

**Speech by Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst,  
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon**

Roundtable discussion on a draft law on the missing and disappeared in the  
framework of the project "Lebanon's unaddressed legacy: the missing and the  
families' right to know" funded by the European Union

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***Check against Delivery***

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Thousands of people have disappeared during Lebanon's civil war and its aftermath. They are still missing to date. Their relatives will never forget them, and neither should we. There is the constant anguish which underpins a strong and unwavering determination to find out what happened. Disappearances are not specific to Lebanon. They occur in many countries around the world. We have here today representatives from European Union Member States (Spain), from Guatemala, from Bosnia where civil wars and other conflicts left such unacceptable legacy.

Enforced disappearance is qualified as a crime both in peace and wartime, and no exceptional circumstances, whether a state of war, internal political instability or any public emergency, may be invoked as a justification.

The adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance by the UN General Assembly in 2006 was a significant step forward in the international promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. The Convention recognises the right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance, as well as the right of victims and their relatives to

justice and reparation. This Convention is to serve as a powerful tool to prevent enforced disappearances, and to fight impunity for these crimes in the future.

In the framework of the regular dialogue with have, representatives from the EU and Lebanon met less than two weeks ago in Brussels to discuss issues of human rights and justice. We invited Lebanon to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance as well as to explore its full accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The EU also asked Lebanon to deliver on its repeated political commitment to address the issue of the disappeared, including through the adoption of legislation recognising the internationally-acknowledged rights of families of missing and disappeared persons.

The commitment of the EU goes beyond political dialogue and our support to International Centre for Transitional Justice in the framework of the programme called *"Lebanon's unaddressed legacy: the missing and the families' right to know"* is clear evidence to this. A milestone of this programme is the law we are discussing today. It acknowledges the basic rights of the families of the disappeared in Lebanon: to know the fate of their loved ones. It also paves the way for the creation of a National Commission to investigate the fate of the missing and the disappeared.

This draft law, completed upon the request of the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon (CFKDL) and the Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile (SOLIDE) and with the collaboration and guidance of expert advice in a participatory process, is a first step in the right direction. I would like to thank the International Centre for Transitional Justice for their dedication and professionalism in dealing with a very sensitive issue. There is the committed support of many local and international activists as well as local and international non-governmental

organisations, judges and lawyers, particularly Mr. Nizar Saghie, whom I wish to thank for his work on developing this draft law over its different stages. For the participants who travelled from far and wide to share their experience and contribute, I hope you will take home with you more ideas, knowledge, experience, contacts and fresh hope for renewed action.

Let me conclude by paying tribute to the families of the disappeared, whose determination should guide us in the search for a comprehensive resolution. Thank you.