

DHR/PR/06-E/30-MAY-2024 INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DISAPPEARED 2024

25th - 31st May 2024

International Week of the Disappeared 2024: Tribute to the struggles of victims' family in finding truth and justice for their forcibly disappeared loved ones

Islamabad, Pakistan: As we mark the International Week of the Disappeared in 2024, Defence of Human Rights (DHR) Pakistan stands in solidarity with the countless victims and their families who continue to endure the agony of enforced disappearances. This week serves as a somber reminder of the ongoing human rights violations that persist in our society and the urgent need for justice, accountability, and reform.

Enforced disappearances in Pakistan have a long and troubling history. Since the early 2000s, particularly during Pakistan's involvement in the US-led 'war on terror,' the practice has become more pervasive. Security agencies have been implicated in the abduction and secret detention of individuals suspected of terrorism or deemed a threat to national security. These actions have been justified under the guise of maintaining national security but have often targeted political dissenters and marginalized communities.

DHR's mission is rooted in the principles of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Our vision is clear: to put an end to enforced disappearances, torture, and injustices in Pakistan. We envision a future where no family has to endure the agony of not knowing the fate of their loved ones. Every citizen has an equal right to truth, justice, and freedom regardless of their caste, creed, color, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or gender.

PRESS RELEASE



Our work encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at addressing and preventing enforced disappearances. DHR documents cases meticulously, runs awareness campaigns, organizes protest demonstrations, and lobbies with policymakers. Moreover, DHR provides comprehensive support to the victims and their families, including legal, psychosocial, and economic aid. Despite our limited resources, DHR has resolved 950 out of the 3057 documented cases of enforced disappearances, offering hope and relief to many.

On this International Week of the Disappeared, we have launched a social media campaign that sheds light upon the impact of enforced disappearances on individuals, families, and society at large. The campaign highlights how enforced disappearances cause profound disruptions to families, leading to emotional trauma and breakdowns in family structures, while also resulting in significant social and economic impacts. The perpetrators often enjoy impunity, perpetuating a cycle of human rights abuses and undermining the rule of law. This practice instills fear and intimidation, erodes trust in institutions, and hinders societal reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.

Way Forward

DHR is deeply concerned by the state's grave negligence in addressing this serious human rights violation. We strongly urge the government to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to enact robust implementation laws that align with its provisions.

As we commemorate the International Week of the Disappeared, let us remember the victims and their families, and renew our commitment to the cause of human rights.

*Media Team,
Defence of Human Rights*