
Day of victims of enforced disappearances: Mijatovic (Council of Europe), alarming number of people have been disappeared in Ukraine by Russian troops

“The large number of people who have been reportedly forcibly disappeared in Ukraine as a result of Russia’s invasion in February is alarming. This abhorrent practice must stop”, said Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, on the eve of the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances (30 August). “The overwhelming majority of enforced disappearances are attributable to Russian and Russian-controlled troops”, Mijatović stressed. “Many local officials, journalists, and human rights defenders have reportedly been disappeared or abducted in areas of Ukraine under the control of Russian or Russian-controlled troops”, the Commissioner went on to say in her statement today, stressing that: “all persons reported disappeared or missing in Ukraine must be searched for, located, and released or returned”; and all cases must be investigated and those responsible punished. There are indeed thousands of cases of disappearances in Europe that have not yet been resolved. And the list of countries is long: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Turkey, the UK (Northern Ireland). It is therefore of paramount importance to strengthen “legislation, including on the rights of relatives”, open archives, conduct “programmes of exhumations and identification of mortal remains”, and to prosecute the perpetrators and provide reparations.

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