5 experiencing moderate to severe atrophy and more than 11,200 have been killed or maimed, according to UNICEF. Yemen is also the world's 3rd most vulnerable country to climate change and least prepared for climate shocks. Extreme climate events are expected to affect the most vulnerable in years to come.

Over 4.5 million people are displaced, including many living in protracted displacement since the beginning of the conflict. Internally Displaced People (IDPs) need shelter solutions and basic household items. The protection of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers also remains of great concern. They continue to travel along the eastern migration route facing various threats. There are reported cases of mass killings, Gender-Based Violence, arbitrary detention, and human trafficking.

The conflict and economic collapse have significantly damaged public services, which were already limited in Yemen. Only 50 percent of health facilities and 65 percent of schools are currently functioning, leaving more than 2 million children out of school. Nearly 90 percent of the population has no access to publicly supplied electricity. Key public service employees, including Yemeni health workers and two-thirds of all Yemeni teachers, have not received a regular salary in years.

The Houthis government has imposed unnecessary restrictions and regulations on humanitarian organizations and aid projects, creating delays. There have been documented many cases of aid interference and obstruction by Houthi forces, including but not limited to lengthy delays for approval of aid projects, blocking aid assessments to identify people's needs, attempts to control aid monitoring and recipient lists to distract aid to those loyal to the authorities, and violence against aid staff and their property.

## Timeline of key events

**2011:** Inspired by the Arab Spring, protests begin against President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime, demanding political reform and an end to corruption.

**2012:** President Saleh agrees to hand over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

**2014:** Houthi Shia rebels overrun the capital, Sanaa, leading the country into a prolonged civil war.

**January 2015:** The Houthis force Hadi to flee to Aden, where he declares the city the temporary capital.

**March 2015:** A Saudi-led coalition intervenes militarily in Yemen, launching airstrikes against Houthi positions to restore Hadi's government.

**2017:** Former President Saleh is killed by Houthi forces after he attempts to negotiate with the Saudi-led coalition, further escalating the conflict. Hadi calls for an uprising against the Houthis.

**2018:** Southern Yemeni separatists, backed by the United Arab Emirates, seize control of Aden, the main city in the south.

**2019:** Separatists and government sign power-sharing agreement to end conflict in southern Yemen.

**2020:** The UN announces a nationwide ceasefire due to the COVID-19 pandemic, though fighting continues in various regions.

**2022:** A UN-negotiated ceasefire is announced, leading to reduced hostilities and some humanitarian access improvements.

**August 2022:** The Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) is formed to unify anti-Houthi forces and enhance governance.

**November 2023:** Houthis declare war on Israel, and start attacking on ships in the Red Sea.

**December 2023:** US alongside 20 other countries launch Operation Prosperity Guardian in the Red Sea, Houthi agrees on key terms to a ceasefire.

**January 2024:** The Biden administration re-designated the Houthis as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).

**March 2024:** The Houthis claim their first attack on cargo ships in the Indian Ocean, further expanding their reach as they continue their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.

## PAST ACTIONS TO SOLVE THE CONFLICT

**National Dialogue Conference (NDC) (2013–2014):** The conference was a key part of the GCC Initiative and was aimed at addressing Yemen's deep-rooted political, social, and economic issues. The NDC aimed to draft a new constitution and set the stage for democratic elections. While some progress was made, key factions, particularly the Houthis and southern separatists, felt marginalized. The Houthis rejected the outcomes of the conference and escalated their military actions.

**UN-Led Peace Efforts:** The United Nations has been heavily involved in trying to mediate peace in Yemen, with several special envoys facilitating peace talks. The most important one shall be the Stockholm Agreement in 2018, where the Houthis and Saudi Arabia agreed on three main factors. Firstly, they settled on a ceasefire in Hudaydah that was to be overseen by the UN to maintain the flow of humanitarian aid. Secondly, they agreed on a large-scale prisoner swap. Lastly, they decided to allow access of humanitarian aid in the city of Taiz which had been under siege. Unfortunately, its implementation has been slow, and both sides have accused each other of violations. The conflict continued elsewhere in Yemen

**UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (January 2024):** The resolution stresses the importance of safe shipment in the Red Sea. Calls for an immediate cease of attacks and demands that the Houthis return a ship they are holding captive. The resolution also reaffirms the right to self-defense of different countries. However, Houthis ignored the council's demands and continued the attacks in the Red Sea. They also kept the ship in their possession.

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

### The UN and its agencies:

**World Food Programme (WFP):** The WFP provides food assistance to millions of Yemenis, as the country faces severe food shortages.

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF):** UNICEF focuses on providing essential health services, clean water, sanitation, and education for Yemeni children. It also supports immunization campaigns and helps address malnutrition, which is rampant due to food shortages.

**World Health Organization (WHO):** WHO helps deliver medical supplies, provide support to hospitals and clinics, and coordinate responses to outbreaks of diseases like cholera. It also works to rebuild the healthcare system.

**The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR):** UNHCR is delivering lifesaving support to millions of displaced Yemenis as well as to refugees and asylum-seekers across the country. UNHCR is the only agency addressing the protection and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers across Yemen.

**The UN Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR):** OHCHR established its Country Office in Yemen (Sana'a) in September 2012. OHCHR advises and assists the Government on strategies, programmes and measures to promote and protect human rights in Yemen, in compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

**The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Yemeni Red Crescent:** They have been active in providing emergency assistance such as food, clean water, and medical care.

## **COUNTRY POSITIONS**

### **The United States**

The USA views the Houthi movements as a major threat to world's stability and has taken numerous steps to prevent further escalation. They actively part-take in peace talks and are pushing for a durable cease-fire alongside a long-term peaceful solution to the conflict. Moreover, they have also taken military action alongside other nations (United Kingdom, Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands) in order to not only limit the spread of Houthi influence into other countries but also to set clear boundaries and limitations for the terrorist group.

The USA has been rumored to provide weapons and logistical support to the Yemeni government. In addition, they gave aid to Saudi-led interventions in the Yemeni Civil war during the presidency of Barack Obama and Donald Trump, however in February 2021 the American president, Joe Biden announced the end of this support. Nevertheless, Houthis still claim that US military influence is present in the region.

The USA has been one of the largest donors to Yemen, providing significant humanitarian aid, including food assistance, medical supplies, and support for water and sanitation projects.

### **The Russian Federation**

The Russian Federation has stayed out of the Yemeni conflict militarily, however, is still present diplomatically. They are calling for an internal resolution and are offering to take the role of the mediator. With that being said, many are concerned with their objectiveness especially regarding their



close ties with Iran, who strongly support the Houthi movement. Moreover, Russia has also refused to label the Houthi movement as “rebel” or “terrorist”. In the past, Russian Federation has both abstained from and vetoed UN Security Council resolutions that called for an arms embargo against the Houthis.

### **France**

France has maintained strong defense ties with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, two key members of the Saudi-led coalition involved in the Yemen conflict. This relationship includes the sale of advanced military equipment such as fighter jets, armored vehicles, and weapons. While France has not directly participated in the military intervention in Yemen, its arms sales have drawn criticism, particularly from humanitarian organizations, as French-made weapons have reportedly been used in airstrikes and ground operations in Yemen. Furthermore, France has condemned the actions of the Houthi government on multiple occasions and calls for an immediate cease-fire in the region.

### **The UK**

The UK has been a key supporter of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, including arms sales, military advice, and logistical assistance. While the UK is not directly involved in the combat operations in Yemen, it has provided military advisors to Saudi Arabia, particularly in helping the Saudi Air Force ensure adherence with international humanitarian law. The UK has also condemned the Houthi actions on multiple occasions and is set to bring the elected government back into power. Moreover, they have acted alongside the USA in the form of naval and air strikes as a response to the Houthi attack on shipments in the Red Sea.

## **China**

China's position on the Yemen conflict is defined by its commitment to non-interference, support for diplomatic solutions, and its desire to maintain good relations with all regional actors. China has called for a political settlement and humanitarian relief, but has largely avoided direct involvement in the conflict. With that being said, unlike the US or the UK, they have not launched any counterattacks on the Houthis. Furthermore, rather than taking a clear stance and action with or against the Houthis, China is using the situation to shame Western powers for further destabilizing the region. They are also one of the countries that have not labeled the Houthi movement as terroristic.

## **Iran**

Iran openly supports the Houthi movement. While Iran denies supporting the Houthis militarily, there have been numerous UN reports with contradicting claims. According to these reports Iran has supplied drones, arms, missiles and more which were later used against Saudi Arabia and other targets. Iran promotes a narrative of supporting an inclusive political solution, often criticizing Saudi Arabia's intervention and presenting itself as a defender of Yemeni sovereignty.

### **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia is very much in support of the previously elected governments and is in a military conflict with the Houthi movement. They started a Saudi-led coalition to push back the Houthis, which still remains active. To this day they remain the targets of frequent Houthi attacks on their borders and crucial facilities with thousands of casualties.

The European Union: The EU has provided substantial humanitarian assistance, including funding for food, water, health care, and education. The EU has also advocated for a political solution to the conflict and has tried to use its influence to push for peace negotiations.

## **QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER**

How will a lasting ceasefire be implemented and enforced?

What actions will be taken to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access to all areas of Yemen?

What steps will be taken to rebuild Yemen's healthcare and infrastructure systems?

What plans will be put in place to safely return or resettle Yemen's millions of displaced people?

How will Yemen address climate-related challenges such as droughts and food insecurity, which have been exacerbated by the war?

How will war crimes and human rights abuses be resolved?

## **CONCLUSION**

Resolving the humanitarian crisis in Yemen requires more than just immediate aid. A lasting peace is essential to create the conditions for long-term recovery. This will involve inclusive political solutions, regional cooperation, accountability for war crimes, and a coordinated international response to rebuild Yemen's infrastructure and economy. Until the conflict is resolved and aid can freely flow, the suffering of millions of Yemenis will continue.

## APPENDIX

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Yemeni-Civil-War>

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/who-are-yemens-houthis>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14704852>

<https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/a-timeline-of-the-yemen-crisis-from-the-1990s-to-the-present/>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154271>

[https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/yemen\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/yemen_en)

<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>

<https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/yemen/>

<https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disasters/yemen-humanitarian-crisis/>

<https://www.ifrc.org/national-societies-directory/yemen-red-crescent-societ>

∨

## **Second topic: Preventing disappearances and extrajudicial executions**

Kateřina Dlouhá

### **Key Terms**

#### **Enforced disappearance**

“An enforced disappearance is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorisation, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.” (Article 2 of the ICPEP and Preamble of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance)

It has three cumulative characteristics:

- Deprivation of liberty against the will of the person;
- Participation of government officials, if only through compliance;
- Refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person.

#### **Extrajudicial executions**

Extrajudicial executions are a violation of the most fundamental right of individuals, the right to life. The designation refers to the intentional killing of a person by a state agent or with their permission. This occurs without a previous judgment affording all judicial guarantees, such as a fair and unbiased procedure.

#### **Crimes against humanity**

The International Criminal Court (ICC) defines crimes against humanity as a range of acts, including but not limited to murder, extermination, enslavement, torture, forced population transfers, imprisonment, rape, persecution, enforced disappearance, and apartheid, when they are "committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population."

### **The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED)**

Founded in 2007, the ICAED is a global network of NGOs and organisations of relatives of the disappeared that works locally, nationally, and internationally to combat the practice of forced disappearances by nonviolent means. The main goal of the ICAED is to cooperate in the swift ratification and efficient application of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

### **Amnesty International**

Amnesty International is an international non-governmental organization focused on human rights. The organization's goal is to promote the realization of all the human rights stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights treaties for all people. The organization has played a notable role on human rights issues due to its frequent citation in media and by world leaders.

### **Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances**

The primary task of the Working Group is to assist families in determining the fate or whereabouts of their family members who have reportedly disappeared. It serves as a channel of communication between family members of victims of enforced disappearance and other sources reporting cases of disappearances, and the governments concerned.

### **Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)**

This body consists of independent experts who monitor the implementation of the Convention for the Protection of all Persons against Enforced Disappearance by the States parties.

### **Incommunicado detention**

Incommunicado detention refers to a form of imprisonment where an individual is held without access to legal counsel, family, or any external communication. This practice often occurs in secret locations and can facilitate torture or ill-treatment, as detainees are isolated from outside oversight, increasing the risk of human rights violations.

### **The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions**

The Special Rapporteur is an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. This mandate investigates and reports on cases of unlawful killings, advocates for accountability, and promotes human rights protections globally.



## Overview Of The Topic

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and enforced disappearances, represent severe human rights violations, primarily the rights to life, liberty and security of a person. Despite persistent efforts of international and human rights organisations, these horrendous acts continue to take place in the modern world, often being committed by agents of repressive states.

These crimes affect all regions of the world and constitute a violation of human rights of the primary victims, their families, and the larger community.

The roots of these violations can often be traced to political repression, civil unrest, and the breakdown of law and order. Authoritarian regimes frequently utilize enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings as tools to silence dissent, instil fear, and eliminate perceived threats. In conflict zones, armed groups may engage in these practices to assert control or retaliate against opposing factions or civilian populations. The consequences are profound, not only for the victims and their families but also for the rule of law, democratic governance, and societal stability.

Despite international legal frameworks and initiatives, significant challenges remain. Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions continue to occur in many parts of the world, particularly in countries experiencing armed conflict, political instability, or authoritarian governance. For instance, in Syria, Yemen, and Myanmar, reports of systematic disappearances and unlawful killings have emerged amidst ongoing conflicts and state repression. The lack of effective accountability mechanisms often results in impunity for perpetrators, perpetuating cycles of violence and eroding public trust in institutions.

Additionally, the role of non-state actors, including terrorist organizations and paramilitary groups, complicates efforts to address these violations. These groups may operate with little regard for human rights, further exacerbating the challenges faced by victims and their families.

The global fight against enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions necessitates a comprehensive approach, including strengthened international cooperation, enhanced legal mechanisms, and robust support for human rights defenders. As the international community grapples with these challenges, it is imperative to uphold the principles of justice, accountability, and the rule of law, ensuring that all

individuals can live free from the fear of disappearance or unlawful execution. Only through sustained efforts and commitment can we hope to eradicate these heinous violations and promote a culture of respect for human rights worldwide.

### **Timeline of the topic**

**1948:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Establishes the right to life, liberty, and security of person in its 3rd Article.

**1966:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Codifies the right to life (Article 6) and freedom from arbitrary arrest (Article 9), laying a legal foundation.

**1970s:** Enforced Disappearances in Latin America

During the “Dirty War” in Argentina and Operation Condor in Chile and neighboring countries, tens of thousands are forcibly disappeared by military regimes.

**1980:** UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID)

The first international body created to address the global issue of enforced disappearances.

**1985:** UN Declaration on Enforced Disappearances

Recognizes enforced disappearances as a serious human rights violation and sets guidelines for prevention.

**1991-2001:** Yugoslav Wars

Widespread enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings occur, leading to prosecutions by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

**2002:** Establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC)

The ICC is given jurisdiction over crimes against humanity, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions.

**2006:** International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED)

Formalizes the definition and criminalization of enforced disappearances under international law.

**2011:** Arab Spring

State repression in countries like Syria and Egypt leads to thousands of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

**2014:** Mexico – Ayotzinapa Case

The enforced disappearance of 43 students brings international attention to the issue in Mexico, highlighting state collusion with organized crime.

**2018:** Jamal Khashoggi's Assassination

The murder of Saudi journalist Khashoggi in Istanbul is a high-profile case of extrajudicial execution.

## Past Action

Past actions to address enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions have involved international, regional, and national efforts. Key legal frameworks include the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)**, which protect the right to life and freedom from arbitrary detention. The **International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006)** formalized enforced disappearances as a crime, while the **Rome Statute (2002)** gave the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** jurisdiction over such crimes when part of widespread attacks. The **UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances (1980)** and the **Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions** monitor violations globally, investigating cases and advocating for accountability. Regionally, the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights** and the **European Court of Human Rights** have prosecuted numerous cases, particularly in Latin America and Europe.

National truth commissions, like Argentina's **CONADEP** and **South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, have documented past abuses, offering accountability and reconciliation. Furthermore, civil society organizations such as **Amnesty International** and **Human Rights Watch** have played a vital role in advocating for victims and pressuring governments to act.

Unfortunately, despite these efforts, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions remain unsolved, particularly in conflict zones and under authoritarian regimes.

## Country positions

### DPRK

To this day the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains one of the most repressive countries in the world. This was proved by the 2014 United Nations Commission of Inquiry report, which found that the government committed methodical, widespread and severe human rights violations, that qualify as crimes against humanity.

Under the dictatorship of Kim Jong Un, the government remains in power by keeping the civilians in fearful obedience. "The exercise of fundamental human rights to freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion, peaceful assembly, and association may be sanctioned by extrajudicial killing; enforced disappearance into one of the country's political prisons; or other severely disproportionate punitive measures," stated Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, during his August 17, 2023, speech to the UN Security Council.

The situation only escalated in recent years as the government continues to apply extremely restrictive measures supposedly meant to be a protection against the Covid-19 pandemic. The deepened isolation only aggravated the existing food and medical crisis making the lives of North Koreans even more desperate. The risk of starvation often leaves the people with no other choice but to attempt an illegal border crossing into China, which unfortunately results in an increasing number of summary executions.

### French Republic

Extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances are not a major problem in the French Republic. Nevertheless, France is one of the biggest actors in international efforts to prevent these dire issues worldwide. The country has worked alongside Argentina to draft, adopt, and promote the Convention since the early 2000s. After ratifying the Convention in 2007, France has implemented a number of measures to integrate its guidelines into national legislation.

However, the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights recently pointed out that the country's legislation on enforced disappearances is still not entirely compliant with the global strategy, in that it requires the identification of a "concerted plan" before this practice can be classified as a crime against humanity.

### **Islamic Republic of Iran**

The current human rights situation in Iran is far from ideal and enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings are no exception. According to the 2023 Amnesty International human rights report, the Iranian authorities “routinely subjected detainees to enforced disappearance and incommunicado detention, frequently in facilities controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence, the Revolutionary Guards and various bodies of Iran’s police”.

Nonetheless, one of the most tragic acts of these crimes can be tracked all the way back to the 1980s.

The year was 1988 and Iranian prisons were packed with political prisoners following the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The massacres began in July and lasted until September of the same year. During these 3 months, thousands of imprisoned political dissidents were subjected to secret forced disappearance and extrajudicial execution by the Iranian authorities. Their bodies were subsequently dumped in mostly unmarked mass graves. Although these atrocities occurred more than 30 years ago, the ones responsible are yet to be brought to justice and the fate and whereabouts of the victims are being systematically concealed. “It is misguided to view the 1988 mass killings as historical events. The enforced disappearances are ongoing and, 30 years later, victims’ families continue to be tormented by anguish and uncertainty over the fate of their loved ones,” said Philip Luther, Middle East and North Africa Research and Advocacy Director at Amnesty International.

### **People’s Republic of China**

It is undeniable that the People's Republic of China does not have an outstanding reputation for upholding human rights. Many international organisations, such as the UN, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, are taking notice of, among others, the country's widespread use of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. Some of these practices are written directly into Chinese law, others occur outside of China’s own legal framework. These practices primarily focus on two categories of targets.

Firstly, inconvenient individuals such as activists, journalists or lawyers who advocate for human rights or oppose the government in other ways can end up in Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location. RSDL is a legal practice (in the PRC) that authorizes holding a person in custody for up to six months in an undisclosed location prior to arrest.

Chinese Communist Party members who “violate their duties” are in many cases subjected to the liuzhi (留置) extralegal detention system which

mimics the practices of RSDL. As this system is not a part of China's legal framework, it is run by a powerful quasi-state watchdog - the National Supervision Commission. Moreover, people who are persecuted for their political or religious views might get imprisoned in psychiatric clinics for the criminally insane, also known as ankang (安康) ("peace and health"). The second category contains particular ethnic or religious groups. This mainly affects religious leaders, critics and influential thinkers from Tibet and Uyghurs and Turkic Muslims from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, who are getting detained incommunicado in internment camps referred to as 'vocational education and training centres' by the Chinese government.

Despite the alarming status quo, the country's authorities are repeatedly ignoring international calls for action and are rather consistently stressing the importance of respecting the rights of a sovereign state.

### **Russian Federation**

Since the start of the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia has been dealing with a wave of enforced disappearances. These are allegedly directed at civil society activists and human rights advocates in Ukraine, as they can expose corruption and have an impact on both political and economic life. This behavior has escalated since the beginning of its full-scale military operation in Ukraine. Since February 2022, at least 562 activists and civil rights defenders have reportedly been kidnapped, forcibly disappeared, and unlawfully detained by the Russian military. Several of them are still missing and are subjected to cruel treatment and torture by Russian forces, sometimes even to the point of death. In an effort by the government to intimidate the opposition party and impose its policies, political opponents are also frequently murdered or go missing. In order to prevent enforced disappearances within its borders, Russia has taken a number of actions, including opening investigations and bringing legal action against those involved, including law enforcement officials. However, the effectiveness and extent of these measures have often been questioned by human rights organizations and outside observers.

## **Saudi Arabia**

Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions in Saudi Arabia remain significant human rights concerns, despite some recent reforms. The government often targets political dissidents, human rights activists, and journalists, detaining them secretly, leaving their whereabouts unknown. High-profile cases, such as the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018, have drawn international attention to these abuses. Extrajudicial executions are also frequent, with the death penalty used against political activists, often following unfair trials. Mass executions, like the killing of 81 people in a single day in March 2022, further highlight the scope of the issue. The Saudi-led coalition's involvement in Yemen has also been linked to unlawful killings of civilians.

While human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned these actions, international responses have been limited due to geopolitical and economic interests in Saudi Arabia. The country's legal system, based on Sharia law, lacks transparency and judicial independence, enabling these abuses to occur with impunity. Despite some efforts to improve its human rights image, Saudi Arabia's repressive practices against critics continue largely unchecked.

## **United Kingdom**

Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions are not common practices in the UK, where rule of law and human rights protections are strong. However, concerns have been raised about the UK's involvement in such activities abroad, particularly in the context of counterterrorism. Allegations surfaced about the UK's role in extraordinary rendition during the "war on terror," where individuals were secretly detained and transferred to countries where they faced torture, such as the case of Libyan dissident Abdel Hakim Belhaj.

While no extrajudicial executions have occurred domestically, concerns exist regarding the UK's use of drone strikes overseas, particularly targeting British citizens suspected of terrorism in places like Syria and Iraq. Critics argue these actions bypass due process and judicial oversight. Though not part of UK domestic policy, these practices have drawn scrutiny for potentially violating international human rights standards.

## **United States of America**

The United States has taken a strong stance against enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, advocating for human rights



protection and accountability globally. As a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the U.S. supports the right to life and the prohibition of arbitrary detention. The U.S. government condemns enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings through diplomatic pressure, sanctions, and support for international justice mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), though the U.S. itself is not a party to the ICC.

Domestically, the U.S. has laws prohibiting such practices and has pushed for accountability through human rights policies. However, the country has faced criticism for its own actions, particularly regarding the use of drone strikes and targeted killings in counterterrorism operations. Despite these controversies, the U.S. remains an advocate for global human rights and regularly uses sanctions to target individuals and regimes responsible for such abuses.

### **Yemen**

Yemen has faced significant challenges regarding enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, particularly amid the ongoing civil conflict since 2015. Various factions, including the Yemeni government, Houthi forces, and other militias, have been implicated in systematic abuses. Human rights organizations report thousands of cases of enforced disappearances, often targeting activists, journalists, and perceived opponents. The lack of accountability and a functioning judicial system exacerbates the situation, leaving victims' families without recourse. The international community has condemned these violations, yet effective action remains limited, highlighting the urgent need for concerted efforts to address human rights abuses in Yemen.

## **Questions a resolution must answer**

How can states be held accountable for involvement in or failure to prevent disappearances and extrajudicial executions?

What mechanisms can be established or strengthened to investigate and prosecute individuals involved in these crimes, including state actors?

How can states be encouraged or pressured to ratify key international agreements?

What steps can be taken to prevent enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions from occurring, both in conflict zones and during peacetime?

What support mechanisms should be in place for families of disappeared persons or victims of extrajudicial executions, such as legal, psychological, and financial assistance?

How can states be compelled to reveal the fate or whereabouts of disappeared individuals, and how should missing persons be traced more effectively?

What role should NGOs, civil society, and independent media play in documenting, reporting, and raising awareness of these incidents?

What measures should be implemented to protect human rights defenders, journalists, and civil society organizations who document and expose disappearances and extrajudicial executions?

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, preventing enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions remains a critical global challenge, requiring coordinated efforts from the international community, governments, and civil society. Despite significant progress through legal frameworks like the ICCPR, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the work of bodies such as the ICC, these violations persist, particularly in regions affected by conflict, authoritarianism, and state repression. International organizations, regional courts, and national truth commissions have played vital roles in promoting accountability and justice for victims, but greater enforcement and political will are essential to ensure these crimes do not go unpunished.

It is now crucial to advocate for stronger international cooperation, the strengthening of legal mechanisms, and the protection of human rights defenders, ensuring that all individuals can live without fear of being forcibly disappeared or unlawfully executed.

## Bibliography/References

<https://youtu.be/bTAuDpGwdnQ>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-disappearances/about-enforced-disappearance>

<https://trialinternational.org/topics-post/extrajudicial-executions/>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/crime-against-humanity>

<https://missingpersons.icrc.org/directory/international-coalition-against-enforced-disappearances-icaed>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FactSheet11rev.1en.pdf>

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/north-korea>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2008/03/north-korea-summary-executions-yet-another-injustice-beleaguered-populat/>

<https://indicators.ohchr.org/>

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/france/>

<https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/hrc45-france-must-guarantee-accountability-extrajudicial-killing-people-african-descent/>

[https://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/2024-06/D-%202024%20-%20203%20%20-%20EN%20-%20Declaration%20For%20the%20universal%20ratification%20and%20effective%20application%20of%20the%20Convention%20against%20Enforced%20Disappearance%2C%20april%202024\\_0.pdf](https://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/2024-06/D-%202024%20-%20203%20%20-%20EN%20-%20Declaration%20For%20the%20universal%20ratification%20and%20effective%20application%20of%20the%20Convention%20against%20Enforced%20Disappearance%2C%20april%202024_0.pdf)

<https://ennhri.org/our-members/france/>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/08/iran-world-turning-blind-eye-to-crisis-of-mass-enforced-disappearance/>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/9421/2018/en/>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/iran/report-iran/>

<https://www.omct.org/en/resources/statements/civil-society-call-to-end-enforced-disappearances-in-china>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/09/saudi-arabia-100-people-executed-as-authorities-continue-relentless-killing-spree/>

This is the end of this document.