

**Intervention # 6 by Mr. Muhammad Ayub Chaudhry, Additional Secretary Ministry of Interior**

**Enforced Disappearances**

**Mr. President,**

Pakistan Constitution unequivocally stipulates in Article 9 that no one shall be deprived of liberty save in accordance with the law.

In line with this constitutional guarantee, we are diligently dealing with any alleged case of involuntary or enforced disappearances.

Let me elaborate. First, as the Minister has stated in her statement, we have made progress since our last UPR on the subject of enforced disappearances.

Pursuant to accepted recommendations on this subject, a bill criminalizing enforced disappearances has been tabled in the Parliament and the parliamentary process is underway.

Second, in terms of institutional and judicial processes, Pakistan has a dedicated National Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

Let me share the functioning and effectiveness of this Commission.

**Mr. President,**

The Commission is a legal forum for families of alleged disappeared persons to lodge complaints.

Any citizen can submit a case through a form available on the Commission’s website. The system is free of cost for filing and processing the complaint, and the complainants are not required to engage lawyers to appear before the Commission.

The Commission has the full legal authority to summon law enforcement agency officials and seek feedback on the alleged cases. Throughout the process, the Commission keeps the affected family updated about the progress. Overall, law enforcement agencies have been cooperating well with the Commission.

The hearings are also held in provincial capitals to make it convenient for the complainants.

The Commission continues to have sufficient resources for providing free-of-cost remedial services at the grass-root level to victims and affected families. The Commission has received a budgetary grant of over PKR 40 million.

As a result of these concerted efforts, the Commission of Inquiry has been able to dispose of most of the cases. As of 31 December 2022, the Commission has disposed of 7000 out of 9200 cases since its establishment in 2011.

For the sake of transparency, the Commission also regularly publishes on its website a list of alleged missing persons as well as the status of cases.

**Mr. President,**

Separately, Pakistan continues to engage with the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances actively. This is evident from the fact that in its different annual reports presented to the UN Human Rights Council, the Working Group has positively acknowledged the high response rate from our side.

As of 31 December 2022, the Commission has successfully disposed of around 50 percent of the cases received from the Working Group. It is essential to highlight that many of these cases comprise cases of voluntary disappearance, fake cases, and cases of preventive detention under domestic law.

In addition to submitting written responses on different alleged cases, we regularly interact with the Working Group on the margins of its sessions. These interactions have provided opportunities to share our national stakeholders’ feedback with the Working Group from an operational viewpoint.

We look forward to our continued dialogue with the Working Group.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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