

[Check against Delivery]

Statement by the International Commission on Missing Persons  
at the 110<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council  
of the International Organization for Migration

Excellences,

Director-General,

Distinguished Council Members,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the 110<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the Commissioners and Director-General of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).

Let me begin by conveying ICMP's sincere appreciation to the IOM Director-General and the Council for the positive consideration that has been given to ICMP's application for Observer Status at the Council. ICMP looks forward to contributing actively to the deliberations of the Council and to the further strengthening of cooperation with IOM.

On 8 March 2013, IOM and ICMP concluded a Cooperation Agreement to facilitate acting in close collaboration on matters of common interest. Since then, the issue of migrants who have disappeared or gone missing in large numbers has been one of the areas of common interest on which our organizations have consulted closely and extended mutual support.

Since the entry into force of the *Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons* in 2015, by which ICMP was established as an intergovernmental organization with Headquarters in The Hague, IOM has participated as an observer in ICMP's Conference of States Parties. IOM has also participated and co-chaired the ICMP Inter-Agency Roundtable on Missing Persons and has been a partner with ICMP in advancing capabilities to investigate the fate and whereabouts of migrants missing in the Mediterranean Region.

The issue of missing persons is particularly important in the context of migration. Addressing the issue of disappearances on migratory routes is an important facet of upholding human

dignity and the rule of law globally and for all persons. Migrants often experience conditions in transit countries or host countries that make them vulnerable, not only, for instance, because of the precarious conditions of irregular migration, but because of their status or lack of status. As non-citizens and without a recognized status, their human rights are often unprotected and unfulfilled.

Formal investigation of disappearances is a basic and universal human rights guarantee. The guarantee of official investigation is a key measure in preventing persons from going missing and is an essential condition for securing justice when persons have gone missing.

ICMP is the only specialized international organization mandated to work exclusively on the issue of missing persons. As former IOM Director-General William Lacy Swing has noted, *“IOM’s global reach and expertise in human mobility, particularly in post-crisis situations resulting in displacement, and in the fields of irregular migration, human trafficking and migration management, clearly complement ICMP’s recognized expertise...”*. ICMP’s expertise complements and reinforces IOM’s efforts to uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

ICMP looks forward to closer cooperation with IOM, and we are confident that the partnership between our two organizations will advance the security and wellbeing of persons that we are mandated to help.

I would like to thank the Director-General for providing this opportunity for ICMP to address the Council. And I would like to thank all of you for your attention.