



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-first session

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Migrants in the Darien Jungle**

The Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees (FEDEFAM) joint with the Argentine Network of Professionals for Foreign Policy (REDAPPE), we wish to convey our concern regarding the reports of enforced disappearances that are occurring among the hundreds of thousands of migrants crossing the Darien Gap. This swampy jungle functions as a natural barrier to land communication between Panama and Colombia, states that unite Central and South America.

Panama's National Border Service reported that more than 133,000 people crossed the jungle in 2021, of which 19,000 were children. According to UNICEF and SELA, known figures from July 2022 indicate that the migration flow ranged between 300 and 500 people per day. It is important to note that these figures are approximate, as information on this migratory route remains scarce.

Migrants are at risk of enforced disappearances. The lack of state protection mechanisms noted by IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR creates an environment conducive to the proliferation of illicit activities and the perpetration of crimes against humanity by criminal actors.

The Committee on Enforced Disappearances commented on the report submitted by Panama in November 2021 that women and children are affected with singular cruelty; women are particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender violence, and children are because they are doubly susceptible: first, because they can be subjected to disappearance, and second, because they can suffer the consequences of the disappearance of those who are responsible for their care.

Considering the overall scenario in the Darien Gap and estimating that numbers will continue to rise exponentially, we call for reflection on the steps needed to ensure the protection of migrants. We propose the creation of an international cooperation mechanism to ensure the articulation of effective interstate policies to prevent, investigate and repair enforced disappearances.

REDAPPE and FEDEFAM share the values upheld by this Council regarding the promotion and defense of Human Rights, and for this fundamental reason we call upon the international community to redouble the efforts made so far. The abandonment and indifference to which these people are subjected requires an urgent collective response.

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RED ARGENTINA DE PROFESIONALES PARA LA POLITICA EXTERIOR( REDAPPE),  
NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.