



ශ්‍රී ලංකා මානව හිමිකම් කොමිෂන් කොමිෂන්
இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Statement No: HRC/PS/i/E/30/08/25

Statement on International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

The International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances is observed every year on the 30 August. It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2010 (Resolution 65/209) to raise awareness about enforced disappearance – where people are secretly abducted or imprisoned by state authorities or their agents, followed by a refusal to disclose their fate or whereabouts – and **to** recognise the suffering of victims, their families, and communities. It is also a day to reaffirm the call on states to prevent enforced disappearance, investigate cases, punish perpetrators, ensure truth, accountability, and reparations for victims, and promote the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which entered into force in 2010. Sri Lanka ratified this Convention in 2016 and enacted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance Act, No. 5 of 2018.

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) acknowledges the profound suffering endured by victims and their families, many of whom continue to live with unanswered questions about the fate of their loved ones. Enforced disappearances represent one of the gravest human rights violations, striking at the very foundation of dignity, liberty, and justice.

The HRCSL has consistently recognised enforced disappearance as a critical human rights concern in Sri Lanka, where decades of conflict and unrest have left thousands unaccounted for. The Commission has highlighted the urgent need for effective investigations, truth-seeking, and reparations, while underscoring the state's responsibility to ensure accountability and to prevent recurrence. Families of the disappeared have the right to know the truth and to receive justice, not only as a matter of compassion, but as a binding legal obligation under international human rights law. They also have the right to advocate for truth, accountability, and reparations without facing threats or intimidation.

In commemorating this day, the HRCSL calls upon state authorities to take concrete steps to advance the rights of victims of enforced disappearances, including supporting and strengthening the mandate of the Office on Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations. The HRCSL also reiterates its previous recommendations with respect to

the establishment of a truth commission, as well as the establishment of an independent permanent Office for the Investigation and Prosecution of Serious Crimes by State Officials with broad powers to investigate enforced disappearances and prosecute perpetrators.

Truth, accountability, and reparations with respect to enforced disappearance in Sri Lanka remains crucial for all communities to move toward genuine reconciliation and to regain their trust in democratic institutions.

Justice L.T.B Dehideniya
Chairperson
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

30th August 2025