

## United Nations Security Council Arria Formula Meeting

### Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: prevent and respond to persons going missing across the globe

12 June 2024, 3:00-6:00pm  
Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters

Five years after the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2474 on Missing Persons in Armed Conflict, Switzerland together with the [Global Alliance for the Missing](#)<sup>1</sup> will convene an Arria-formula meeting to take stock of its implementation.

#### Background

In almost all armed conflicts, people go missing. In 2019, Resolution 2474 set out a comprehensive set of obligations and measures to prevent and respond to cases of missing persons in armed conflict. However, the period since then has seen an unprecedented rise in reported cases. In 2023 alone, the ICRC registered more than 40,000 new missing persons, the largest ever annual caseload. While men are the majority of those reported and known to be missing and deceased in the context of armed conflict, women are at the forefront of the search for them.

While the Security Council has considered missing persons in certain contexts on its agenda, some of which longstanding, the issue has yet to be more consistently taken up in the Council's responses to armed conflicts. Similarly, while a number of member states have made important progress in recent years in addressing conflict-related missing persons, tens of thousands of people go missing each year without any effective measures being taken. Behind these numbers are human tragedies for the families and communities affected. Moreover, where left unaddressed, the issue of missing persons risks becoming an obstacle to efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

Against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts and geopolitical divisions, this Arria Formula Meeting seeks to identify key capacities and measures to prevent people from going missing where conflicts break out and to swiftly address cases when they do.

#### Objectives

The main objective will be to strengthen implementation of UNSC Resolution 2474 through the identification of concrete measures that seek to prevent and respond to persons going missing in armed conflict across the globe.

Drawing on good practices shared by Member States and practitioners, the meeting will focus on preventive measures and capacities as well as early responses to conflict as highlighted in UNSC 2474<sup>2</sup>. Special attention will be given to the importance of addressing the issue of missing persons in peace processes<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Croatia, Estonia, State of Kuwait, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and The Gambia.

<sup>2</sup> UNSC 2474 mentions for instance preventive measures such as enacting national legislation, ensuring detainee registration, providing appropriate training for armed forces, producing and providing proper means of identification, including for members of armed forces, the establishment of national information bureaux upon the outbreak of an armed conflict, grave registration services and registers of deaths and ensuring accountability as appropriate in cases of missing persons.

<sup>3</sup> UNSC 2474 "calls upon all parties to armed conflict, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to include provisions to facilitate the search for missing persons" and further notes that the broad range of actions on missing persons outlined in the resolution "can contribute to the process of confidence building between parties to armed conflict, expediting peace negotiations and settlement, transitional justice processes, reconciliation, peacebuilding and sustaining peace".

## Guiding questions

- How can the UN Security Council better integrate the issue of missing persons into its conflict analysis and response, particularly in the early stages of conflict?
- What essential preparedness and early response measures can member states take to prevent persons from going missing when conflict breaks out?
- How can we ensure that mediators and the parties in conflict address the issue of missing persons in peace mediation processes?
- What are opportunities and risks associated with the use of new technologies and data science in dealing with missing persons?

## Modalities

The Arria-formula meeting will be chaired by Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations. All UN Member States and Permanent Observers are invited to participate. High-level attendance is encouraged.

## **Briefers:**

- H.E. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the UN
- Dr. Luz Janeth Forero Martínez, Director of the Search Unit for Missing Persons (*Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas Desaparecidas* – Colombia)
- Ms. Florence Anselmo, Head of the Central Tracing Agency, International Committee of the Red Cross
- Representative of families of the missing

The meeting will take place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber from 3pm to 6pm on 12 June 2024. Interpretation into the official languages of the UN will be provided (subject to confirmation).

To facilitate participation by as many delegations as possible, interventions should not exceed **three minutes**.

To inscribe in the speakers' list and deliver a statement, please indicate the delegation as well as the name and title of the speaker via email to [newyork.un.teampolitik@eda.admin.ch](mailto:newyork.un.teampolitik@eda.admin.ch) by **Friday, 7 June at 6PM** with the subject line: "*Missing Persons UNSC Arria meeting*".

UN Agencies, civil society and academic institutions are also invited to make submissions in writing.