



# Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances

A world without *desaparecidos*



afad.asia@protonmail.com



disappeared-asia.org



(+63) 922 727 6877

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE VICTIMS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES 30 August 2025

On this International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the **Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)** stands in solidarity with families of the disappeared across Asia. For decades, enforced disappearance has been used to silence dissent, criminalize human rights defenders, and instill fear in communities. It remains one of the gravest crimes committed by states, leaving families in perpetual anguish, trapped between hope and despair.

### Across Asia: Stories of Silence, Struggle, and Resistance

- **Bangladesh:** The interim government of Bangladesh facilitated the accession of the country to the Convention. However, families continue to endure immense suffering. Anisha Islam Insha, whose father **Ismail Hossain Baten** was forcefully disappeared in 2019, recalls her father's abduction on his way from work to have lunch at their home. Despite notable political changes and the creation of an Inquiry Commission, over **1,600 cases** have been recorded, and victims' families continue to demand independent investigations, reparations, and truth.
- **Nepal:** Families like those of **Chandrakala Upreti** and **Swastika Mali** still wait for answers decades after the conflict. In the case of Swastika, even after the government recognized her father's abduction, she still faces baseless accusations to prove her father's innocence, just to get citizenship. Meanwhile, wives remain in limbo, "not knowing if [they are] widowed or married," and children forced to prove their fathers' innocence just to obtain citizenship. Chandrakala's husband was taken into custody in 2003 by the former Royal Nepal Army. He did not return. In Nepal, despite peace agreements and Supreme Court rulings, truth and justice remain elusive.
- **Pakistan:** When he was only two years old, Ibrahim Abdullah's father was disappeared. Now at twelve, he writes letters pleading to meet his "Baba", a child's voice capturing the pain of absence, uncertainty, and growing up without answers. His story is not isolated. It is one among the thousands of cases documented by the Defence of Human Rights, which has recorded over **3,100** disappearances since 2006, with **1,362** still missing.
- **India-administered Jammu & Kashmir:** The Association of Disappeared Persons (APDP) has documented thousands of cases of enforced disappearances since 1989. Indian authorities continued detaining individuals who were later found dead.



# Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances

A world without *desaparecidos*



afad.asia@protonmail.com



disappeared-asia.org



(+63) 922 727 6877

The authorities also continued the application of stringent laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), which creates an environment conducive to enforced disappearances. The arbitrary detention of former **AFAD Chairperson Khurram Parvez** and independent journalist **Irfan Mehraj** under UAPA exemplifies this trend; though their cases are primarily detentions rather than disappearances, they highlight legal tools used to suppress dissent. Currently, APDP has been completely dissolved and is unable to operate.

- **Sri Lanka:** Mallika Amma has searched for her husband since he was abducted in 1989, losing five male relatives in a single night. Families demand excavation of mass graves according to international standards, compensation, and the right to commemorate their loved ones without harassment.
- **Indonesia:** Poet Wiji Thukul, disappeared in 1997–1998, lives on in the protests of students and workers who chant his words: “There is only one word - resist!” After 1998, enforced disappearances continue in Aceh, West Papua, and East Timor. Yet, enforced disappearances have persisted beyond 1998, including in Aceh, West Papua, and East Timor, and remain visible today during protests such as the 2024 Peringatan Darurat and the recent demonstrations against the increase in parliamentary allowances on 25 and 28 August 2025. Although Indonesia signed the ICPPED in 2010, it remains unratified. Families demand immediate ratification, investigations into past and ongoing cases, and comprehensive reparations.
- **Timor-Leste:** Association HAK reminds the world of thousands who disappeared during the Indonesian occupation (1975–1999). Families still demand the right to truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence, including stronger truth-seeking mechanisms and support for memorialization.
- **South Korea / North Korea:** Families of South Korean POWs, abductees, and detainees demand that the Korean government fulfill its obligations as a new State Party to the ICPPED. More than **200,000 victims** remain unaccounted for since the Korean War and later abductions. Families call on Seoul to make enforced disappearance a central agenda in inter-Korean relations.
- **Philippines:** Despite a pioneering law (RA 10353), no perpetrator has been convicted. More than **50 cases** of disappearance have been reported under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., since 2022, including indigenous rights defenders **Dexter Capuyan and Gene Roz Jamil “Bazoo” De Jesus**. The refusal to ratify the ICPPED underscores a lack of genuine commitment.



# Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances

A world without *desaparecidos*



[afad.asia@protonmail.com](mailto:afad.asia@protonmail.com)



[disappeared-asia.org](http://disappeared-asia.org)



(+63) 922 727 6877

## AFAD's CALL

We, the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, call on Asian governments to:

1. **Criminalize enforced disappearance in domestic law** and ratify the **International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED)** without delay.
2. **Investigate and prosecute perpetrators** of enforced disappearance, ensuring accountability at all levels.
3. **Provide reparations and social support** to families of the disappeared, including recognition, financial assistance, psychosocial support, and memorialization.
4. **Protect human rights defenders** and guarantee that truth and commemoration are never suppressed.
5. **Ensure guarantees of non-recurrence** through reforms, demilitarization, and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

## OUR COMMITMENT

From Dhaka to Kathmandu, Jakarta to Seoul, Dili to Manila, Colombo to Islamabad, families share the same anguish: the uncertainty of not knowing, the cruelty of silence, the injustice of impunity.

AFAD, together with its members and victims' families, reaffirms its unwavering commitment: we will continue to search, to speak, and to fight until every disappeared person is accounted for, and until the region is free from the shadow of enforced disappearance.

**Stop Enforced Disappearances. Surface the Disappeared. Sign and Ratify the Convention. End Impunity Now.**