AFAD’s Strategic Plan: Vision, Mission and Goals

VISION
A world free from enforced disappearances (EDs) and injustices.

MISSION
An Asian federation of human rights organizations advocating truth, justice, reparation and empowerment for the victims and the reconstruction of the historical memory of the disappeared towards the eradication of EDs.

GOALS
The Asian peoples understand, respect and advocate for the right not to be subjected to ED (by preserving the collective memory of the disappeared, learning lessons from the past and reminding the new generation of the dark past of their respective history);

Improved policy and structural reforms at the international, regional and national-levels to hasten the resolution of cases, prevent or totally stop involuntary disappearances;

Enhanced capacity of AFAD members and the Secretariat to effectively convince governments to address the issue of EDs in their respective countries and in Asia (e.g. demand for redress, reparation, restitution, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition).
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1. Introduction

1.1 REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

In 2017, although significant number of milestones have been achieved by the member organizations of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearance (hereinafter referred to as AFAD or the Federation), impunity by State authorities and the crackdown against the human rights community continued. In the Philippines, where the Secretariat of the Federation is based, for instance, the political context allows further violations by State authorities. The present administration of Philippine President Rodrigo Roa Duterte reflects a leadership that disregards due process and derogates the rule of law. Assault on human rights defenders persists and it comes in the form of extrajudicial killings, EDs, unlawful arrests, arbitrary detentions, and criminalization through trumped up charges. Nine ED cases have also been added last year to the documented growing number of unresolved cases. Political persecution and attacks against independent democratic institutions like the Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Supreme Court intensified as the government attempts to shut down the check and balance and ultimately, to silence its critics. Several cases in the context of the war on drugs occurred but could not be documented due to the atmosphere of fear.

In Indonesia, human rights advocates still struggle to bring human rights at the core of public attention alongside other mainstream issues. Two areas in Indonesia, West Java and Papua, recorded the highest number of human rights violations in the 2017. ED cases remain unsolved as the perpetrators continue to enjoy government-granted immunities. While Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo promised to solve these gross human rights cases through his “Nawacita” political platform and through the 2015-2019 Medium Term Development Plan, justice for the victims and their families remains a mere campaign promise. The Indonesian government also started to limit democratic spaces and to prevent critics from speaking against the government through laws like Law No. 17/2013 and Presidential Decree No. 02/2017, which bans mass organizations and criminalizes defamation on the internet.

Despite the fact that ED is considered as a past crime in Timor-Leste, the victims and their families still suffer from post-traumatic psychosocial conditions. The Indonesian militarism and occupation of Timor-Leste indeed left an indelible scar on the victims and unfortunately, the experience is still haunting them. The Timorese government had a plan to establish a commission that will work on the search of disappeared persons. Both Timor-Leste’s Foreign Minister Mr. Jose Luis Gutierres and Social Solidarity Minister Mrs. Isabel Amaral Gutierres committed to initiate the talks to establish the Commission on Missing Persons, but until now there has been no progress on this. Human rights defenders in Timor-Leste continue to face harassments as well. In January 2016, the Executive Director of Yayasan HAK, Manuel Monteiro Fernandes, experienced phone call harassments for organizing and participating in a peaceful demonstration that coincided with the President of Indonesia’s visit to Timor-Leste.¹

¹ https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/timor-leste-protect-yayasan-hak-members-ua-2516/
Since 1950, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has been engaging in the systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent ED of persons from other countries on a large scale. 100,000 South Korean civilians were abducted by the North Korean government during the Korean War. Since the signing of the Korean War ceasefire agreement on July 27, 1953, at least 3,835 persons were abducted and taken to the North. Of the post-war abductees, 3,310 persons were returned to the South within one year of abduction, and nine abductees escaped and returned to the South as of 2014. The South Korean government acknowledges that at least 516 abductees remain in North Korea.

Nepal’s experience on ED is quite similar with South Korea. No recent cases of ED were recorded in the last year. However, according to the complaints filed at the Commission of Investigation of Enforced Disappearance (CIEDP), out 2,800 complaints, 2,575 are male and 224 are female. Majority of the disappeared persons are from the poor and marginalized community and in majority of cases, direct involvement of State forces are clear. Since the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the CIEDP will both expire on 10 February 2018, victims are also wary and have serious concerns on security and safety issues and the future of their complaints. Hopes of getting truth and justice have dimmed with each passing day.

In other South Asian countries, the human rights situation has become worse. Law enforcement agencies in Pakistan continue to forcibly disappear civilians and human rights activists. Despite new laws and amendment to the Constitution, dozens of ED cases are still reported every month. Different tactics are used by law enforcement agencies to forcibly disappear a person – from fake police encounters to charging of false allegations to victims in the Anti-Terrorism Court. These ED cases mostly resulted in the eventual death of the victims. Some ED victims were also found dead in distant locations. Pakistan’s Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance (CoIoED) is not living up to the victims’ expectations because instead of pursuing justice, it tries to confuse and mislead the family members of the victims. AFAD’s member-organization in Pakistan, the Defence for Human Rights (DHR), receives written complaints on a regular basis regarding the unsatisfactory performance of the Commission. The Supreme Court, which serves as the last resort of the victims, also uses delaying tactics to resolve the cases of victims in the last couple of years.

Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) continues to be a battlefield between India and Pakistan. J&K, an armed conflict area with an estimated 700,000 armed forces, is the most militarized zone in the world. Civilians have faced widespread and systematic attacks by Indian State forces for 26 years resulting in 70,000+ extra-judicial killings, 8,000+ EDs, 7,000+ unmarked and mass graves and numerous cases of illegal detentions, torture, sexual violence, etc. The armed forces, through special legislation and direct political support of the Indian state, enjoy total impunity, and to date, have not been prosecuted for their crimes in civilian courts. On the strength of UN Security Council resolutions, the people of J&K demand the end to Indian military occupation, recognition of their right to self-determination, and institution of an international, independent justice mechanism to prosecute State forces. India does not recognize J&K as a “dispute,” armed conflict and rejects the application of international law.

“A world without disappeared”

Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances
2017 Annual Report
In Bangladesh, the human rights situation in the country continues to be catastrophic. The lack of democratically functional state institutions and the present democratic deficit are prevalent due to the controversial parliamentary elections on 5 January 2014. The rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association are still being controlled and curtailed by applying repressive laws. Human rights defenders face persecution and diversified challenges while they take up cases ED. In Bangladesh, acts of ED have become an institutionalized practice of repression by the government and such crimes are taking place with the complete knowledge and approval of the government. A majority of the ED cases reported followed a common pattern.

Through solidarity and mutual support, AFAD member-organizations and the Federation as a whole are able to respond to human rights issues, especially to EDs, at the national, regional, and international levels. The threat posed by government leaders with authoritarian inclinations and the unresponsiveness of most government institutions mandated to supposedly address the issue of ED continue to be major blockade to AFAD’s mission of combating and eradicating ED.

1.2 ORGANIZATIONAL SITUATION

1.2.1 MEMBERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Abbv</th>
<th>Council Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Odhikar</td>
<td>Odhikar</td>
<td>Adilur Rahman Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons</td>
<td>APDP</td>
<td>Zahir Uddin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence</td>
<td>KontraS</td>
<td>Yati Andriyani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association of Families of the Disappeared</td>
<td>IKOH</td>
<td>Wanmayetti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Advocacy Forum</td>
<td>AF</td>
<td>Chudamani Acharya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict Victims' Society for Justice</td>
<td>CVSJ</td>
<td>Janak Raut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Defense of Human Rights</td>
<td>DHR</td>
<td>Amina Masood Janjua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance</td>
<td>FIND</td>
<td>Nilda Lagman-Sevilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free Jonas Burgos Movement</td>
<td>FJB</td>
<td>Edita T. Burgos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights</td>
<td>NKHR</td>
<td>Joanna Hosaniak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Families of the Disappeared</td>
<td>FOD</td>
<td>Brito Fernando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Justice for Peace Foundation</td>
<td>JPF</td>
<td>Pratubjit Neelapajit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes</td>
<td>RCMH</td>
<td>Boonthan Verawongse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>Asosiasaun HAK</td>
<td>HAK</td>
<td>Sisto dos Santos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There had been no quantitative changes in the membership during the whole period. However, it is important to note that for some reasons, the member-organizations from Thailand remained inactive. Most of the member-organizations made varying contributions to the work of AFAD through among other things, joint project implementation, participation in meetings, responses to urgent action appeals, helping in boosting the Federation’s credibility by garnering international awards and giving helpful advice in times of crises.

1.2.2 THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>Khurram Parvez</td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Mary Aileen Diez-Bacalso</td>
<td>Secretary-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Sri Suparyati</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Nilda Lagman-Sevilla</td>
<td>Expanded EC Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Amina Masood Janjua</td>
<td>Expanded EC Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AFAD expanded Executive Council performed the following tasks during the year:

1. Presence in both the East Asia and South Asia Council meetings held in Nepal;
2. Presence in the 2016 Year-End assessment and 2017 Planning of the AFAD Secretariat;
3. Presence in the 2017 Country Staff meeting;
4. Presence in the 2017 Mid-Year Assessment and Planning;
5. Trouble-shooting of Secretariat issues;
6. Several electronic meetings regarding management issues;
7. Lobbying with government agencies in Nepal during the South Asia Council meetings;
8. Preparation for the 6th AFAD Congress; and
9. Philippine based EC members participated in the UPR of the Philippines.

It is important to note that the expansion of EC, to include a member from the Philippines where the AFAD Secretariat is based and a member from Pakistan was a good decision of the AFAD Council in order to strengthen the Management Committee of the Federation. The AFAD Executive Council indeed performed its management functions, especially when there were challenges in the AFAD Secretariat on the first half of the year. It also supported the AFAD Secretary-General in her work in reconstituting the AFAD Secretariat. It also led the preparation and actual conduct of the AFAD Congress.
As part of its management functions, the Executive Council reviewed office policies, e.g. personnel, finance, security for human rights defenders, vehicle and gender. The AFAD Secretary-General’s new policy on the sustainability of leadership was conceptualized.

1.2.3 THE SECRETARIAT

The Office of the Secretary-General

The Office of the Secretary General (OSG) had to deal with several challenges during the year. On the first half of the year, much time and efforts were exerted, together with Executive Council members, to resolve secretariat issues of security of tenure, requirements for working visa, implementation or non-implementation of policies, etc. Project oversights were quite unfortunately limited to planning, assessment, editing of documents and reports but intensive monitoring was limited.

While fund raising was done, it was quite limited to soliciting embassy support to two activities in Switzerland and The Netherlands respectively. The joint project with the European Union for the Philippines was approved with AFAD participating in the project in terms of international work. Moreover, a concept note of Disappearance Observatory was submitted by AFAD in partnership with some ICAED member-organizations.

The OSG also participated in the session of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, during which, she led the AFAD delegation from Bangladesh, Laos, Timor-Leste, Indonesia and South Korea in the Federation’s participation in the event and in the lobbying activities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission on Human Rights.

In May, the OSG also joined FIND and other member-organizations whose countries were subjected to the UPR, such as India and Indonesia in the UPR sessions. While the Philippine UPR was the focus of attention due to her prior presence in the Pre-UPR and the need for follow up, she participated in the side event on Indonesia. Moreover, she had meetings with the UN WGEID, with the UN Senior Officer for South Asia and with the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

Project oversight especially during the first half of the year was limited to editing of documents, e.g. reports, proposals, statements. However, much time was spent in the initial preparations of the external evaluation of the Bread for the World projects of 2012-2014 and 2015-2018 through the preparations of the TOR, the shortlisting of participants, the selection of participants and the initial discussion of the selected evaluators.

It was also during the period that initial Congress preparations were made by South Asian Council members, such as review of the draft Concept Paper as well as review of AFAD’s Constitution and By-Laws.
The second half of the year was spent on the reconstitution of the Secretariat, such as the introduction of the then incoming members to the old Secretariat members, the orientation on the work, discussion of the office policies, initial performance evaluation and efforts towards team-building. She was also dealing with new issues of habitual absences and tardiness of one secretariat member and eventual resignation and efforts towards team-building.

A significant amount of time was used in cooperating with the external evaluation in terms of answering all their questions, in coordinating with member-organizations which were visited, e.g. Philippines (both Secretariat and two member-organizations), Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. Moreover, much time was spent in commenting on the drafts of the external evaluators since earlier reports did not meet AFAD’s expectations of an evaluation that could give concrete learnings. The matter was eventually resolved during and after the AFAD Congress, when intensive discussions were conducted with all Congress delegates and a post Congress evaluation Committee was formed.

In August 2017, the AFAD Secretary-General was also invited by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) to serve as resource person in the Asian Youth Leadership for Democracy fellowship held in Taipei, Taiwan. She also endorsed a representative of two member-organizations from Indonesia and Pakistan to participate in the said training. It was an opportunity to network with young people from different parts of Asia and to renew ties with the TFD.

The Secretary General organized a small meeting of the DKA in the AFAD office. It was the second time after many years that DKA representative, Stephan Lumplecker visited the AFAD office. It was a very important opportunity for AFAD to present the situation in the region, with emphasis on the Philippines. It was also important for AFAD to understand the work of DKA.
The AFAD Secretary-General was chosen among the more than 300 applicants as one of the 37 participants in the First International Human Rights Course conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNESCO held in Buenos Aires, Argentina on October 23-29, 2017. It was an important opportunity for her to participate in the intensive course and to share the Asian experience in the work against EDs and to get the necessary knowledge and insights on the topics outlined for the course.

She was also able to network with several organizations mostly in Latin America, but also in other regions. Equally important was the opportunity to meet with the family of Emilio Mignone, who with the Argentinian Government, gave her the Emilio Mignone International Human Rights Prize in December 2013. Also significant was her participation in the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo which announced the search and identification of the 126th grandchild. On that occasion, she also met with some members of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo-Linea Fundadora. It was unfortunate, however, that she could not meet with Sra. Marta Ocampo de Vasquez, then president of the said organization because she was severely ill. More than a couple of weeks later, Ms. Marta Ocampo de Vasquez died at the age of 90.

On the last quarter of the year, intensive Congress preparations were conducted by the AFAD Secretariat in close coordination with the Council and the Executive Council. These included the coordination efforts with member-organizations, with the host organization and the AFAD Council.
Substantial as well as logistical preparations were made to ensure that despite difficulties and the fact that only the Secretary-General and her assistant went to the Congress due to financial constraints, it could provide technical support to the preparations and conduct of the Congress, which is the highest policy-making body of the Federation which convenes only once in every three years.

During the whole period, the coordinative function of the Secretary-General being the focal point of ICAED was sustained through the conduct of skype meetings to ensure a sustained campaign for the universal ratification and implementation of the Convention. Her presence in Geneva was maximized for ICAED purposes. Moreover, in her visit to Argentina, she also made a side trip to Lima, Peru in order to meet Qatary Panituri, ICAED member in Peru and to meet families of the disappeared in the country. It was also an opportunity to support the member-organization in terms of their campaign against impunity in the country, specifically regarding the issue of former Peruvian president and dictator Fujimuri.

ICAED activities were limited, though to writing of letters to governments and joint statements during the IWD in May and IDD in August. These were translated to major languages, e.g. French, Spanish. One major pending agenda of ICAED, which still needs time to work on is the establishment of an office in Geneva.
Below was the movement of the Secretariat members during the year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary-General</td>
<td>Mary Aileen Diez-Bacalso</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>Toni Soriano</td>
<td>Jun Ramos (Sept 2017)</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant to the Secretary-General and Fundraiser</td>
<td>Christian Gultia</td>
<td>Elyse Conde (Jul 2017)</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Officer</td>
<td>Maria Elizabeth Guzman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Campaign Officer</td>
<td>Sara La Rocca</td>
<td>Heidi Fernandez</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Ron de Vera</td>
<td>Tina Boado (Jul 2017)</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeper</td>
<td>Amy Vina</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Services Staff</td>
<td>Jaime Getanis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Research and Documentation Officer</td>
<td>Ivanka Custodio</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Advocacy Project Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kim Bay (Oct 2017)</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Staff</td>
<td>Bogie Bobis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Staff</td>
<td>Fernando Fortuna</td>
<td></td>
<td>On Call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AFAD Secretariat experienced resignations of four members towards the middle of the year due to issues of security of tenure, problems of implementation of office policies and other personal reasons. Hence, at the middle of the year, the Executive Council interviewed applicants for positions vacated and chose those who passed the criteria of skills and knowledge as well as attitude.
1.2.4 PROJECT AND PROGRAM FUNDING

**2017 Funds**

- **BTW**: 9,774,464.66 (47%)
- **Misereor**: 2,854,618.07 (14%)
- **WWDP**: 1,544,190.91 (7%)
- **ICAED**: 792,897.09 (4%)
- **General Fund**: 646,585.28 (3%)
- **Netherlands Embassy**: 603,200.00 (3%)
- **German Embassy**: 50,000.00 (2%)
- **DKA**: 474,222.00 (2%)
- **Donor Embassies**: 334,000.00 (2%)
- **Taiwan Foundation Democracy (TFD)**: 4,475,343.00 (22%)

**2017 Expenses per Funder**

- **BTW**: 8,837,676.06 (59%)
- **Misereor**: 3,472,540.30 (23%)
- **WWDP**: 1,258,390.48 (8%)
- **ICAED**: 856,368.65 (6%)
- **DKA**: 300,000.00 (2%)
- **General Fund**: 200,000.00 (1%)
- **Netherlands Embassy**: 150,000.00 (1%)
- **German Embassy**: 100,000.00 (0.5%)
2. AFAD in 2017

2.1 REGIONAL CAMPAIGN AND LOBBY

AFAD’s regional campaign and lobby is supported by Bread for the World and is being implemented by AFAD and its member-organizations in the following countries, namely: Bangladesh, J&K, South Korea, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. The project period covers January 2015 to December 2018.

The implementation of the regional campaign and lobby program was characterized by (1) changes in the political situation of some countries which may facilitate or make it difficult for human rights defenders and organizations to operate, (2) signing and ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (herein after referred to as the Convention) by some countries and (3) the drafting of domestic laws criminalizing EDs in some countries.

2.1.1 Public Awareness

• Traditionally-commemorated activities were utilized to ensure maximum impact of the public awareness aspect of the work. AFAD and its member-organizations conducted activities, meetings, and public events during the 2017 IWD, IDD and the International Human Rights Day (IHRD).

• Online presence of the federation and its member-organizations was also prioritized through the use of its website, Facebook, and Twitter pages to reach a bigger audience and to popularize the issue of ED in these online platforms.

• Statements were released on the following topics/events:
  1. New wave of disappearances in Pakistan
  2. Gwangju Uprising
  3. Death Anniversary of Aasia Jeelani
  4. Persecution of Media in Bangladesh
  5. IDD
  6. Statement on the UPR of the Philippines
  7. Joint statement of AHRC and AFAD on disappearances
  8. Statement on Disappearances in Malaysia
  9. Press release of the APDP on the UPR of India
  10. Solidarity message on the anniversary of NKHR
  11. International Day of Women 2017
  12. Signing of CED 10th Anniversary
  13. Statement on the Anniversary of Masood
  14. Statement of Solidarity during the Torture Survivors’ Day
  15. Statement for the Release of Adilur Khan who was arrested in and deported by the Malaysian Government
16. Statement on the court decision on the case of Jonas Burgos  
17. Statement on the Col. Lama Case  
18. Statement on the anniversary of the disappearance of Fr. Rudy Romano  
19. Statement on the IDD  
20. Statement on the Anniversary of the Assassination of former AFAD Chairperson, Munir  
21. AFAD Congress Statement  
22. Statement on the 5th anniversary of the disappearance of Sombath Somphone  
23. Several statements with Odhikar, AHRC, Forum Asia and FIDH on various issues  
24. Statement in Support of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights re: the government’s attempt to reduce the budget of the Commission to P1.00.

2.1.2 Campaigns

- Country-specific profiles were retained and are continuously being updated to monitor the situation of human rights in each country.
- The AFAD Campaign Country Staff meeting was held in April 2017 and was participated in by the AFAD Executive Council and the Campaign Staff in different countries. The meeting was done to review the status of all campaign plans and efforts since the May 2016 meeting in Thailand. It was also an opportunity to plan the activities for the second half of the year until the AFAD Congress in December 2017.
- The AFAD Campaign country staff meeting was followed by a Council meeting of South East Asian members from Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the Philippines. The agenda of which was to respond to some pressing secretariat issues, to review the preparations for the Congress, to propose amendments to the Constitution and By-laws and to discuss the objectives of the 6th Congress.

The AFAD South Asian Council members' meeting in Nepal was successfully concluded on July 23-26. It was participated in by representatives from Bangladesh, Kashmir, Nepal, Pakistan. AFAD was able to accomplish the following:

1. Review of AFAD's Constitution and By-Laws - we reviewed both documents which were earlier reviewed by the Southeast Asian members and proposed some amendments;
2. Review of AFAD's personnel policies and proposed some revisions;
3. Review and update of Concept Note of the previous Congress in 2014
4. Prepare for AFAD's external evaluation;
5. Monitor the implementation of the project of the Women World Day of Prayer;
6. Conduct of lobby activities with six government agencies and individuals.

In June, AFAD released the May 2018 issue of The Voice, which focuses on the struggle of human rights defenders within the AFAD network. It stresses the persecution, harassment, and danger that are faced by human rights defenders in their day-to-day work. The June 2017 issue also features as its cover the photo of AFAD Chairperson Khurram Parvez when he was illegally detained early in the same year.
2.1.3 Lobbying

- Through the support of the German Embassy in Manila, AFAD was able to participate in the Pre-UPR session of the Philippines and to speak to more than 30 states on the issue of EDs in the country. This resulted in nine states recommending to the Philippines to sign and ratify the Convention; 20 mentioned the state of EDs in the country and more than 90 spoke about the sorry state of human rights in the country due to extrajudicial executions and many other forms of human rights organizations.

- With the funding from Bread for the World, AFAD and member-organizations joined the UPR proper of both India, Indonesia, Pakistan.

- Side events were organized by AFAD and FIND in cooperation with the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance. The said side event focused on the effects of ED on children. A children’s book was also launched during this occasion.

- AFAD Council members from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal and Indonesia visited South Korea in order to participate in the session of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in February 2017. It was an opportunity for AFAD, in cooperation with its member-organization in South Korea, the Citizens' Alliance of North Korean Human Rights, to also lobby and do the following:

  1. To follow up cases and allegations submitted to the UN WGEID;
2. To present the best practice of HAK of Timor-Leste and IKOHI and KontraS of Indonesia and other civil society organizations in the said countries to facilitate the reunification of stolen children with their biological parents; 
3. To lobby for the signing and ratification of the Convention through meetings with relevant government agencies; and 
4. To participate in a public event with families of disappeared persons in South Korea.

- During the South Asian Council Members’ meeting, the representatives also met with several human rights defenders and four government offices, e.g. the Commission on Human Rights, the CIEDP, Ministry of Law and Justice and Accountability Watch Commission.

It is also important to mention that AFAD’s work for the ratification of the Convention by Asian States was officially reported to the UN CED in June 2017.
2.2 COUNTRY-SPECIFIC CAMPAIGN

2.2.1 PHILIPPINES

In a country ravaged by massive human rights violations in the context of the war on drugs of the Duterte administration, supported by the majority of both Houses of Congress, AFAD and FIND, in cooperation with other human rights organizations, worked hand in hand to respond to major challenges. At the international level, both FIND and AFAD made a conspicuous presence during the Third Cycle the Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines and maximized the opportunity to follow up cases submitted to the UN WGEID. In the base country, AFAD and FIND continued their work against EDs through the conduct of traditionally commemorated events, issuance of statements to respond to the burning issues of the day, active participation in mobilizations to protest against anti-human rights legislation and many other issues of concern and information dissemination endeavors in universities, religious organizations and among local government officials.

Below is an enumeration of activities conducted during the period:

- FIND conducted an educational discussion on Martial Law with students of Camarin National High School, Novaliches, Caloocan City and a Film-Showing on Enforced Disappearance and Human Rights Education in Tabaco City.
- AFAD, FIND, and iDEFEND, in partnership with the City Government of Tabaco, conducted a human rights orientation for the city government employees.
- AFAD and FIND participated in the Training of Trainers organized by the In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDefend). FIND, as head of iDEFEND’s Legislative Lobby Committee, served as trainer on the death penalty.
Traditionally-commemorated Events:

- Truth telling session and outdoor candle lighting ceremony during *Kalbaryo ng Kawalan ng Katarungan* (Cavalry of Injustice);
- Participated in the 10th Anniversary of the Disappearance of Jonas Burgos;
- Participated in a Mass Protest action in observance of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture;
- The IDD was commemorated this year through a kite-flying/family day event at the Sunken Garden of the University of the Philippines. The event was published in the country's leading broadsheets, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Philippine Star and some tabloids on the following day.

AFAD and FIND along with iDEFEND guested in Radio Veritas to tackle the issues of the declaration of martial law in Mindanao, and the death penalty.
The children’s book entitled *Ang Paghahanap* (The Search) was formally launched at the Commission on Human Rights in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the disappearance of a labor and human rights lawyer during martial law and the brother of the book’s author last May 2017.

**The photo at the left features the cover page of The Search Children’s Book.**

A group performs in the IDD in the spirit of reminiscing and reconstructing the historical memory of the desaparecidos.

Nilda Lagman-Sevilla of FIND blows the candles on the 32nd birthday of the organization.

“*A world without desaparecidos*”

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Lobby Work:

AFAD and FIND actively participated in activities both in Geneva and in Manila related to the UPR of the Philippines held on May 8, 2017. Both worked together to respond to the burning human rights issues under the Duterte Administration. Many other activities were conducted in the Philippines in coordination with IDefend and members of the Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (CAED). Below is an enumeration of the activities conducted:

- Participated in UPR Info’s pre-sessions in Geneva where AFAD met with 38 Permanent Missions, and presented the stakeholder report on the Philippines;
- Met with the UN WGEID Secretariat;
- Joined the civil society delegation to Geneva during the UPR;
- AFAD and FIND served as panelists to the “Post UPR of the Philippine 3rd cycle”, a side event held in Geneva;
- Launched the Children’s book as a side-event during the UPR;
- Participated in a simultaneous UPR livestream held in Manila;
- Participated in a press conference on the UPR immediately after returning to Manila;
- Attended three consecutive days of oral arguments with respect to the petition to nullify the declaration of martial law in Mindanao;
- Conducted a two-day workshop on the assessment and implementation of the R.A. 10353, in partnership with the CHR;
- Joined the lobbying efforts against the re-imposition of death penalty and the lowering of the age of criminal responsibility, led by FIND as the head of the Legislative Lobby Committee of iDEFEND;
- Attended a follow-up meeting with the Department of Justice Board of Claims (DOJ-BOC) following the previous two-day workshop on the assessment of the RA 10353;
- AFAD coordinated with Senator Risa Hontiveros to deliver a Privilege Speech on the IDD;
- Representatives from the AFAD Secretariat attended the livestream of the 3rd cycle of the Philippine UPR results held at the CHR;
- AFAD and FIND, in partnership with Amnesty International, launched a regional campaign calling for the ratification of the Convention, as part of the federation’s effort to garner popular support to the campaign, and to popularize the Convention and its relevance in deterring EDs in Asia;
- The Project Coordinator participated in the joint assessment of the outcomes of the recently concluded Philippine 3rd UPR Cycle.
**Capacity Development:**

- In January 2017, AFAD conducted an organizational assessment to review its performance for the year 2016;
- AFAD and FIND attended a Commission on Human Rights-sponsored two-day workshop on the National Preventive Mechanism mandated to be established under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT);
- The Philippine Country Coordinator attended the annual campaign staff meeting of AFAD;
- FIND participated in AFAD’s Regional Campaign staff meeting held in Seameo, Innotech on April 24 – 27, 2017;
- FIND attended a two-day forum on Transitional Justice hosted by the Alternative Lawyers’ Group (ALG) together with other human rights organizations and transitional justice activists. The objective of the activity was to broaden the advocacy for transitional justice in the country.
Networking And Solidarity:
AFAD networked with Mr. Mikah Kanervavuori, the new Senior Advisor of the Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights, who was formally introduced to the Human Rights community in early October. Succeeding the meeting was a roundtable discussion on the pressing human rights issues in the country, and planning of possible points of convergence and partnerships with other organizations.

- As part of AFAD’s work in the ASEAN, AFAD attended the annual meeting of Solidarity for Asian Peoples’ Advocacy (SAPA) where the coalition discussed its plans regarding participation in the upcoming ACSC/ APF.
- AFAD participated in the Regional Consultation Meeting of the ACSC/APF. AFAD is a member of the Program Committee of the said regional formation.

Portraits of victims are displayed at the Commission on Human Rights during the ASEAN People’s Forum.

AFAD participates in the planning process of the ASEAN People’s Forum as a member of the Program Committee.
Breaking Impunity:

- As member of the National Monitoring Mechanism, AFAD and FIND attended the year’s first meeting to discuss plans in addressing the three grave human rights violations in the country (Extra-judicial Killing, Enforced Disappearance, and Torture).

2.2.2 BANGLADESH

- Training for Human Rights Defenders. Odhikar has trained and developed 500 human rights defenders who are now working in their network. From January to March, it has documented 28 new cases of ED victims. Odhikar, in collaboration with the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) and Bangladesh Alliance against Torture, organized a two-day National Consultation on the Implementation of the UN Convention Against Torture on January 25 and 26, 2017 at the CCDB-HOPE Foundation in Savar, Dhaka, to mobilize civil society and create a platform for supporting the anti-torture movement.
On 6 February 2017, Odhikar in collaboration with FIDH, OMCT, FORUM-ASIA, AFAD, ALRC and Mayer Dak submitted a joint alternation report on Bangladesh to the Human Rights Committee (CCPR) on the implementation of the ICCPR. On March 28, 2017, the UN Human Rights Committee was critical of the Bangladesh government during its concluding observations on the ICCPR review on Bangladesh. The Committee expressed concern at the reported high rate of EDs extra-judicial killings and the excessive use of force by State security forces. The Committee is concerned with the lack of investigations and accountability of perpetrators, leaving families of victims without information and redress. It is further concerned that domestic law does not effectively criminalize EDs and that the State party does not accept the fact that EDs occur. The Committee explicitly urged the Bangladeshi authority to criminalize EDs into its domestic law.


- **National Consultation on the Mobilization of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) against Torture.** Odhikar, in collaboration with the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), organized a two-day National Consultation on the Mobilization of HRDs against Torture on 26 – 27 July 2017 at the CCDB-HOPE Foundation in Savar, Dhaka. The goal was to mobilize HRDs against torture and to create public awareness in order to combat torture. This consultation followed-up to the previous consultation on the implementation of CAT, allowing HRDs to engage into a more interactive dialogue on implementation of the national and international laws, including its reporting process.
• **IWD** - Odhikar observed the IWD with the families of the disappeared persons and human rights defenders. On this occasion, Odhikar organized a series of public events, including rallies, press conferences and human chains and meetings at different places of Bangladesh.

• **Statement on the IWD** - On 25 May 2017, Odhikar issued a joint statement with the Asian Human Rights Commission and the AFAD to mark this gloomy week. Odhikar and AHRC and AFAD expressed solidarity to all the families of the disappeared around the world, including Bangladesh. The said organizations honored the disappeared by excavating the dark history of the state terror tactic, exposing the contemporary cases of ED, and shining a light on ongoing resistance and efforts toward truth and justice around the world.
Between 29 May and 1 June 2017, local human rights defenders associated with Odhikar organized meetings, rallies and formed human chains in 10 districts to commemorate the IWD.

- In 2017, Odhikar issued a joint statement with AFAD and AHRC on the occasion of the International Day of the Victims of EDs. It also organized a discussion at its office with the families of the disappeared, rights activists, politicians, and journalists. To mark this day, HRDs associated with Odhikar organized rallies and human chains in 12 districts on the growing trends of EDs.
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Odhikar issued a statement in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2017. Violence against women is endemic in Bangladesh. Women and girls are subjected to domestic violence, rape, dowry and its related violence, acid violence, stalking and sexual harassment, etc. As per a 2015 survey of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, more than 80% of married women in the country face some form of abuse at least once in their married life, be it physically, sexually, financially or emotionally.

International Human Rights Day. To commemorate International Human Rights Day, Odhikar issued a statement and on December 10, local human rights defenders associated with Odhikar organized rallies and meetings in 15 districts of Bangladesh.

Meetings with UN Special Procedures. As part of the UN advocacy and lobby, an Odhikar representative met with different UN Special Rapporteurs, including the WGEID in Geneva in September and November 2017 where she highlighted the current human rights situation of Bangladesh, persecution of HRDs and victim-family members, imposition of repressive laws, dysfunctionality of the national institutions and the next Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh.
• **Communication with the UN WGEID:** Thirty-three (33) cases were submitted to the UN WGEIND during this reporting period using its standard communication form to consider actions under the ‘Urgent Appeal’ and ‘Urgent Action’ procedures. Odhikar also responded to the Working Group and sent follow up information regarding two cases as inquired by the Working Group.

• **Lobbying with the UN Human Rights Council (Oral):** As part of the campaign and lobby, Odhikar submitted oral statements to the 33rd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council under interactive dialogues on agenda item 3 – Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the WGEID and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery; and under general debate on Agenda Item 4 – Human Rights Situation that Requires the Council’s attention.

• **Lobbying with the UN Human Rights Council (Written):**
  
  o On 13 February 2017, Odhikar, in collaboration with the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), submitted a joint written statement to the UN Human Rights Council for its 34th regular session on the situation of human rights, highlighting the state of EDs in Bangladesh. The statement was placed under Agenda Item 4, which describes human rights situation that requires the Council’s attention.
  
  o On 15 May 2017, Odhikar, in collaboration with the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), submitted a joint written statement to the UN Human Rights Council for its 35th regular session under Agenda Item 4, which describes human rights situation that requires the Council’s attention.

• **Joint submission to the Human Rights Committee:**
  
  o On 6 February 2017, Odhikar in collaboration with FIDH, OMCT, FORUM-ASIA, AFAD, ALRC and Mayer Dak submitted a joint alternative report on Bangladesh to the Human Rights Committee (CCPR) on the implementation of the ICCPR.
  
  o On March 28, 2017 the United Nations Human Rights Committee was critical of the Bangladesh government during its concluding observations on the ICCPR review on Bangladesh.
  
  o The Committee expressed concern at the reported high rate of EDs and extrajudicial killings and the excessive use of force by State security forces.
• **UPR Submission.** On 5 October 2017, the Solidarity Group for Bangladesh – comprising Odhikar, AFAD, the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC), the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), CIVICUS Global Alliance, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) – submitted a joint report for consideration as part of the third UPR of Bangladesh.

2.2.3 J&K

Because of the increasing repression in Indian administered J&K, the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) was not able to implement a lot of public and indoor activities that involve a large group of people. Their activities were mostly research and documentation and processing of reports to the WGEID. They were able to conduct some public rallies but only a few. The condition in the area is now very risky for human rights defenders that they need to get permits to conduct activities that are held outside of the office.

Amid unending human rights violations including killings, torture, illegal detentions, harassment and continued surveillance to civilian population, the Association conducted various activities in the quarter. The association campaigned against the issue of disappearance in Kashmir and also engaged more number of families of disappeared from different parts of the valley. The activities resulted in the increased participation from the victims’ families, volunteers and other associates. The greater participation facilitated more fervent struggle by the families and associates of APDP.

The total number of documented disappearance cases as of August 2017 is 1,200. There are unverified reports of 8,000 more cases but APDP needs to travel and check these data. The areas covering this report are not accessible due to the violence in increased militarization.

**Research and Documentation:**

By the last quarter of 2017, one new case of ED was reported. However, the APDP continued fact finding and documentation of ED cases perpetrated in past. The research team documented about six such cases. The relative families of the newly documented victims were offered legal assistance and were suggested to join the association. Few families got associated with the APDP’s struggle and have taken part in the program organized by the association since then.
Litigation and Case Follow-ups:

Between October and December 2017, *Habeas Corpus* petitions in relation to few newly documented cases were filed before the High Court and a demand for investigation and reparations in favor of affected families was put forth. APDP legal team kept on attending the legal proceedings in the disappearance cases and continued to monitor progress in all the cases undergoing before the High Court. Hundreds of cases of disappearances are currently sub-judice before the High Court and State Human Rights Commission [SHRC], where in APDP frequently observed these cases and made necessary representations, rejoinders and other communications to the courts and human rights commission concerning investigation into these cases.

Pursuing the case of unknown, unmarked and mass graves before the J&K State Human Rights Commission [SHRC], APDP on 24th October, 2017 succeeded in getting one more order regarding the existence and investigation of unmarked and mass graves in Jammu and Kashmir. On 24th October 2017, in response to a petition filed by APDP, the SHRC ordered comprehensive investigation including forensic examination into 3844 [Poonch with 2717 Graves and Rajouri with 1127] unmarked and mass graves unearthed documented by APDP from Poonch and Rajouri Districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The Order was another development in the legal advocacy of APDP and the struggle against ED in Jammu and Kashmir.

Monthly Review Meetings of Members and Associates:

The APDP Executive under the supervision of Patron and legal advisor Parvez Imroz and Campaign staff held review meetings in each month of the quarter. The executive members while participating in the meetings discussed various plans and activities to be undertaken by the APDP and at the AFAD level. Further, the executive members during these internal meetings evaluated the preparations for the Sit-in programs and other events organized during the quarter. The participant executive members during these meetings apprised APDP about the various issues and problems confronted by the Member families. The group conversations led to the identification of various remedial measures for mitigating the problems faced by some Member families of association. The executive meetings proved to be very valuable in order to execute all the programs and activities planned by APDP

Sit-In Program Welcoming the SHRC Order Regarding Investigation into Unmarked and Mass Graves:

On November 2, 2017 APDP held a Sit In Program in the press enclave of Kashmir. Member families, volunteers and associates of APDP from across Kashmir gathered at the Press enclave in the capital of Kashmir.
The members through a statement briefed media that APDP welcomes the Order [Dated 24th October, 2017] of State Human Rights Commission regarding the presence of unmarked and mass graves in Jammu and Kashmir. The member asserted that once again the human rights commission has acknowledged the existence of unknown, unmarked and mass graves in Jammu and Kashmir and has directed the government for a comprehensive investigation including DNA [Deoxyribonucleic Acid] Testing, Carbon dating and other forensic techniques for establishing the truth behind these graves. The commission in its order also said that the direction shall be complied within six months.

During the Sit-in the participants reminded media that the recent order is in line with the SHRC’s 2011 judgment in which the Commission had found that in the 38 graveyards, which they had investigated and had documented 2,730 graves, out of which 2,156 graves are still unidentified graves, while as 574 persons were later, after being buried as foreign militants, identified as local residents of Jammu and Kashmir. The member families further stated that since 2011, instead of complying with the directions and recommendation of SHRC for investigation into all the unmarked graves, the government continued to avoid undertaking any such investigations on the pretext that the investigation would lead to a law and order problem in J&K and also argued government’s inability in terms of expertise and infrastructure for such investigation despite the fact that the European Parliament adopted a resolution in July 2008 [RC B6-0349/2008] and called for independent and impartial investigations into all suspected sites of mass graves and also offered financial and technical assistance to the Indian Government for such a thorough inquiry.

2017 Rafto Award to APDP Patron Parvez Imroz:

Human rights lawyer and APDP patron Parvez Imroz along with Parveena Ahangar won the prestigious Norway Rafto Prize 2017 for Human Rights. The award, which honors human rights defenders, went to the two activists for their “decades of campaigning for human rights” in the state. The committee which announced the award said, “Parveena Ahangar and Imroz have long been at the forefront of the struggle against arbitrary abuses of power in a region of India that has borne the brunt of escalating violence, militarization and international tension.

Program on the Eve of World Human Rights Day 2017:

On 9th December, on the eve of World Human Rights Day, APDP organized an internal debate cum discussion, findings of which were forwarded to media in the form of a press summary. Members from various parts of Kashmir participated in the program. During the program the members observed to urge government of India to take cue from the International Tribunals and initiate process of justice mechanisms for victims of enforced disappearance in J&K.
Engagement with media Organizations and Professionals:

Between October to December 2018, the association continued to connect media organizations in the advocacy and campaign against enforced disappearances. The press release, letters and other communications relating to the various activities of APDP during the quarter were broadly circulated to all the media organizations, journalists, reporters and other media professionals. The press briefs and communications forwarded by APDP were widely covered by the local, national as well as international media.

2.2.4 INDONESIA

18 years since the reform initiative started, the Indonesian government is still not making any significant step to solve the past human rights violations. The human rights community conceptualized the possible creation of a Presidential Committee, which will directly advise the President on how to solve past cases. The Presidential Committee will not replace the authority of the human rights court as it intends to only facilitate the coordination between the National Human Rights Commission and the General Attorney. The human rights community envisions that the Presidential Committee will also help expedite the pursuit of justice for the victims. Activities were also conducted to lobby the proposal to create the Presidential Committee within the government.

KontraS' activities were all directed at influencing the Indonesian Parliament to make a positive move towards ratifying the Convention. These activities were implemented:

- Round table discussion “Law Enforcement and Settlement of Human Rights Violations: A Guts for Human Rights” (Penegakan Hukum dan Penyelesaian Kasus Pelanggaran HAM: Sebuah Nyali untuk Hak Asasi) held on Feb 18, 2017 at the Judicial Commission building. The event was covered by the national media:

  10 Tahun Melawan Lupa, Aksi Kamisan Terus Dapat Dukungan (10 years against forgetting, the Thursday Rally continues to get support); http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/01/19/18395381/10.tahun.melawan.lupa.aksi.kamisan.terus.dapat.dukungan

- Victims, human rights activists observe 10th anniversary of Kamisan in 5 cities;


- Ten years on, ‘Kamisan’ rally continues;

Together with the victims, KontraS, IKOHI and some CSOs reported the Coordinating Minister for Political, Law and Security Affairs (Menko Polhukam) and the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) on February 2, 2017 to Ombudsman on the maladministration that both institutions did on the establishment of DKN. As an outcome, Menko Polhukam Wiranto, a perpetrator of human rights violations during the Suharto regime, was summoned by the Ombudsman to provide information regarding his decision to resolve past cases through non-judicial schemes as well as the establishment of DKN. However after requesting for a delay, Wiranto was not present at the next call, March 29, 2017.

Together with Setara Institute, KontraS held a public discussion “Is the Past Worth to be Reconciled?” (Pantaskah Masa Lalu Direkonsiliasi?) on February 10, 2017 in Setara Institute’s office. This event was attended by students and journalists. This event was also covered by the national media:

Sumarsih: Tragedi Trisakti Tak Pantas Diselesaikan Lewat Rekonsiliasi (Sumarsih: Trisakti Tragedy Does Not Deserve to be solved through Reconciliation):

http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/02/10/16031441/sumarsih.tragedi.semanggi.tak.pantas.diselesaikan.lewat.rekonsiliasi

Pandangan soal penyelesaian kasus masa lalu (Views on the Settlement of the Past)


KontraS arranged a meeting with a Working Group to do high political lobby consisting of human rights figures (called Forum Aktivis HAM – Human Rights Activists Forum, abbreviate: FAHAM) on February 16, 2017. This meeting discussed the function of DKN being formed as it considered as a substitute for the national TRC by the government, also the advanced strategy to deal with DKN. DKN is a new proposed mechanism by the Jokowi administration to resolve cases of human rights violations. A series of other meetings and public activities were pursued to discuss the issue on the establishment of the DKN.
• KontraS met the officers of Witness & Victims Protection Agency (LPSK), National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) and the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan). The organization asked the Indonesian government for concrete support to the local TRC in Aceh. Since then, several MoU drafts and cooperation agreements between Aceh TRC and national institutions have been made.

• **Conference Case with Victims.** The victims and families understand the political situation in Indonesia. They have developed the same views and demands which could be presented in future lobby and campaign work. These demands include, but not limited to the following: abolition of the DKN and following up on the four recommendations\(^2\) made by the Parliament.

• **Case Conference with Students.** Students from various universities were the participants of another case conference which presented the political condition and the status of pending cases in the judicial system. The case conference also became a platform to discuss how the youth, particularly the students, can push the government to expedite the progress of cases.

\(^2\) See recommendations: https://www.kontras.org/eng/index.php?hal=siaran_pers&id=88
The Thursday Rally. Every Thursday afternoon, victims, families, and CSOs gather in front of the State Palace to demand justice for victims of atrocities and to call for the stop of impunity in the country. This year, the rally broke national record as the longest act of struggle to open up the truth, seek justice, and call to end impunity. The rally received an award from MURI (Indonesian World Records Museum).

- To commemorate the IWD on May 29-June 4, 2017, which also coincided with Pancasila Week set by the Government of Indonesia, KontraS launched a social media campaign by making memes out of the Pancasila Week tagline and the face of 13 activists who are still disappeared. This was done to remind the State that justice for the families of victims of is also guaranteed in Pancasila, which is not merely a theoretical ideology.

- On 23 March, KontraS held an open stage in the park across the State Palace to commemorate the International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims. The activity aimed to give broad public awareness about the meaning of the right to truth for the victims and the public. This event, filled with a number of musical and poetry performances, was attended by the public, including students and journalists.

2.2.5 PAKISTAN

The practice of ED of the citizens of Pakistan is still going on. Law enforcement agencies seemed to have launched a crackdown against anyone. Despite the new laws and other legal safeguards as provided for by the Constitution, dozens of cases of ED are reported every month. Recently, new tactics are being used by law enforcement agencies to forcibly disappear civilians. Hundreds of reports of killings of disappeared persons in fake police encounters are recorded; other victims are also being charged of false allegations in the Anti-Terrorism courts; and many disappeared persons are found dead from unspecified locations.
In 2017, the Defence for Human Rights (DHR) worked even harder to combat ED in Pakistan. Despite continuous threat faced by DHR staff because of their work, the DHR manages to conduct activities that are expected to contribute to the national and regional fight against ED.

- **IWD**

  - On May 23, 2017, a seminar on psychosocial issues and remedies for the victims of ED and their families was arranged;

- **IDD 2017**

  A protest was organized by DHR in front of the National Press Club in Islamabad. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) also joined the protest.
2.6 NEPAL

After three decades of internal conflict and recently after the elections, Nepal is stuck in the process of transitional justice. The process, apparently, is still smeared with protests from various political parties who are not satisfied with the new Constitution. The civil society also has a lot of criticisms against the newly-installed government after it has failed to resolve issues of human rights violations within two years in existence of the Commissions on Reconciliation and Human Rights respectively.

Advocacy Forum, (AF), one of AFAD’s member organizations in Nepal, took part in many processes to ensure effective implementation of transitional justice (TJ). Last year, the government surveyed and had dialogues with civil society for the TJ on human rights process. However, until now, there have been no clear resolutions to the cases of human rights violations during the conflict era.

Activities held by AF this year include:

- Meetings with British and US Embassies to discuss risk management after Col. Lama was sued by the AF and by the victim Janak Raut in a UK Court for human rights abuses and torture. The UK Court acquitted Lama. The British Embassy was concerned with the potential risks after the case was resolved.
- A series of local and national consultations with the victims were also done for the TJ process.
- Memorialization of the dead victims were also done.
- Some torture survivors were given reparation as a result of the ongoing TJ and civil society campaigns.
• AF conducted numerous advocacy and lobbying meetings at a local, national and international levels on issues related to impunity, torture, EDs, and sexual violence. AF also worked to bring the attention of the international community to the frustrating obstacles to justice.

• Every year on the last week of May, AF-Nepal and CVSJ as an integral part of the global movement against EDs, commemorates the IWD. During the armed conflict, more than 1,300 people disappeared and their fate and whereabouts is still unknown. To address the past atrocities, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Commission of Inquiry of Enforced Disappeared Persons have been established and still no substantial result has been made. Additionally, both commissions stalled their investigations, adding insult to injury to the victims and their families.

• On 8 February 2017, AF met with German parliamentarians. Discussions included: the transitional justice process; the prevailing human rights situation including the issue of torture of detainees; and the need for the international community to share a common strategy and vision with national partners that wish to end the culture of impunity in Nepal.

• On 9 February 2017, a meeting was held between AF staff, Bikash Basnet and Human Rights Officer Swarnima Bhandari of the British Embassy at Lainchour Kathmandu. The prime objective of the meeting was handing over post- trial risk assessment of Colonel Kumar Lama Case and briefing of current human rights issues. The post-trial risk assessment was handed over to the representative of the British Embassy and sought their contribution as an international community.
On 16 March 2017, a meeting was held with Mr. David Richelsoph who is the Director of Office of Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan & Maldives Affairs, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the United States Department of State. Bikash Basnet briefed about the ongoing peace process and TJ issues and AF’s position over TJ mechanisms. The issues of conflict victims particularly the disappearances were forwarded.

Their role in addressing the demands of the conflict victims in Nepal was sought for.

On 15 March 2017, the victims organized an event in Dharna. It was monitored by AF. The commissioner expresses his commitment to come up with plan of action within 7 days. Similarly, on 22 March, a follow up of Dharna event was organized by the victims’ group of which AF monitored the event. The commission provided a plan of action and tried to convince the victims to commit themselves on its mandate. However, there is no significant progress on the working modality of the commissions.

- **IWD 2017 Observed**

Every last week of May, AF-Nepal and CVSJ, as an integral part of the global movement against EDs, commemorates the IWD. During the armed conflict, more than 1,300 people disappeared. Their fate and whereabouts are still unknown. To address the past atrocities, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and CIEDP have been established and still no substantial result has been made. Additionally, both commissions stalled their investigations, adding insult to injury for the victims and their families.

This year, AF and CVSJ commemorated the IWD, carrying out the following activities:

1. Highlighting on social media the cases of victims who disappeared: Mukunda Sedhai and Surya Prasad Sharma- already shared it with AFAD;
2. Joint Press Statement by AFAD-AF and CVSJ;
3. Solidarity pictures in the program districts (Biratagar/Sunsari, Nepalgunj, Dhanusha, Kanchanpur, Rupendehi and Kathmandu);
4. Discussion with victims about their concerns on current TJ Processes and the relevance of commemorating IWD in post-conflict Nepal;
5. Picture-taking with people wearing black clothes, covering their eyes/head and holding posters saying “Where are They”?

Victims’ group urges the Commission to proceed with a Plan of Action
The program was successfully organized in different districts of Nepal. Families of victims of ED demanded to advance the TJ process without delay and stressed on the need for a revision of TRC law, criminalization of disappearance in Nepal and ratification of international convention against ED.

- **International Day in Support of Torture Survivors 2017**

  As in previous year, AF organized an event on June 26 and issued a press statement to commemorate the International Day in support to victims of torture. In the aftermath of two landmark cases of torture and transitional justice in Nepal – Kumar Lama and Maina Sunuwar – the prevention and criminalization of torture remains a priority for AF. For the last 16 years, AF has been visiting police detention centers in Nepal and providing legal assistance to the detainees.

- **IDD 2017**

  As in previous year, IDD 2017 (30 August) CVSJ and AF decided to mark this day in memory of the victims of disappearances and to create pressure to the concerned authority to tell the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared persons.

  The programs were organized in Biratnagar, Janakpur, Pokhara, Nepalgunj, Kanchanpur, Bardiya and Kathmandu. The program activities were: media briefing, press statement, rally, candle lightning, discussion program, meeting with victims’ families to express our solidarity.

![AF staff with the families of victims during the commemoration of the IWD](image)
Facilitated Visit of External Evaluator to Nepal

AF Nepal facilitated and conducted an external evaluation of AFAD supported projects from 8 October to 12 October 2017.

Fe arrived in Nepal on 8 and returned on 12 October 2017. The organizations tried to offer all the courtesy and facilitated her work during her stay in Nepal. AF responded to all the questions in positive way and succeeded on to justify the relevance of our work in the field. During her three days stay in Nepal, she interviewed, the victims, board members of Advocacy Forum- Nepal, Council members of AFAD, board members of Conflict Victims Society for Justice-Nepal and other related persons.

Lobby and advocacy activities

AF conducted numerous advocacy and lobbying meetings at a local, national and international level on issues relating to impunity, torture, enforced disappearances and sexual violence. AF also worked to bring the attention of the international community to the frustrating obstacles to justice outlined above. Furthermore, AF briefed the human rights situation and TJ process to different embassies in Kathmandu. Meetings were held with the US Embassy, the German Embassy, the UK Embassy, the Swiss Embassy and the Finish Embassy in Kathmandu.

AF coordinated and carried out campaign and advocacy

On 27 October 2017, a meeting held at Nepal Bar Association to discuss on and make strategy on the Nepal Army Writ Petition filed at Supreme Court of Nepal. Victims were asked to approach NBA to seek their support and commitment on the case. The Chairperson of NBA Sher Bahadur KC denied to attend a meeting as he was litigating the case from Nepal Army side. Then we approached Secretary Khamba Bahadur Khati, he also refused to attend a meeting in the last minute citing that he has another emergency meeting. The meeting was attended by Devi, Sunwar, Gita Rasaili, Suman Adhikari, Bikash Basnet, Samar Basnet, Om Prakash Aryal, Subodh Pyakurel, Puspa Poudel, Indra Aryal, kashiram Dhungana, Babita Chaudhary.

The meeting decided to submit a case file to different senior lawyers including Tikaram Bhattarai, Shabhu Thapa, Sunil Ranjan Singh, Laxmi Bahadur Nirala, Harihar Dahal, Hari Phuyal, Satish Krishna Kharel, Bhojraj Acharya and among others.
2.2.7 SOUTH KOREA

- NKHR and AFAD’s lobbying work and meetings in South Korea (February 2017)

February 7, 2017: AFAD delegates met with South Korean NGOs and the members of the UN WGEID at the Seoul Global Center. A briefing on North Korean Abductions and Enforced Disappearance in congruence with the UN WGEID Visit at the Seoul Press Center’s Foreign Correspondents Club was also conducted. The delegates also attended an academic symposium hosted by MOFA, WGEID, Korea University Center for Human Rights and Seoul University at the Four Seasons Hotel.

February 8, 2017: The delegates attended a meeting with Representative Hong Il Pyo of the National Assembly Human Rights Forum at the National Assembly. The focus of the meeting was the possible ratification of the Convention by the Republic of Korea (ROK).

February 9, 2017: The delegates participated in a meeting with the UN WGEID at the Seoul Global Center. They also attended the meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director of Human Rights and Social Affairs, Mr. Choi Won-Seo, and with the National Human Rights Commission.

February 10, 2017: AFAD delegates participated in a press conference with the WGEID.
Efforts to convince the ROK to ratify the Convention

The NKHR wrote to 106 embassies in Seoul and in Geneva, requesting them to consider an official recommendation to the ROK regarding the ratification of the Convention. The organization also wrote to relevant South Korean authorities including the National Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Blue House to encourage the said ratification.

- Submission of Cases to the UN WGEID and Preparation of ROK’s UPR

  o NKHR conducted 10 interviews with the family members of the South Korean abductees to submit formal petitions to the UN WGEID. In September 2017, the four new cases of Mr. Joong-sik Kim, Mr. Yu-seok Jung, Mr. Geun-sik Kim and Mr. Jung-soo Heo were submitted. Six other new cases will be submitted by the end of November 2017.

  o By September 2017, NKHR submitted 68 abduction cases to the UN WGEID. Among them, 15 cases have not yet been considered by UN WGEID. On February 28, 2017, the UN WGEID transmitted 18 cases (submitted on December 23, 2014 and November 24, 2015) to the North Korean government; the Government sent a reply to WGEID on May 1, 2017. However, the information provided in the letter did not sufficiently determine the fate or whereabouts of the victims. Moreover, the Government categorically denied its involvement in the crime of enforced disappearance and insisted that “all such allegations are part of the stereotyped heinous political plots pursued by the hostile forces against the DPRK.”
In preparation for the ROK Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN HRC on 9 November 2017, NKHR sent letters in September 2017 to almost 110 governments which signed, ratified or acceded the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and requested their cooperation in urging the South Korean government to ratify the Convention. The letters were co-sponsored by AFAD and ICAED and sent to the relevant Embassies in Seoul and in Geneva. NKHR also sent the letter to the UPR Info Session Program Manager, Mrs. Nargiz Arupova to distribute the letter during the Info Session on the ROK. NKHR has also followed up on the issue domestically, requesting the National Human Rights Commission of the ROK to re-address the issue with the Government. Letters were also sent to the relevant authorities including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the President’s Office to urge the ratification.

For the South Korean ratification of ICPPED the NKHR has also followed up domestically, requesting the National Human Rights Commission of the ROK to re-address the issue with the Government. Letters were also sent to the relevant authorities including the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to urge the ratification.

The relevant agencies have not yet responded to NKHR’s letters, except for the National Human Rights Commission. The Commission informed NKHR that they have been raising the issue of ratification with the South Korean government every year and planned to re-address the issue with greater weight in the future. According to the Commission, there was no actual progress made towards ratification of the Convention.

NKHR joined at the 6th Congress of AFAD in Colombo, Sri Lanka in December 2017. During the Congress, delegates of 14 partner organizations conducted SWOT analysis of AFAD, and developed future plans and organizational goals for next three years. Bylaws, harassment, personnel and financial policies, and constitution were amended. Vehicle policies and regeneration of leaders’ policies were drafted. There were elections of new Chairperson, Secretary General, Treasurer and Executive Council members.

**2.2.6 TIMOR-LESTE**

AFAD’s member organization in Timor-Leste, HAK, intensified its campaign and lobby against impunity following the successful reunification of the “stolen children” with their biological parents. Amidst the political elections and change of leaderships in Timor Leste, HAK continued its campaign to prosecute the perpetrators of the past crimes of EDS under the Indonesian leadership and the new Timor-Leste independent government.

- In April, HAK commemorated the anniversary of a big massacre that occurred in two districts in 1999.
• To continue its work to eradicate the crime of EDs and call for justice on the past crimes, HAK networked with the international community in Europe and America.

• HAK officials also went to Lisbon and the Netherlands to strengthen its solidarity work. The conference, which was held in the Portuguese Parliament, was held in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET). The Assembleia da Republica in Lisbon invited members and founders of IPJET and important speakers as well as senior activists from Europe and America from Helsinki, England, Portugal, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Argentina and the United States.

• On this occasion, HAK also received an invitation to participate in the discussion about advocacy efforts and steps on how to deal with past crime issues, especially the Indonesian military occupation in Timor-Leste during 1974-1999, as well as the current struggles under the new independent government. HAK stressed the absence of justice for perpetrators of 24 years of human rights violations against humanity in Timor-Leste under the Indonesian military regime. Together with HAK, another panel was lawyer Gustavo Gabriel Lopez from Cañuelas, Argentina.

• In 2017, HAK also focused on solidarity activities for the families of the victims of ED. In June, HAK organized a reunion of 19 families who were involved in the "stolen children" issue. The organization remains as a main support system for these families.
III. REGIONAL RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

The loss of a long-term funding for AFAD’s research and documentation program did not stop the Federation from pursuing research and documentation on cases of ED. It has maintained and updated its regional database, allowing the Federation to easily keep track of specific cases. The regional database also allows the Federation to see the latest patterns of cases from different countries. The importance of documentation is inseparable with the work of seeking justice and putting a stop to the phenomenon of ED. Effective documentation helps build up the cases and legal remedies, making it stronger and making the perpetrators even more accountable. It also serves as a basis for the regional and international campaign strategy.
From July to December 2017, AFAD’s research and documentation program focused on the project “Advancing Women’s Participation in AFAD’s Research and Documentation.” The project was made possible through the generosity and support of the Women’s World Day of Prayer.

The goal of the project was to empower women families of victims of EDs by engaging them in the AFAD's research and documentation program.

A regional training of trainers was also set in order to ensure that women will be capacitated in the relevant field of research and documentation, therefore, enhancing women's role in the overall struggle against ED.

The project holder is AFAD, with Odhikar (Bangladesh), AF and Conflict Victims’ Society for Justice (CVSJ), and FIND as project implementers.

The project worked on the following activities:

1. Capacity-building for women-led documentation program
   1.1 Regional training of trainers
   1.2 Local documentation, gender sensitivity and psychosocial training

2. Actual Documentation
   2.1 Meeting with families and provincial visits
   2.2 Maintenance of regional and country databases

**Project Outcomes:**

**Nepal:** Women participants benefited from documentation training. They were very interested to learn and participate during the in-depth discussions on how to document cases of enforced disappearance. They also learned more about the specific important TO DOs in the documentation process including the importance of anti-mortem data collection, how to properly and sensitively approach the victim’s family, and on what should really be the focus of the documentation.

The women beneficiaries learned a lot from the documentation trainings, queries on interview techniques, and documentation skills. After documenting cases in the field, their skills on interview, collection of evidence, and documentation have been developed. Presently, they are more involved in human rights activities. They participated in the human rights programs, observation of the International Human Rights Day, and they also volunteered to support others to also get involved in human rights work.
The beneficiaries also visited the houses of family members whose loved ones were forcefully disappeared during the armed insurgency in Nepal (1996-2006), interviewed family members, and documented their cases. They have documented 13 cases of enforced disappearance.

**Bangladesh:** Many families had never heard about human rights documentation, and had not known that there was a difference between enforced disappearance and kidnapping. Many of them also had no idea that there are UN human rights mechanisms. Due to this and when the topics were first introduced to them, they became enthusiastic. They felt like documentation is not just an additional skill or knowledge for them, but rather a fundamental skill or expertise necessary for human rights work. It was positive that they did not only promised to use the skills to search for their own disappeared family members, they also made a commitment that they will use the skills that they gained to help other families as well.

Majority of the women family members of the disappeared were not connected so the training and networking through Facebook helped them to connect with other families and feel empowered. Although one local training and a few field visits may not be enough to improve their conditions completely, Odhikar sees it as a positive beginning.
Long term project plan and implementation will enhance their capacities and enable them to work independently as advocates for ending enforced disappearances and other human rights violations.

**Philippines:** The beneficiaries were equipped with knowledge and skills on documentation, conducting interviews, monitoring, fact-finding, and writing of fact sheets. To put these in the proper context, they were also given information on human rights and human dignity, the minimum standards for psychosocial work, and the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2012. One of the Local Training participants whose brother is a *desaparecido* but was not a FIND member has filed an application for membership.

Beneficiaries were also able to apply what they have learned through actual conduct of documentation cases in their respective locations. This has definitely immersed them more in human rights documentation. Their skills have been enhanced to the extent that in some cases, they seemed to not even need the supervision of the WWDP Local Documentation Coordinator in the field. The project contributed to the socio-political awareness of the participants and to their involvement in other FIND activities such as traditionally commemorated and other public events. They are committed to continue doing such.
September 2017 - The AFAD Campaign Officer participated in the Summer School on Data Innovation for Justice and Peace held in The Hague, The Netherlands. Her participation was sponsored by The Royal Netherlands Embassy.

As earlier mentioned, despite the absence of funds for documentation, AFAD continues to monitor its database. The matrix below presents the status of recording of cases in 2017 as compared with those in previous years (2015-2016).

### Status of Recording of Cases as of year 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>June 2013</th>
<th></th>
<th>June 2014</th>
<th></th>
<th>December 2015</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Recorded</td>
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<td>Advocacy Forum (NEPAL)</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOD (SRI LANKA)</td>
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<td>246</td>
<td>107</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAK (TIMOR LESTE)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKOH/KONTRAS (INDONESIA)</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<td>Odhikar (BANGLADESH)</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>138</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCMH (THAILAND)</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHR (PAKISTAN)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKHR (NORTH KOREA)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. The reason no record was ever synched in the case of NKHR is because the category *Other abductions/Possible Disappearance* was used instead of *Disappearance.*
2. The reason that a substantial number of FOD cases (more than a hundred cases) are not synched is because the records have been marked confidential and thus not relayed to the central database.
3. ODHIKAR added many more cases (70 cases to be exact) but they were recorded after Dec. 31, 2017.

IV. SWOT ANALYSIS

4.1 CAMPAIGNING AND LOBBYING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visibility of ED in Asia at the global level; synchronized activities during traditional events, ability to respond to urgent actions, especially on the arrest, detention and deportation of Adilur Khan; awards received by Adilur Khan and Parvez Imroz during the year boost credibility of AFAD and serve as protection measures.</td>
<td>Lack of resources to sustain campaign and lobbying at the country level; refusal of Asian states to ratify the CED, lack of media visibility at the regional level and generally at the national level, lack of public support possibly due to low level of awareness on the issue, delay in reporting, absence of members in skpe meetings.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards received in 2017 and earlier; high visibility due to repression could be turned into opportunities; support of existing funders; prospective funders open to support AFAD. The result of the external evaluation can be used to bolster AFAD’s credibility in view of the emphasis of the continuing relevance of the work of AFAD in the region.</td>
<td>Persecution of human rights defenders; inadequate resources to sustain campaign and lobbying, possible labor issues if internal systems are not fixed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systems are in place, there is an existing database, there are members who are very good in documentation and which can share their expertise with others.</td>
<td>Absence of funding for documentation, absence of documentation country staff, cases in database do not reflect at least the majority of the cases, lack of updated published country and regional reports (latest was 2013), several cases are still to be sent to the UN WGEID for actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support of HURIDOCS, family members can give information for continuing documentation, training given from the activities of the WWDP project.</td>
<td>Repression, persecution of local documentation, possibility of losing files if organizations are under surveillance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The immediate positive effects of the WWDP project to the families of the disappeared will go a long way to their empowerment and possible empowerment of other families of the disappeared if given the opportunity to echo the knowledge they have acquired from the said project. To note, a continuation of this project has been requested by all project implementers.

4.3 DIRECT ASSISTANCE TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Standards published in English and Bahasa was used for the reunification process; able to facilitate inter-change of experience with Guatemalan organization; WWDP project helped in empowerment of victims vis-a-vis documentation.</td>
<td>Earlier efforts during infancy stage of AFAD not fully sustained due to lack of funding, UNVFVT proposal “submitted” but not received; lack of government support to victims due to absence of pro-victims policies, Asian Forensics for Human Rights not followed up by the forensic person in charge due to lack of resources.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use results of previous and present psychosocial rehab. activities for possible fund-raising</td>
<td>Families of victims may possibly be dependent on leaders and may not be empowered; lack of identified secondliners; victims themselves are in danger of repression, especially if they file cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 PHILIPPINE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project is closely monitored including financial status; ED remains visible as an issue in the Philippines despite emergence of more visible issues, persistence in the lobbying for the CED despite impediments.</td>
<td>Documentation on drug related cases could not be done due to threats; there is imbalance in the partners’ implementation as one partner does not have the necessary base to do the work, varying levels of capacity in project implementation, lack of general public awareness on the issue resulting in lack of public support</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding from Misereor; UPR results where 20+states spoke on ED and 9 States recommended Philippines’ accession to the CED and more than 90 States spoke on the sorry state of human rights in the country; EU support for</td>
<td>Duterte’s war on drugs; Duterte’s unsheathing the sword of war against human rights defenders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“World without desaparecidos”
AFAD’s international work in relation to the present state of human rights in the Philippines.

5.5 CAPACITY BUILDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned and unplanned capacity building activities were conducted; additional ones done, e.g. leadership training, documentation training, International HR Course in Argentina, trainings on documentation in three countries; basic human rights trainings and trainings on CED and law in the Philippines, including Minimum Standards.</td>
<td>Reecho of said capacity building activities remained a challenge; lack of programmatic capacity building activities due to inadequate resources remained a weakness.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trainings offered by other organizations; possible proposals for submission once contents are collectively discussed.</td>
<td>Stunted growth of AFAD leaders and constituents; families of victims may become dependent from leaders, existing activities may not be echoed and may benefit only those who participated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 FUND RAISING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Able to sustain the support to member-organizations through the BFW project and the Women World Day of Prayer;</td>
<td>1. Lack of person solely in charge of fund-raising. Assistant to the Sec. Gen.’s time is also maximized for other purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Able to get small support from foreign embassies in Manila, e.g. German Embassy and the Royal Netherlands Embassy;</td>
<td>2. Too many concerns that impeded the AFAD Secretariat from concentrating on fund raising. The first half of the year was spent on dealing with secretariat problems while the second half was spent on external evaluation and congress preparations and actual conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Able to get a small part in a joint EU project with Philippine-based NGOs for the purpose of international work;</td>
<td>3. The year 2017 could have been the most appropriate year for fund raising since all AFAD projects would end at the end of 2018. This was unfortunately not given priority by the AFAD leadership and the Secretariat due to time constraint. Much time was spent to resolve secretariat issues and Congress preparations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Able to submit a new Concept Note to the EU for the implementation of the Disappearance Monitor, which is now dubbed as Disappearance Observatory.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

“A world without desaparecidos”

Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances
2017 Annual Report
## OPPORTUNITIES

1. AFAD Secretary-General was able to meet with an officer of the Norwegian Fund for Human Rights in her course in Argentina and agreed to have a continuing communication with them to explore opportunities for cooperation;

2. Some AFAD Congress delegates were able to meet with the OSI of South Asia in order to explore new opportunities for cooperation.

3. AFAD has possibility for support from the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, at least for small projects.

4. AFAD, being now a partner of a joint EU project, already is in the EU list of partners and therefore may possibly be considered in future concept notes and proposals.

5. AFAD can continue to explore other former donors and see possibilities for renewed partnership.

## THREATS

1. Delay in submission of funding requirements and proposals may cause non-renewal of existing projects;

2. Less funds for human rights projects at the international level can cause problems in the continuity of AFAD’s work.

3. Devaluation of the peso will affect funding from Bread for the World and might affect project implementation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFAD:

1. Strategically plan for the Federation taking into consideration the ff:

   1.1 Regional/national human rights situation

   1.2 Results of the Congress

   1.3 Results of the external evaluation

   1.4 AFAD’s financial situation

   1.5 Results of internal and external assessments/evaluations

   1.6 Capacities and limitations in human resources

2. In the next Council/country staff meeting, discuss contents of new projects for submission to existing and potential funders.

3. Make AFAD’s 20th anniversary a huge event in the Philippines - back to back activities to maximize resources using Council meeting and country staff budgets and make it as an opportunity for orientation of the AFAD Secretariat.
4. Based on needs analysis, come up with a comprehensive education curriculum designed for the leadership; AFAD secretariat; country staff members, victims’ families as an integral part of empowerment plan.

5. Sum up AFAD’s documentation work with the assistance of the documentation consultant and conceptualize an updated project to sustain the work.

6. Sum up of the campaign and lobby project and collectively conceptualize and update SMART project.

7. Organize a face to face meeting of core group of ICAED members using limited ICAED resources and follow up efforts to set up a Geneva office.

8. Involve selected family members of the disappeared in the conceptualization of a project for empowerment of which direct assistance is an integral part.

9. For the AFAD Council and the EC to lead in the planning for fund-raising based AFAD’s fund raising history, present funding priorities and .

10. Systematize AFAD’s administrative requirements according to basic management principles and according to the law in the country where the Secretariat is based. Ensure full and strict implementation of AFAD policies. Improve reporting capacity in terms of timeliness, substance and form.
Results of the 6th AFAD Congress

Theme: Strengthening AFAD in its Second Decade of Struggle Towards a More Effective and Enduring Response to ED

Negombo, Sri Lanka
December 12-17, 2017

The AFAD recently held its 6th Congress in Negombo, Sri Lanka last December 12-17, 2017. True to the theme of the Congress, the concerted efforts of the AFAD members have laid the foundation for further strengthening AFAD, and have prepared the organization to respond more effectively and consistently to ED.

Below is a brief yet concise summary of the results of the recently concluded Congress.

A total of 20 delegates were present from ten (10) countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Indian-administered Kashmir, Laos, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Korea, and Timor-Leste. All Executive Council officers and members were present as well. Alongside this, a representative from the ICAED Steering Committee Member in Peru, Qatary Panituri, attended the Congress as an observer. However, the delegates from Nepal were not able to attend the Congress due to inadvertent concerns regarding their entry visas, which led to their deportation.

The Congress commenced with the conduct of a significant public event titled “AFAD In Solidarity with Families of the Disappeared: Never Again!” where mothers and other loved ones of the disappeared in Sri Lanka gathered to, once again, call on their government to address the many cases of ED in the country, which is estimated to be at least 60,000 to 100,000. Among those in solidarity with the victims of ED were AFAD Secretary-General Mary Aileen D. Bacalso; Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan; President of the AFAD member-organization Families of the Disappeared (FOD) Brito Fernando; staunch women’s rights activist and attorney-at-law, Nimalka Fernando; and renowned civil and human rights activist attorney, Manori Muthettwegama; and the AFAD 6th Congress delegates.
Image 2. Renowned civil and human rights activist attorney Manori Muththettuwegama speak in front of the mothers and families of the victims of ED in Sri Lanka during the public event organized by AFAD through its member-organization, FOD.

Image 3. During the public event, mothers and loved ones of the disappeared in Sri Lanka call on their government to address the phenomenon of ED.

Image 4. During the public event, mothers and loved ones of the disappeared in Sri Lanka called on their government to address the phenomenon of ED.
Shortly after, FOD facilitated a brief gathering with the mothers and loved ones of the disappeared, where AFAD officers and members Aileen Bacalso, Nilda Lagman-Sevilla, Shui Meng Ng, Amina Masood Janjua, Celia Sevilla, and Edita Burgos had shared stories of grief, courage, hope, and inspiration. It is deemed that through the conduct of such activities, the mothers and families of the disappeared in Sri Lanka will not only be encouraged to take action against the prevalent threat of ED in their country, but will also be empowered to stand and fight against this cruel human rights violation.

Subsequently, members of the Congress presented their respective reports to the Congress, copies of which were sent prior to the Congress. Each report highlighted the disappointing state of human rights in each country while also giving focus on the significant efforts and activities that were undertaken by their respective organizations in the past three years. Bangladesh, Kashmir, and Pakistan remain under constant threat due to the perilous human rights situations in these countries, with both Khurram Parvez and Adil Khan facing persecutions. On the other hand, despite democratic form of government in the Philippines and Indonesia, the human rights situation continues to deteriorate as both President Rodrigo Duterte and President Joko Widodo foster a culture of impunity and violence as they continue the vilification of human rights advocates and defenders.

In Sri Lanka, the new regime serves as a beacon of hope to the families of the disappeared, as President Maithripala Sirisena vowed to attain justice for the victims of enforced disappearance. However, many of the victims have increasingly become frustrated and disheartened by the fact that the government has not yet taken concrete action on this pronouncement since its election in 2015. While the ratification of the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance was achieved, the draft law against EDs has not yet been enacted into law. The Office of Missing Persons has not yet seen the light of day through its most-awaited operationalization.
Alan Harmer, on the other hand, an individual member of AFAD from Switzerland and an active volunteer of ICAED, also submitted his report. He expressed his strong support to the Federation as well as the started the efforts of establishing a headquarters for ICAED in Geneva.

In contrast to the other member-organizations, the human rights situations in Timor-Leste and South Korea are relatively nonviolent. Still, the culture of impunity in Timor-Leste remains, as President Francisco Guterres wants to overlook the past and reconcile without any attempt to achieve justice and reparation for the victims of enforced disappearance and other human rights violations. South Korea, on the other hand, maintains a difficult relationship with its northern counterpart, as North Korea continues to conceal the fate or whereabouts of the victims of abduction. Moreover, it has also categorically denied its involvement in the crime of enforced disappearance, yet South Korea remains positive and confident about the situation as more abductees come forward to share their stories.

ICAED Steering Committee member Mercedes Malpica Solorzano gave a report on the human rights situation in Peru as well. Primarily, she shared how the culture of impunity continues to be predominant in her country, as evidenced by President Pablo Kuczynski’s granting pardon to former president and human rights violator Alberto Fujimori. Given these deplorable circumstances, families of the victims of enforced disappearance in Peru continue to stand and fight against ED, knowing full well that truth and justice will be achieved through their ceaseless yet determined struggle.

To end her presentation, Mercedes passed around a ball of colorful yarn among the Congress delegates to illustrate how important unity and solidarity are. Using but a humble ball of string, she reiterated how vital it is to stand against the scourge of ED together because much like the piece of string that they were holding together, their struggle will not gain much impact if they are not done in unity and solidarity of one another.
Afterwards, Khurram Parvez presented a synthesis of the reports, focusing on the SWOT analysis of the situation and work of AFAD and corresponding recommendations.

Essentially, the whole Congress realized that it must continue working together steadfastly to address the myriad challenges and difficulties that beleaguer not only their respective countries but the whole of Asia. The Congress recognized that now, more than ever, the Federation must remain determined to respond to the phenomenon of enforced disappearance.

In addition to this, the AFAD Secretary General presented the status and work of the Secretariat during the last three years. A video was presented to mark the milestones achieved by AFAD in its journey for the past three years. It aptly depicted both the successes and challenges the organization had faced in the last three years, making AFAD stronger and more capable to undertake what lies ahead. The video can be viewed at [http://afad-online.org/galleries/videos](http://afad-online.org/galleries/videos).

Apart from this, the results of the external evaluation of the Bread for the World project were also discussed and validated. The Congress gave comprehensive feedback on the recommendations given by the evaluators, Wolfgang Heinz and Fe Garcia.

Comprehensive planning sessions for South Asia and East Asia were also conducted by two workshop groups, which formulated strategic plans for the next three years. Both plans focused on optimizing AFAD’s resources to achieve its goals and objectives, which were primarily focused on widening and fostering the influence, capacity, and advocacy of the organization throughout Asia for it to more strongly respond to the worsening phenomenon of enforced disappearance in the region.

In conjunction with this, AFAD’s policies, Constitution, and By-laws were also revised, refined, and finalized by the Congress.

The Congress also elected a new set of officers for the next three years. Once more, Khurram was elected as the Chairperson and Aileen the Secretary General. Yati Andriyani was elected as the new Treasurer, while Nilda and Adil were elected as the Executive Council Members for Southeast Asia and South Asia respectively.

To efficiently encapsulate the accomplishments and recommendations of the AFAD 6th Congress, a comprehensive press statement was published to ascertain that the issues and matters discussed throughout the whole conference are brought to light. A press statement honoring Sombath Somphone on the 5th anniversary of his disappearance was also published during the conduct of the event to commemorate the fifth anniversary of his disappearance last December 15. In conjunction with this, the Congress also viewed a film to remember and honor Sombath’s life and works in community development.
It is also worth mentioning that the Federation received a total of 34 solidarity messages from organizations all over the world, particularly from 22 countries, i.e. Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, Indonesia, Italy, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Laos, Morocco, the Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, United States of America, and Venezuela. This not only signifies that AFAD’s work is recognized and acknowledged, but it also denotes how important its contribution is in the search for truth and justice for the desaparecidos and their families. Nevertheless, we are nothing but humbled by the overwhelming support by our peers, who remain our partners and allies in the journey to realizing a world without desaparecidos.
III. CONCLUSION

The human rights situation in the countries where AFAD has presence did not improve, but instead deteriorated. In many countries, particularly those in South Asia, they continue to face actual and new cases of enforced disappearance and other human rights violations. The abuse, threat, and harassment against human rights defenders continued. This pattern was also seen in the case of many Southeast Asian countries, specifically for instance, in the Philippines, where there is now a culture of hate against human rights advocates. The human rights movements in other countries like Indonesia and Nepal dealt with false hopes from their respective governments, as they continue to be positive that major legal reforms and steps to pursue justice for victims would be taken.

Despite the challenges and the worsening situation of human rights, AFAD remains a critical and important force that pushes for truth, justice, and accountability in the region. Although internal challenges and other limitations which were caused by the lack of sufficient resources somehow hinder the Federation from effectively fulfilling its role, these did not at all stop the Federation from doing its work. With mutual support of the AFAD management and the member-organizations, the specific goals set at the country level and regional level were achieved.

AFAD managed to retain and update its regional database of cases as part of its regional research and documentation program despite the lack of direct and consistent funding. With the generous support of other funders, AFAD was still able to carry out a human rights documentation training for women who are families or victims of enforced disappearance. AFAD also doubled its campaign and lobbying efforts by maximizing the available UN human rights mechanisms such as the UPR and the UN WGEID. Campaign and lobby work at the domestic level, with the support of AFAD, was able to tap the governments directly – pushing them further to take action to resolve cases of enforced disappearance and to accede/sign and ratify the Convention. The member-organizations continued to seek truth and accountability from their respective governments.

It is significant to note that at the end of the year, two AFAD leaders once again garnered international awards. Advocate Parvez Imroz with a mother of a disappeared, Ms. Parveena Ahangar from Kashmir received the Rafto International Human Rights in Norway because of their work in Kashmir. Likewise, Mr. Adilur Khan also garnered the Franco-German International Human Rights award for his work for human rights in his country. Such awards serve as a recognition of the good work the AFAD leaders are doing in their respective countries. While these awards bolster the member-organizations’ and the federation’s credibility, these also serve as a source of protection especially for both leaders who are based in countries with repressive governments.

The relevance of the work of AFAD has been affirmed once again by the results of the external evaluation conducted by Bread for the World. The difference it is making in the lives of the victims is clearly mentioned in the evaluators’ report.
By the end of the year, the leadership of AFAD was reconstituted during the 6th Congress. The gathering which happens only after three years further reinforced the reasons why AFAD exists. It was an opportunity to determine the direction of AFAD in the next three years, considering the differing political situations, circumstances, and organizational limitations. The Congress became a platform to resurface hope, strength, and solidarity among the AFAD members.