



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1577

Vienna, 17 September 2026

**EU Statement on the International Day of the Victims of
Enforced Disappearances**

On 30 August, we marked the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. The European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to the prevention and eradication of involuntary or enforced disappearances, as well as to combatting impunity for those responsible for, or complicit in, such crimes.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine remains a stark reminder that such brutal practices continue to be used in the OSCE region. The most recent report of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine from 2026 concluded, that Russian authorities have committed the crime against humanity of enforced disappearance of the children deported or transferred from Ukraine, and the war crime of unjustifiable delay in their repatriation. The recent OSCE Moscow Mechanism report of July 2026 provides further evidence of this, documenting the targeting of Ukrainian children, including systematic and unlawful detention, militarization, indoctrination, and coercion by Russia. The report concludes that these practices constitute violations of international humanitarian law on a "grand scale". These findings are consistent with ODIHR's Ninth Interim Report on reported violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine, which documents the continued arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of civilians from parts of Ukraine temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia, often accompanied by torture and ill-treatment.

We strongly condemn any such acts, including the widespread practice of sending Ukrainian children to so-called 'recreation camps' for re-education, the use of so-called 'filtration camps', and the enforced disappearances and persecution of Crimean Tatars in the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula as grave violations of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We stand

firm in demanding that those responsible be held to account. During the last high-level meeting of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children on 11 May, the EU, together with Ukraine, Canada and international partners reaffirmed their shared commitment to stepping up action for securing the return of every Ukrainian child forcibly transferred or deported by Russia and ensuring full accountability for these crimes.

Our OSCE and international commitments and obligations are clear: any form of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are unequivocally prohibited, under all circumstances, without exceptions. With the adoption of the 2020 Ministerial Council Decision on the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, participating States reaffirmed enforced disappearances as a serious human rights violation in the OSCE area.

In this regard, the EU remains deeply concerned about the grave and systematic human rights violations in Belarus, including enforced disappearances and acts of transnational repression intended to harm individuals outside of Belarus. We reiterate our call on the Belarusian authorities to conduct complete and transparent investigations into all alleged violations and abuses of human rights, including reports of enforced disappearances, and to ensure accountability for those responsible.

Furthermore, the EU remains seriously concerned about the lack of information about historic cases of enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan. We reiterate our strong call on Turkmenistan to immediately acknowledge and address this scourge and take action on the outstanding cases. All individuals, including civil society and opposition actors, must be protected from such criminal acts.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and in light of persisting challenges, we encourage all participating States to ratify the Convention, to cooperate fully with the UN Committee and the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances and to take concrete measures to prevent enforced disappearances. This includes investigating effectively all allegations of enforced disappearances, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing redress to the victims and their families.

Albania, Andorra, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.