2002 Year-End Report

Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances
1. THE PHENOMENON OF INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES IN ASIA

The year 2002 did not witness any significant positive development on the problem of involuntary disappearances in the Asian region, particularly in countries where AFAD member-organizations are based. This situation was presented by the AFAD member-organizations during its meeting with former Chairman of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID), Mr. Ivan Tosevsky during the 58\textsuperscript{th} session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April 2002 in Geneva, Switzerland. During the rest of the year after the said meeting at the United Nations, the following has been the development of the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in the region.

China, a country which is recently one of AFAD’s main concerns due to the fact that the latter recently accepted the Tiananmen Mothers as its members, has 3,000 to 4,000 undocumented cases of involuntary disappearances which is an aftermath of the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing. According to the Tiananmen Mothers, they have identified at least twelve people whose whereabouts remain unknown. These individuals vanished into thin air, leaving their families suspended in hope and dread for nearly 14 years.

Recently, 115 mothers issued an open petition letter to the Tenth National People’s Congress of China. The open letter called on the Chinese government to give a full accounting of the fate of these people and if any are found dead, to turn over their remains to the families. The mothers’ continuing efforts to demand the Chinese government to reveal the truth behind the massacre fell on deaf ears.

In the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir, on July 18, 2002, State Home Minister Khalid Najib Soharwardly admitted that 3,184 persons were missing in the valley as of that date. In the early part of 2003, the Chief of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed informed the state assembly that 3,734 persons were reportedly missing since 2000. He also said that 1,553 persons disappeared in 2000, 1,586 were missing in 2001 and 605 in 2002. These state pronouncements reconfirm the undeniable reality of enforced or involuntary disappearances in the valley.
This is not to mention the record of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons which mentions of a total documented cases of 6,000 from 1989 up to the present. This figure does not include a number of undocumented others. For which reason, the organization recommends, among other things, the appointment of a Commission under the Commissions of Inquiry Act to investigate all cases of enforced or involuntary disappearances that took place since 1989. It further recommends the repeal of impunity laws such as Sec. 6 of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Furthermore, it calls on the government of India to invite the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit the country.

KontraS of Indonesia has documented 1,266 cases of involuntary disappearances from 1965 up to the present. This figure does not include the innumerable cases which could not be documented during the 32 years of the Suharto regime. The Indonesian politics during the New Order regime allowed violence and brutality against humanity. Yet, even up to the present, disappearances of people and other forms of violence became an official political method up to the present. KontraS concludes that social and political institutions which should protect and safeguard the people officially become the perpetrator of crimes against humanity. Because the perpetrators are agents of the State, KontraS demands that the present administration of President Megawati should publicly apologize for the atrocities committed during the Suharto period up to the present.

The phenomenon of enforced disappearance in Pakistan is to be viewed in accordance with the political and cultural ethos of the country. Pakistan was created in 1947 through the voluntary withdrawal of British colonial rule. Its creation was not an outcome of a revolution but by a historical convulsion. Army and civil bureaucracy blocked the path to democracy, rule of law and a constituted framework. Time and again, its constitutional structure was unlawfully shattered, altered and abrogated to meet the requirements of incumbents to the chief executive office. All constitutional transformations were legalized by the judicial branch of state. The initial derailment from the constitutional path made Pakistan into nearly a failed state. A caucus of army, civil bureaucracy and judiciary usurped the rights of the people. The theory of social contract has been replaced by the theory of might is right. The state is not governed by the will of the people but by the might of garrison.

As one of the consequences of such a situation in Pakistan, involuntary disappearances happened and still continue. So far, the Truth and Justice Commission has documented 245 cases. Of these cases, twenty-two families have been organized, so far.

The Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) – Philippines believes that there has been no substantial and positive development to the already 1,838 reported cases that happened from 1971 up to the present. As a matter of fact, new cases happened during the present administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

The meeting of the organization with the president of the republic has not yet produced concrete results in terms of the resolution of past cases and the prevention of
future ones. The 14 cases filed in local courts have yielded no significant developments. As a matter of fact, one of these cases have been archived due to the absence of witnesses. Furthermore, trials of the other cases have time and again been postponed.

The efforts to criminalize involuntary disappearances through the filing of a bill penalizing this act in the Lower and Upper Houses of Congress have not yet yielded concrete results. Efforts to lobby for the enactment of this bill into law continue. It is hoped that before the end of the term of the present Congress, the law could be enacted, or else, the whole process has to start again after new members of the Congress shall have been elected in the year 2004. It is hoped that if enacted, the law could facilitate the resolution of past cases and prevent their recurrence. One major debate regarding this bill is the provision on the continuing nature of the crime vis-à-vis the non-retroactivity of laws.

The Organization of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared continued to press the government of Sri Lanka to look into the cases of disappearances in the country, concretely through the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances during its three visits to the country. The organization demands for the resolution of the more than five hundred cases pending in courts. Furthermore, the demand for a non-discriminatory treatment of giving fair compensation to the families continues to be an important concern of the families of the victims. The OPFMD is also questioning the government’s process of clarifying cases, considering that more than four thousand cases have been clarified by the Sri Lankan government in the past according to the 2002 report of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

The Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes continues to demand for the revelation of the truth about the 293 persons who disappeared during the 1992 massacre that resulted from the *coup d’etat* against the newly constituted civilian government. Yet, the government of Thailand places the burden on the shoulders of the families of the victims of pinpointing possible locations of graves of these missing persons so that necessary exhumations could be conducted. The families, who have no idea about these places, insist that the government should be made responsible for the revelation of these places. Furthermore, the long-time appeal of the families for a monument to be erected in honor of the victims of the massacre has not yet materialized. A process to finalize the monument design and the acquisition of a piece of land for this purpose is on-going. Moreover, in view of the non-resolution of this problem, the Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes presses the Royal Government of Thailand to invite the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit the country in order to facilitate the process of searching for the disappeared persons.

With all these information, the national organizations concerned, supported by the regional federation, AFAD, have to exert more efforts to consolidate and expand its ranks in order to more effectively and efficiently respond to the demands of its continuing search for truth, justice and redress.
11. **THE ORGANIZATIONAL SITUATION OF AFAD**

During the first seven months of the year, the Federation had, as its members, the five organizations from India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. As part of its plan to expand to organizations in other parts of Asia, the Federation took the efforts to follow-up the application of prospective members from China and Pakistan. For which reason, starting September, AFAD became a Federation of seven members from seven countries. With such an additional strength, corresponding additional resources and responsibilities were also entailed.

The AFAD Council consciously planned during its regular Council meeting and based its plan according to the three-year General Plan of Action ratified by the May 2000 Founding Congress. Important policy-making issues were also discussed and decided upon.

To note, the year 2002 witnessed a difficult organizational situation of the Federation. An internal problem occurred which resulted in the reconstitution of the AFAD Council. An internal debate within the Federation on the question of consistency to important solidarity principles happened during the year, for which reason, the AFAD Council had to make difficult decisions regarding its composition.

It cannot be denied that the former AFAD Chairperson tendered his resignation, which was accepted by the Council. The Council decided not to replace the Chairperson before the convening of the Second Regional Congress, hence, the Secretary-General was given the responsibility to head the Federation and to preside Council meetings. The AFAD Council remained determined to ensure that the member-organizations remain intact.

Also important to note is that after July and before November, the Federation’s secretariat was reduced to one person, the Secretary-General. This is also due to the above-mentioned internal debate coupled with the Federation’s financial difficulties. Despite such a situation, the Secretary-General was able to manage the Federation, both in the Council level as well as its day-to-day work. The person who took charge of the finances, however, continued to work part-time and fulfilled the obligation of producing and sending regular monthly reports as well as preparations for the external audit.

Two external audits were conducted during the year due to the resignation of the former Secretary-Bookkeeper. The first one was done in July and the second was done in January of 2003. (See Annex A for the results of the external audit).

Three persons worked with the Secretary-General towards the end of the Year, starting November. One person worked contractual for three months to prepare for the Leadership Training, which was conducted during the last week of January 2003. The second person worked contractual for also four months to assist the Secretary-General in the work related to lobby, campaign and public information and documentation of the
results of the Leadership Training. A third person worked on a contractual basis and eventually absorbed as full time member of the Secretariat for the year 2003.

The member-organizations, while independently performing their tasks in their respective countries, were, in varying levels, able to perform the plan of the Federation both in terms of joint activities and meetings as well as in terms of regionally synchronized activities during traditionally commemorated events, e.g. International Day of the Disappeared and International Week of the Disappeared.

Communication between member-organizations and the Regional Secretariat was done, needs much improvement. Other member-organizations communicated regularly by e-mail to the Secretariat, but the others also did not. The Secretariat regularly sent official communications to the member-organizations, but the members’ consistency in responding to these communications needs improvement. Inter-member communication has still to be developed.

AFAD received financial support from a second partner, the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst e.V. (EED). Such financial support was given for the following purposes: purchase of office equipment; leadership training, lobby, rehabilitation for the families of the disappeared, e.g. scholarship for children of the disappeared persons in Kashmir and rehabilitation activities for families of the victims in other Asian countries.

The said support had indeed, bolstered the work of the Federation. HIVOS, which is AFAD’s partner for the comprehensive implementation of its work, welcomed the support of EED. In fact, for such reason, they were encouraged all the more to approve AFAD’s proposal for 2003-2005 and in fact, increased its financial support.

Despite its difficulties and limitations, the Federation was able to perform its tasks according to its mandate as could be seen in the accomplishments enumerated below. Furthermore, it was able to transcend internal organizational problems. This is a manifestation of the relative maturity the Federation has achieved during its more than four years of existence.

111. ACTIVITIES

ADMINISTRATION

1. The AFAD Secretariat – The AFAD Secretariat started with three persons, e.g. the Secretary-General, the Publications Officer and the full time Secretary-Bookkeeper. However, due to internal problems within the Federation and also due to financial constraints, AFAD’s Secretariat was reduced to the full time Secretary-General and a part-time bookkeeper starting from July up to October. A new person was hired on a contractual basis to assist the Secretary-General in doing lobby and campaign work, one person was hired to prepare for the Leadership training up to January of 2003 and another person worked as contractual for administration from November to December.
The AFAD Secretary-General had to work alone in the office for three months due to the above-mentioned problem. While doing her principal tasks, she also did the work of the Publications Officer. It was quite difficult for her considering that she had to do some traveling and had to leave the office during those times.

The part time bookkeeper did manage to finish her tasks on time and as a matter of fact, was able to prepare everything for the year-end external audit which was finished at the beginning of 2003.

It is important to note that during the year, the AFAD Secretariat moved to another office. The transfer was done for the purpose of enhancing AFAD’s distinct mandate as a regional Federation and in order to be independent from FIND, its mother-organization - both in terms of resources and facilities. This transfer was also suggested by the OPTIMA Management Services who made a management audit on FIND.

2. **Planning and Budgeting** – At the beginning of the year, the AFAD Secretariat initiated to propose a one-year plan for the year. Such a plan was based on its assessment and planning done in January. It was proposed to the AFAD Council for approval. More than 95 percent of the substance of the proposed plan was approved by the Council. A budget based on the expected funds for the year was also proposed. Realistically, however, the expected funds were not enough based on the activities expected for the year. It was presumed that additional funds will be solicited to implement the plans.

3. **External Audit 2001 Year End Report** – The financial transactions for the year 2001 was externally audited for the purpose of submission to the AFAD Council, to HIVOS (which then was the sole partner of AFAD) and to the Securities and Exchange Commission. The report was finished in February.

- **2002 Mid-Year Audited Report** - Since the AFAD Secretary/Bookkeeper was resigning in July, for the first time, AFAD’s transactions for the first half of the year was externally audited. Before, the audit was made after the end of every fiscal year only which was the beginning of the following year. The purpose of the mid-year audit was to turn-over financial documents to the new person in-charge of finances.

- **Regular submission of financial statements to AFAD member-organizations** - Monthly financial statements were regularly sent by email by the Secretary-General to all the AFAD member-organizations for the purpose of updating the member-organizations on the financial status of the organization.
4. **AFAD Council Meetings**

4.1 **Regular Council Meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland in April 2002** – The AFAD Council meets annually every April to assess activities of the past year and to plan the activities for the new year and discuss other organizational matters. Council meetings are held in Geneva in time for the Federation’s participation to the annual sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. There were other internal problems that came up during this meeting which necessitated major decisions in the immediate future.

4.2 **Special Council Meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2002** – AFAD held a Special Council Meeting to resolve a major organizational problem of the Federation. It was attended by the majority of the AFAD member-organizations. In that meeting, the Council made a unanimous decision to accept the resignation of its Chairperson and retain the membership of one of its member-organizations. Furthermore, the meeting was used to review the plans and to firm up the plans for the remaining five months of the year. It also served as a venue to know the developments of the situation of each country and the response of each organization.

5. **Fund-raising activities in Europe in April 2002** – After the 58th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the AFAD Secretary-General visited funding agencies in The Netherlands and Germany to look for funding possibilities. It was an effort to beef up the limited resources of the Federation. Funding agencies visited were: ICCO, Novib, Foreign Office of the Netherlands in The Hague, Caritas – Germany and EED-Germany.

Novib gave funds for two Sri Lankan delegates to the AFAD Council meeting in Bangkok held in August 2001. The EED in Bonn, Germany, through the positive recommendation of Mr. Basil Fernando, approved proposals of AFAD, e.g. Rehabilitation; Lobby; Leadership Training and Purchase of office equipment. Such approval is a major accomplishment of the Federation and has bolstered its work.

HIVOS, AFAD’s long-time partner, was very pleased to know that AFAD has a new partner, the EED.

The other proposals were not approved, since the agencies visited have other priorities.

Other efforts to raise funds included submission of a proposal to the French government on the subject on impunity, particularly on the implementation of the resolutions of the Asian and Latin American Lawyers’ Conference held in Jakarta in November 2001. Another proposal was the proposal on rehabilitation for victims of involuntary disappearances, which was submitted to the European
Commission. For one reason or another, both proposals were unfortunately disapproved.

6. Submission of 2001 Year-End Narrative and Financial Report to Funding Agencies and other Main Contacts of AFAD - As a standard operating procedure, the said reports were submitted to funding agencies and other contacts of the Federation in the Philippines, in the other parts of Asia and in other continents. The said reports were also attached to other project proposals.

7. Staff Development Activities – Especially at the beginning of the year, staff development activities were conducted to enhance interpersonal and working relationship of the secretariat and to improve skills. Skills improvement was done through a training on project proposal-making attended by the AFAD Secretariat members and some staff members of the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND), the member-organization in the Philippines. Two trainings conducted by PRESS, a group of media practitioners who are training NGO people on how to make use of the established media, were also attended by the AFAD Secretariat members.

As traditionally commemorated, the AFAD Secretariat held a small Christmas party in its office. It invited some representatives of human rights NGOs as well as staff members of FIND.

COMPONENTS OF WORK

Solidarity

1. Visit to the Mothers of the Tiananmen Massacre Victims – As agreed during the AFAD Regular Council Meeting in April 2002, AFAD, through its Secretary-General, visited for the first time, the Tiananmen Massacre Victims in Beijing, China. It was done after more than one year of arranging the trip considering the security problems and language difficulties. The visit was principally done for the purpose of knowing the organization better considering that it applied for membership in AFAD in 2001.

Through the efforts of Human Rights in China, particularly its Hongkong Office, the visit materialized. Thus, personal talks with three families of the victims of the massacre became possible. These talks enabled the AFAD Secretary-General to know better the situation of the members of the organization in the context of the political situation in China and how possible can coordination with AFAD be
made in view of the Chinese government’s unwillingness to allow the members of the Tiananmen Massacre to go out of the country.

The visit enabled the Secretary-General to recommend to the AFAD Council the approval of the membership application of the Tiananmen Mothers. Such recommendation was positively responded to by the AFAD Council by accepting the Tiananmen Mothers as the sixth member of the Federation. The approval of the application was done during its August 2002 Special Council meeting in Bangkok, Thailand.

2. Attendance to the Congress of IKOHI - KontraS and IKOHI requested the AFAD Secretary-General to attend the first Congress of the families of the disappeared in Indonesia. To note, the member-organization of AFAD in Indonesia is KontraS, whose concern is not only the issue of involuntary disappearances, but includes broader human rights issues. Hence, organizing the families of the disappeared in the country is of paramount importance.

The opening of the Congress was attended by more than 100 persons coming from families of the disappeared, human rights defenders and representatives from government agencies. The Secretary-General shared about the experience of organizing the families of the disappeared in the Philippines through a presentation of the work of FIND. Also, the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in other Asian countries as well as in some countries in Latin America were shared and the corresponding organizational response of AFAD in cooperation with the Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees (FEDEFAM).

The Congress proper was focused on the formation of IKOHI – the formulation of its Orientation, Constitution and By-Laws, General Plan of Action. Significant to note is that the deliberation was principally done by the families of the disappeared, which is a very positive because it is an initial sign of the empowerment.

IKOHI expressed its intention to be a member of AFAD.
3. Participation in a Conference of the Union of Associations of the Missing Defenders in former Yugoslavia -

The Fenix of Croatia, through its former President, Mrs. Ljubica Butula, invited the AFAD Secretary-General to attend the first conference of some 200 families of missing persons in former Yugoslavia. She was also asked to facilitate the participation of FEDEFAM to the same activity. She then coordinated with FEDEFAM President Mrs. Martha Vasquez as to who among the FEDEFAM members could represent the latter during the Conference. Eventually, it was Mr. Patricio Rice, FEDEFAM Adviser from Argentina, who represented FEDEFAM to the Conference.

During the Conference, AFAD presented the two-minute slide presentation on the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in Asia, Latin America and the response of AFAD in coordination with FEDEFAM. It was presented with simultaneous translation from English to the official languages used during the conference. Mr. Patricio Rice also presented the situation in Latin America and the work of FEDEFAM.

The main content of the Conference was about the ways and means of searching for the thousands of missing persons in the former Yugoslavia through forensic anthropology. Thus, forensic doctors within Former Yugoslavia and the U.S.A. presented exhumation missions and different ways and means of identifying the victims. The ultimate purpose of the Conference was to eventually find the thousands of victims of the war.

The Conference ended with a tour to tourist spots in one of the beautiful places in Croatia.

4. Participation in the gathering of organizations concerned on the issue of involuntary disappearances in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, West Africa - A significant development in the international movement against involuntary disappearances is the reactivation of the Project, Linking Solidarity/HOM in The Netherlands. Mr. Ewoud Plate, the Project Coordinator, was assigned to replace Ms. Henriette Emaar, who resigned from the post in early 2001. The project Linking Solidarity focuses on facilitating the formation of a network of organizations concerned on the issue of involuntary
disappearances in Africa. In the course of preparing for the formation of a network, Ewoud Plate coordinated with AFAD. Thus, cooperation with Linking Solidarity became very frequent during the second half of the year.

In the first conference of organizations concerned on the problem of involuntary disappearances, AFAD’s participation was sought for because of the need to share its beginnings, its mission, vision and goals to its brothers and sisters in Africa. As a person who was able to work in AFAD first as a Coordinator and presently as its Secretary-General, Mary Aileen Bacalso was invited by Mr. Ewoud Plate to share about AFAD.

Thus, during the Conference, AFAD presented its 22-minute slide production and participated in the deliberation regarding its formation, its present structure, its internal dynamics and its work at the United Nations together with FEDEFAM.

Mr. Patricio Rice who represented FEDEFAM, presented the work of the latter from its very beginnings up to the present.

Both the AFAD and FEDEFAM presentations were well-received and appreciated and had indeed, encouraged and challenged the participants who came from several countries of West Africa in order to form their own network.

5. Approval of the membership applications of the Tiananmen Mothers of China and the Truth and Justice Commission of Pakistan - After a couple of years, the applications for membership of the Tiananmen Mothers of China and the Truth and Justice Commission of Pakistan were approved by the AFAD Council.

The approval of the application of the Tiananmen Mothers was based on the results of the visit of the AFAD Secretary-General to China and her discussion of the former’s president, Ms. Ding Zilin.

Although there was no visit to Pakistan due to security problems, the papers submitted by Mr. Farooq Niazi, Coordinator of Truth and Justice Commission, which presented cases of disappearances in his area, including general situations, coupled with his participation in AFAD activities in the past, served as bases for the approval of the application of the Truth and Justice Commission.

For a number of years, AFAD was a Federation of five member-organizations. It was a breakthrough for AFAD when it approved the membership of two more organizations. The Council is aware that membership of new organizations entails a corresponding responsibilities on the part of AFAD and on the newly-approved members.
6. Start of the Groundwork for the Implementation of AFAD’s Rehabilitation Work: The AFAD Secretariat started the groundwork of rehabilitation work by sending questionnaires to the different AFAD member-organizations. The AFAD member-organizations, though, needed more time to answer the questionnaires and to conduct feasibility studies to be discussed by the AFAD Council during its regular meeting to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in April 2003.

The AFAD Council, in its Special Meeting held in Manila, Philippines in January 2003, in time for the AFAD Leadership Training, decided to choose member-organizations of AFAD as beneficiaries to the project on the bases of needs and capacity to implement the program. Hence, the organizations selected to implement the project are: APDP-Kashmir, India; KontraS – Indonesia, Truth and Justice Commission – Pakistan, FIND-Philippines and Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes – Thailand. All have to submit a profile of their membership and feasibility studies during the Council meeting in April in Geneva. During which, the projects shall be approved by the Council members for implementation in close coordination with the AFAD Secretariat.

Lobby

1. Visit to government agencies based in Colombo-Sri Lanka The AFAD Secretary-General, together with representatives of the Organization of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared (OPFMD) and Atty. Diego Morales, human rights lawyer from Argentina, visited government agencies in Colombo, Sri Lanka in order to bring to the latter’s attention the concern of the international community about the still unresolved problem of involuntary disappearances in the country. The more than five hundred cases then filed in court was particularly brought to their attention.

Mr. Wasudewa Nanayakar, former member of the Parliament and Patron of OPFMD, said that the presence of Atty. Morales and Ms. Bacalso was important in giving pressure to these government agencies to do something concrete vis-à-vis individual cases and on the issue of compensation for the families.

2. Visit to the Commission on Human Rights based in Bangkok, Thailand

   Right after the summing-up on the implementation of the resolutions of the Asian-Latin American Lawyers’ Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, the
delegates visited the office of the Thai Commission on Human Rights where they were met by its Chairperson and other Commissioners. The families of the disappeared in Thailand were also present during the meeting.

The AFAD delegation presented the situation of involuntary disappearances in their respective countries to the Commission on Human Rights. Mr. Diego Morales from Argentina gave a number of insights about human rights based on the Argentinian experience on the issue of involuntary disappearances.

More importantly, the delegation expressed concern about the situation of involuntary disappearances and other human rights violations that happened in 1992 and the continuing effects of this to the families of the victims. The Commission expressed its limitation because it only has an investigative power. Nevertheless, the Commission assured the group that it will do something about it.

3. Diplomatic briefing – The AFAD Secretariat and its member-organization in the Philippines, the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearances (FIND) conducted a joint diplomatic briefing on the third week of March – a week before their participation to the 58th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. This was attended by representatives from 11 foreign embassies based in Manila.

4. AFAD’s participation to the 58th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights

AFAD’s annual lobby activity is held every March or April in time for the discussion of Item 11 on Civil and Political Rights, wherein which the issue on involuntary disappearances falls under.

During the said activity, the following accomplishments were done:

- AFAD was able to hold a number of meetings with Asian governments, especially the governments of countries where AFAD members are based.
- AFAD was able to meet with Mr. Ivan Tosevsky, former Chairperson of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID) to present individual cases and general situations.
- AFAD was able to participate in a joint parallel activity which FEDEFAM conducted. It was attended by the secretariat of the UNWGEID and different NGOs. It was an opportunity for both federations to present their situations.
- AFAD was able to regularly meet with Asian NGOs concerned on many issues affecting human rights in the region. It was an opportunity for networking.
The meeting in Geneva was considered by AFAD members as an opportunity to meet together. Hence, its regular annual Council meeting was held at the week-end in between the two weeks of their stay in Geneva.

1. **Courtesy visit to the new Chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights** – The AFAD Secretary-General, together with the Chairperson of the Balay Rehabilitation Center, Mrs. Daisy Valerio, took the initiative of meeting the new Chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, Chairperson Purificacion Quisumbing. The work of AFAD was presented to her. Mrs. Quisumbing also asked about the work of FIND, which is one of its members.

2. **Information dissemination to the diplomatic community based in the Philippines and in other Asian countries** – AFAD sent copies of its magazines, brochures, posters, statements to foreign embassies in the Philippines and in other Asian countries. This was done by both by the AFAD Secretariat and the member-organizations in order to inform the diplomatic community of the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in the region in order to elicit their support.

3. **Participation in the congressional hearings for the enactment into law of FIND’s bill entitled: “An Act Penalizing Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and for Other Purposes** – The AFAD Secretariat has been consistent in supporting the bill of FIND through its participation in congressional hearings related to this. AFAD wrote position papers during the said hearings and participated in the deliberation.

4. **Follow-up on the status of the Federation’s application for consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council** – Thrice, the AFAD Secretary-General followed-up its application with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The first two follow-up efforts were done in writing and sent by fax to the office of the UN NGO Committee. The third effort was done when the Secretary-General
personally met Ms. Hanifa Mezuie, head of the UN NGO Committee Secretariat during the CONGO conference held in Bangkok in December 2002. Ms. Mezuie immediately made a follow-up on this, but unfortunately, she said that her staff could not find the application. Another follow-up letter was sent to Ms. Mezuie by email, but for an unknown reason, there was no response.

The application for consultative status is a very important thing for AFAD, however, due to over-stretched skeletal secretariat, a constant follow-up remains to be done. One suggestion is to ask one person based in New York to make a follow-up.

5. Participation in the Asian Civil Society Forum sponsored by Cooperation of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council

Upon the invitation of CONGO, AFAD participated in the Asian Civil Society Forum held in Bangkok, Thailand in December 2002. The AFAD Secretary-General was one of the resources persons on Civil and Political Rights. Together with the representatives of Amnesty International – International Secretariat who gave a presentation on torture and of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines who gave a presentation on arbitrary detention, she presented the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in Asia through the slide production of AFAD.

The phenomenon of involuntary disappearances was one of the important issues included in the concluding statement of the conference.

The activity was also an opportunity for networking with other Asian and European NGOs. To note, the conference was participated in by 500 NGOs, most of which were from Asia.
CONGO later invited AFAD to become its associate member. Thus, the AFAD Secretary-General filled-in an application letter and submitted it to the CONGO office in Geneva.

**CAMPAIGN and PUBLIC INFORMATION**

AFAD’s campaign work is based on its general objective of eradicating involuntary disappearances in the region and in the rest of the world. Hence, its member-organizations, in varying levels and forms, came up with campaign activities to combat involuntary disappearances in their respective countries.

In support to the initiatives of member-organizations, the AFAD Secretariat has come up with the following activities:

1. **Participation in the National Lawyers’ Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka** – On January 11-13, 2002, the AFAD Secretary-General acted as a resource person of the National Conference of Lawyers and Activists sponsored by the Organization of Parents and Family members of the Disappeared (OPFMD). She also facilitated the participation of Mr. Diego Morales from the Center for the Defense of the People of Buenos Aires in the said conference. During the preparation period, the Secretariat participated in the program conceptualization of the conference. She also endorsed the project proposal of OPFMD to the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The proposal was approved.

2. **Preparation and Actual Conduct of the Summing-up of the Implementation of the Jakarta Lawyers’ Conference** – The AFAD Secretariat facilitated the preparations and actual conduct of the summing-up of the implementation of the Jakarta Lawyers’ Conference held in November 2002. This summing-up activity was held in Bangkok, Thailand on January 14-15, 2001 – immediately after the national lawyers’ conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The summing-up activity, co-sponsored by Forum Asia and Thai Law Society was attended by lawyers from Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Argentina.

The preparations included the draft agenda and program, coordination with the host and co-sponsors vis-à-vis the venue and other technical needs in Thailand, e.g. documentation, translation, etc.

AFAD and the lawyers’ evaluation team that conducted the summing-up, had a meeting with the National Commission on Human Rights in Thailand. After which, a press conference on the results of the meeting was conducted. The results of which was published in one of Thailand’s major dailies.
After the summing-up activity, the remaining delegation visited some possible partners, Searfild (CIDA) and SIDA. Possibilities for support were however, slim.

3. **The publication of two issues of the AFAD Magazine** – the AFAD magazine, *The Voice*, was regularly and timely published in 2002. So far, since its first publication, *The Voice* came out four times already.

![The Voice Magazine](image)

The magazine contains an editorial, country reports on the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances, features on important human rights issues; photo-essay, features, news items and literary. The Secretariat made sure that writers from different countries where AFAD members are based are able to contribute to the magazine in order to reflect the magazine’s regional scope.

The magazine came out every April in time for the session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and every October.

The AFAD Secretariat saw that coming out with the magazine in April is timely for the Federation’s lobbying in Geneva. Besides, it saves the Federation the expensive mailing cost because copies are hand-carried by participants from the Philippines to be distributed to representatives of the AFAD member-organizations. The October issue was mailed to AFAD member organizations because there was no regional activity that coincided with its release and distribution.

The magazines were distributed to the following:

- AFAD member-organizations which distributed their copies to their respective network;
- Foreign embassies in Manila
- Members of the Senate of the Philippines (both Lower and Upper houses)
- NGOs in Manila
- Foreign Missions in Geneva
- AFAD contacts in Europe, Africa, Latin America

When there were opportunities to bring the magazines personally during conferences, these were done to ensure proper distribution as well as saving from the exorbitant mailing cost.

The value of the magazine to the Federation can be expressed in the following: It serves as the face and voice of the Federation; it projects the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in the Asian region; it serves as a material for lobbying; it gives the member-organizations a sense of identity to the Federation.

4. **Issuance of statements during important events and responding to the urgent issues of the day vis-à-vis disappearances** - AFAD has issued the following statements:

- 2 position papers supporting the bill of FIND entitled, “An Act Penalizing Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and for Other Purposes“
- Statement for the International Women’s Day
- Statement for the anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Romero in time for the Holy Week (Published in the Inquirer as Letter to the Editor)
- Statement in Protest to the Raid of the Office of KontraS
- Statement on Israel
- Statement on the release of Aung San Su Kyi
- Statement for the International Week of the Disappeared
- Statement for the International Day of the Disappeared
- Statements on different cases of involuntary disappearances in Colombia
- Statement on the 17th anniversary of the disappearance of Fr. Rudy Romano
- Statement on Pinochet and its parallelism to Marcos (Published in The Inquirer)
- Letter to the Editor on the Martial law anniversary in the Philippines (Published in The Inquirer)
- Statement of Protest Against the Raid of the House of Stella Carlotto, President of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo
- Letter to the Editor for the National Day of the Disappeared
- Statement of Support for the launching of IKOHI
- Various Urgent Action letters opposing individual cases of involuntary disappearances in Colombia
All the above-mentioned statements were sent by email to the AFAD local and international contacts. Some of the statements were printed in the national dailies in the Philippines, specifically in the Letter to the Editor Section.

The value of the statement is that they served as a mouth-piece of the Federation. Statements issued during traditionally commemorated events, e.g. International Week of the Disappeared and the International Day of the Disappeared, served as materials for press conferences. Furthermore, through the published statements, AFAD’s name is gradually established, however, limited to its base country, The Philippines. AFAD was able to respond to urgent action cases particularly in Colombia who regularly sends information. It is, however, significant to note that the AFAD Secretariat has not received urgent action cases from its member-organizations.

5. **Publication of new AFAD brochure** – Since the old AFAD brochures had already been distributed, the Secretariat saw the need for the production of 1,500 copies of new AFAD brochures. These were used for networking.

6. **Publication of AFAD Posters for the International Day of the Disappeared** – AFAD Posters, showing faces of the disappeared from five Asian countries and the disappeared from Latin America were produced on the occasion of the International Day of the Disappeared. These posters were sent by post to the AFAD’s distribution network of its magazine.

   The posters aimed to honor the disappeared during their International Day. These served as promotional materials.

7. **Commemoration of traditional events**

   AFAD commemorated the following traditional events:

    7.1 **International Week of the Disappeared (last week of May 2002)**

   The AFAD Secretariat, in cooperation with the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND), conducted joint activities during the International Week of the Disappeared. The series of activities included the holding of a public forum on disappearances in Asia and the rest of the world; *Run for the Disappeared* which was led by running priest, Father Robert Reyes and a celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the chapel of the University of the Philippines. The activities were culminated with the blessing of the new office of AFAD.
7.2 International Day of the Disappeared (August 30, 2002)

The AFAD Secretariat issued a central statement for the International Day of the Disappeared. The said central statement was used for mass distribution and press conferences conducted simultaneously by member-organizations in the Philippines, Kashmir, Indonesia.

To note, FIND in the Philippines conducted a forum on the global phenomenon of involuntary disappearances at the University of the Philippines. The KontraS of Indonesia conducted a public forum on the international phenomenon of involuntary disappearances with a press conference that capped the activity. The Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) of Kashmir – India held the biggest gathering of eight hundred family members of the disappeared ever. It was held in Srinagar. It had testimonies of mothers of the disappeared and half widows, a photo exhibit and a press conference.

Meanwhile, the AFAD Secretariat also showed the slide presentation of AFAD in the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in Asia and the response of AFAD in cooperation with FEDEFAM.

IV. MAJOR INVESTMENTS OF THE FEDERATION

In terms of asset acquisition, due to the transfer of office to another building and the recent financial support of EED, the following additional office equipment, furniture and fixtures were purchased during the year:

1. Two pieces of office cabinets – from HIVOS funds
2. Office chairs – from HIVOS funds
3. Office conference table – from HIVOS funds
4. Venetian blinds – from HIVOS funds
5. Fujitsu Notebook computer – from EED funds
6. Laser printer – from EED funds
7. Scanner – EED funds

It was then planned that at the beginning of the year 2003, the money from EED allotted for the purchase of a photo copying machine be used for the acquisition of one.

The additional pieces of office equipment, needless to say, have very much facilitated the work of the secretariat.

V. DEVELOPMENTS IN NETWORKING ACTIVITIES OF AFAD

The AFAD magazine, which regularly and timely came out during the year 2002 served as the organization’s mouthpiece. Thus, in the absence of regular regionally-coordinated activities in some countries where the member-
organizations are based, still, the publication served as a venue of projecting the Federation and its issue. The same is true with the official statements the Federation issued, some of which were included in the web-site of Linking Solidarity, which accepts information regarding disappearances from all parts of the world.

Existing network in the national levels have been maintained by both the Federation’s Regional Secretariat and its member-organizations. This include national government and non-government agencies and/or organizations, the local diplomatic community, the foreign offices in some European countries, the international NGOs and solidarity groups abroad, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

The regional secretariat also took efforts to network with religious congregations based in Manila through the showing of its slide presentation during the International Day of the Disappeared.

AFAD did not limit itself solely to the confines of regional concerns. A partner of FEDEFAM in the struggle against impunity, it also responded to the challenge of sharing its experience to other continents. Next to FEDEFAM, AFAD, despite its stage of infancy, has been regarded by other continents as an example of the efforts for unity by organizations concerned with involuntary disappearances. The Union of Associations of Missing Defenders in the former Yugoslavia, which convened a conference in Croatia in November and participated in by five hundred families of the victims, saluted AFAD for its efforts to unite in order to end impunity. AFAD’s examples have also been valued by the newly formed network in West Africa, RADIF, which, through the support of Linking Solidarity, had made an accomplishment in terms of unifying themselves.

Its recent involvement in the huge conference of CONGO – organizations with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held in Bangkok, Thailand enabled the Federation to expand its network to other non-government organizations in the Asian region. This is not to mention the results of its networking during the annual sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

V1. ORGANIZATION’S RELATIONS WITH LOCAL AND OR NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER DONORS

As stated in the enumeration of activities above, AFAD’s existence is known in countries which it has member-organizations because of its consistent visits to national government authorities during the conduct of its past and recent activities. These continued to be sustained, thus, strengthening AFAD’s credibility. But in China and Pakistan, AFAD still has to make its presence felt.
In terms of donors, AFAD related both to HIVOS and EED, which are its partners during the year. It exerted efforts to look for other sources from the funding agencies earlier mentioned, but for varying reasons, new partnerships were not made possible.

To reiterate, the support of EED is a big boost to the work of AFAD. It gave money to a wide range of purposes, e.g. asset acquisition in terms of office equipment, leadership training for internal strengthening and lobbying. All these revolve around AFAD’s campaign for truth, justice and redress in the context of rehabilitation of the families of the victims.

AFAD still needs additional support for other important projects, such as the still pending intensive and systematic regional implementation of the resolutions of the Asian-Latin American Lawyers’ Conference held in Jakarta, Indonesia in November 2000.

V11. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FAILURES VIS-À-VIS TARGETS

The year 2002 was the second half of the implementation of the Federation’s three-year General Plan of Action. While a number of accomplishments were done according to the availability of material and human resources as well as the varying levels of capability of member-organizations, other activities could not yet be accomplished.

It is expected that in the first half of the year 2003, the major activities planned would be implemented. Realistically, some of the plans in the three-year General Plan of Action will have to be incorporated again in the next three-year General Plan of Action to be formulated and ratified by the Second Congress to be held in August 2003.

On Leadership and Administration

AFAD continues to be consistent with its duly approved mandate and structure. The Council continues to convene regularly during regular and special meetings. Always, it takes charge of doing the decision-making on matters related to policies.

The AFAD Secretariat does its work of serving as center for coordination and Service. The Secretary-General, in the absence of a Chairperson, is the one doing the projection activities and acted as spokesperson of the Federation during national, regional and international activities.

Many of the trainings targeted have not yet been implemented, although the preparations for the Leadership Training were already made during the last
quarter of the year. Such a major internal strengthening activity was expected to serve as a venue for discussing in an in-depth manner the internal affairs of the Federation which necessitate decisive actions. Also, it was expected to provide the leaders and second-liners of the Federation with the necessary skills to collectively run the whole network.

Scanning of the socio-economic and political developments of the region has been limited to the focus of the Federation, which is involuntary disappearances. But relating it to the over-all situation of the whole Asian region still remains to be implemented. No profound discussion on the general regional situation of Asia has been done during the year. The task has been left to the individual initiatives of each member-organization.

The consolidation and expansion of its network are one of the Federation’s main strengths. All its activities are always linked to the need to accomplish this important function. AFAD is conscious of this because it means projection of the phenomenon of disappearances and eliciting support from a broader audience. After all, the problem of involuntary disappearances is an issue not only of the families of the victims but also of the greater society.

International Solidarity

The fact that AFAD remains intact despite its internal problems and as a matter of fact, expanded, is a test to the strength of the solidarity of its member-organizations.

All its activities during the year were geared towards sharing of experiences among member-organizations, learning from each other and working together amidst differences for the sake of the common goals of its member-organizations. What still needs to be developed is the inter-member cooperation and not just communication between the member-organizations and the Regional Secretariat in between regional activities.

Holding synchronized country-based campaigns have not, so far, been tested as a feasible and effective activity. For instance, regionally-coordinated pickets in front of Chinese embassies in the different countries where AFAD members are based is one possible activity that needs to be explored in the future.

As always, traditionally commemorated events were consistently conducted such as the International Week of the Disappeared, the International Day of the Disappeared, Human Rights Week. Coordination among member-organizations and between AFAD and FEDEFAM continued to be sustained. More creative forms of coordination, could, however, be explored to garner more impact.
The slide production served as a material for sharing AFAD’s experiences to its network in Africa and former Yugoslavia. Such gave both encouragement and challenge to the newly formed network in West Africa and former Yugoslavia to strengthen their own ranks. It also bolstered the morale of AFAD to be recognized of its modest accomplishments by its African counter-part.

The inter-continental cooperation which developed during the year is a very significant development to the work of the Federation.

International Lobby

Regional lobbying was still concentrated during the session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva, Switzerland in April 2002. It was the fourth year that AFAD was present during the sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Immediate results could not be seen, but the presence of AFAD during this session gives morale bolster to FEDEFAM and gives a loud message to the United Nations member-states that involuntary disappearance is not only a Latin American problem.

Still, AFAD had not achieved Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Certain focus on the follow-up of this important endeavor should be done, but AFAD did not have the resources to do it during the year. Follow-ups were made in writing, but without response from the United Nations NGO Committee Office in New York. It was recently learned that the application of AFAD, although already acknowledged two years back, was lost in the files of the United Nations.

Lobbying in the national levels remained an initiative of member-organizations. As no person from the regional secretariat focused on this, a sustained and systematic lobbying in the regional and national levels to follow-up efforts in Geneva could not be done. Member-organizations did their own lobbying, but a coordinated action based on a clear direction was not possible due to several constraints.

Efforts to relate with the diplomatic community in the national levels through sustained relationship with different embassies were made by both the Regional Secretariat and some of the member-organizations. This is an attempt to complement the efforts in the international level during sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. But as above-mentioned, there is no synchronized action in this regard.

International Campaign and Public Information

The search for truth, justice and redress is principally being done by the member-organizations. This is being done in different ways, e.g. search for the disappeared through various forms such as exhumations, for example, the filing of
cases in courts and the campaign for compensation and indemnification for the victims.

The role of the Federation is to support the member-organizations. The existing lawyers’ network, which was formed in 2002, was only followed-up through e-mails and through the finalization and distribution of the results of the summing-up conducted in Thailand at the beginning of the year. However, the strengthening of this network was not made possible, again due to funding difficulties. All the project proposals submitted for this purpose were disapproved.

The Federation played a crucial role in the projection of the regional phenomenon of involuntary disappearances through all its activities in different countries; through its magazine, The Voice; and through its official statements. The web-site, which is part of the Three-Year Plan of Action, could not yet be done. Linking Solidarity, however, offered its web-site to AFAD and to the rest of the organizations working on the issue of involuntary disappearances. This venue of projecting the issue and the Federation still remains to be maximized.

V111. IMPACT OF THE ACTIVITIES ON THE TARGET GROUP

For certain, the work of AFAD has an impact on the target group, who are the families of the disappeared in Asia. However, such an impact could not immediately and concretely be seen by the families themselves as they may have long-term qualitative effects vis-à-vis the fight against impunity.

By the nature of its work, for certain, what could immediately be felt by the target group are the result of the work of the national organizations. The member-organizations have the responsibility to bring the voice of the families of the disappeared in their respective countries during meetings of the Federation and at the same time, inform the results of the work of the Federation to the families. In this manner, the individual family members of the disappeared could in one way or another, appreciate the impact of their Federation to their lives.

AFAD may need to come up with creative ways and means to make its presence felt by the member-organizations in the next years to come. In so doing, the Federation may eventually be in the position to gauge its impact after having done the necessary possibilities to deepen in its work of helping the families of the disappeared.

A survey or better still, an impact evaluation on this should be conducted in order to make the Federation more relevant to the concrete needs of its target group.
CONCLUSION AND EVALUATIONS FROM THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS

The year 2002 has proven AFAD’s viability and relevance to the signs of the times. Amidst organizational turmoil, the Federation transcended differences in many respects. The dynamics of its international solidarity, lobby, and campaign, notwithstanding limitations in human and material resources, transcended organizational problems and threats that came along the way.

The essence of the Federation’s existence, solidarity work soared to greater heights when the Federation, after four years in existence, reached out to the families of the disappeared and other victims of human rights violations in China and Pakistan. Two new members were added to the Federation, which for years, was composed of only five organizations. The Tiananmen Mothers of China and the Truth and Justice Commission of Pakistan were accepted as new members.

AFAD did not limit itself solely to the confines of regional concerns. It shared its experience to the families of missing persons in the former Yugoslavia and also to organizations concerned on disappearances in West Africa. Its continuing cooperation with Linking Solidarity has made its experience available for the African organizations. Furthermore, the cooperation with FEDEFAM was more than ever, sustained and in fact, new forms of cooperation through sharing of experiences with the African network, were made.

Amidst the pain of the families of the disappeared and other victims of involuntary disappearances and other human rights violations, AFAD serves as a venue for the expression of solidarity. It is hard proof that the problem of involuntary disappearance is not an isolated problem, but a universal one. AFAD reassures families of the disappeared in many parts of the world that they are not alone in the struggle.

International lobbying saw initial yet concrete results. Modestly contributing to the effort towards the establishment of a legally-binding instrument protecting all persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances, AFAD has seen results concretely in the decision of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to call for a two-week meeting of the inter-sessional body created to study the Draft Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. The unified voice of AFAD at the United Nations reaffirmed the fact that involuntary disappearance is not solely a Latin American problem as many Asian governments would like to project.

Moreover, the international presence of AFAD in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia, where Federation’s activities were conducted, delivered a message that national efforts are well-supported by common struggles in other countries.
Consequently, pressures have been exerted so that these governments would do something concrete, or else, be subjected to the moral sanction of embarrassment before the international community.

The conference of NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and NGOs seeking such status held in Bangkok, Thailand, enabled AFAD to present the regional phenomenon of involuntary disappearances and to establish a network with some 500 Asian NGOs. The issue of involuntary disappearances in the region was projected and in fact, included as one of the important points in the concluding statement of the conference.

In the campaign for justice, attempts to sustain the resolutions of the Asian and Latin American Lawyers’ Conference were made through the conduct of a National Lawyers’ Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka and the holding of a summing up of past efforts. The lawyers deemed it fit to prioritize the campaign for the enactment of domestic laws criminalizing enforced or involuntary disappearances. The Philippine experience in lobbying for the bill, entitled “An Act Criminalizing Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and For Other Purposes” is an example for other Asian countries.

*The Voice*, the official publication of AFAD, has been true to its role of serving as the Federation’s mouthpiece. Moreover, it modestly attempts to be an instrument for raising public awareness on the scourge of involuntary disappearances in Asia and the rest of the world. AFAD’s voice was also heard through its numerous official statements on human rights issues.

Still lacking, however, is the strengthening of the individual member-organizations, inter-member cooperation and healthy communication among member-organizations and the Regional Federation. Consolidation at all levels would certainly be a guarantee for a stronger response to the global problem of enforced or involuntary disappearances. It is both a task and a challenge.