Sample letter to a minister or Government official urging the ratification of, or accession to, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

[YOUR ADDRESS]

[RECIPIENT’S ADDRESS]

[DATE]

Dear [NAME OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL],

I am writing to you to encourage ratification of, or accession to, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

The Convention entered into force on 23 December 2010. As at 1 August 2017, 92 States have signed the Convention and 57 have ratified or acceded it. For the full text, please see [International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ConventionCED.aspx). This Convention:

* Establishes the absolute and non-derogable right of a person not to be disappeared;
* Clarifies what is an enforced disappearance by an agreed definition;
* States that enforced disappearance constitutes a crime against humanity when widespread and systematic;
* Clarifies that non-State actors must also be prosecuted by States when they commit acts similar to enforced disappearances;
* Obliges States to criminalize enforced disappearance in their penal system;
* Establishes the absolute prohibition of secret detention;
* Obliges States to exercise mandatory jurisdiction over all perpetrators of enforced disappearance to prevent impunity;
* Establishes that all persons who are incarcerated must be protected from enforced disappearance;
* Establishes a broad definition of the victims of enforced disappearance with their corresponding rights;
* Establishes the right to truth about all circumstances of enforced disappearance cases;
* Establishes special protection for child victims.

The Convention represents a milestone and fills a legal gap in international human rights law. It constitutes an effective tool to prevent and suppress the crime of enforced disappearance as well as protect the rights of the victims. Yet the Convention has not attracted the massive number of ratifications which it clearly merits. With only 57 States parties, it is deprived of the broad-based support it requires to meet its objectives.

I would like to urge [NAME OF COUNTRY] to ratify, or accede, the Convention as soon as possible. While doing so I encourage [NAME OF COUNTRY] to recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the monitoring body of the Convention, to receive individual and inter-State complaints under articles 31 and 32 of the Convention.

The Convention offers [NAME OF COUNTRY] an important opportunity to fulfil its obligations to victims of enforced disappearance.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME OF PERSON / ORGANIZATION]