Disappearing Act: Reconstructing the Crime of Disappearances in Times of Political Violence

Fact Sheet

Project Information

DISACT
Grant agreement ID: 101086935

Funded under
European Research Council (ERC)

DOI
10.3030/101086935

Start date
1 July 2023

End date
30 June 2028

Total cost
€ 1,990,598,00

EU contribution
€ 1,990,598,00

Coordinated by
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
Cyprus

Objective

DISACT will investigate the logic of the crime of disappearances in repressive and (post)conflict settings. Even though combatants have always gone missing on the battlefield, the purposeful disappearance of people is a relatively recent phenomenon. Around 1,000 people now disappear daily, with high levels of public attention to the phenomenon, yet we know relatively little about the historical origins of the crime, the rationale for violent (state and non-state) actors to deploy it, or the processes underpinning its international diffusion. In answering these questions, the project will draw on in-depth analysis of six carefully selected cases, each geared towards documenting a different stage or thematic manifestation in the historical evolution of disappearances. First, DISACT will use archival sources to examine how
disappearances emerged in the context of the French colonial counterinsurgency in Algeria (1954-1962). It will then draw on rich ethnographic evidence of violence in Cyprus (1955-1974) to shed light on the logic of the crime in conflict settings. Next, DISACT will investigate the hitherto unexplored role of illiberal intergovernmental organizations in facilitating regional diffusion by analysing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Eurasia (2005-2020). Finally, the project will innovate methodologically by using forensic evidence to uncover the strategic logic of selective removal of remains of victims from original grave sites, comparing the experiences of Cyprus, Chile, and Bosnia. This comparative, interdisciplinary, and multimethod project will blend ethnographic, forensic, legal, and archival evidence to enrich the understanding of one of the most complex human rights violations of our time. Understanding the motives driving disappearances could identify the unexamined and interlinked dynamics of state repression, colonialism, violent conflict, and post-conflict accountability.

**Fields of science**

- social sciences > law > human rights > human rights violations > political violence
- medical and health sciences > other medical sciences > forensic sciences

**Keywords**

DISACT

**Programme(s)**

HORIZON.1.1 - European Research Council (ERC)

**Topic(s)**

ERC-2022-COG - ERC CONSOLIDATOR GRANTS

**Call for proposal**

ERC-2022-COG

See other projects for this call
Funding Scheme

HORIZON-ERC - HORIZON ERC Grants

Coordinator

UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
Net EU contribution
€ 1 840 209,00
Address
Avenue panepistimiou 2109 aglantzi
1678 Nicosia
Cyprus
Region
Κύπρος > Κύπρος > Κύπρος
Activity type
Higher or Secondary Education Establishments
Links
Contact the organisation
Website
Participation in EU R&I programmes
HORIZON collaboration network
Other funding
€ 0,00

Participants (3)

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
United Kingdom
Net EU contribution
€ 30 955,00
Address
University avenue
G12 8QQ Glasgow
Region
Scotland > West Central Scotland > Glasgow City
THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

United Kingdom

Net EU contribution

€ 83 241,00

Address

University road lanyon building
BT7 1NN Belfast

Region

Northern Ireland > Northern Ireland > Belfast

Activity type

Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

Links

Contact the organisation Website Participation in EU R&I programmes HORIZON collaboration network

Other funding

€ 0,00

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES ROYAL CHARTER

United Kingdom

Net EU contribution

€ 36 193,00

Address

Thornhaugh street russel square
WC1H OXG London
Region
London > Inner London — West > Camden and City of London

Activity type
Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

Links
Contact the organisation  Website  Participation in EU R&I programmes  HORIZON collaboration network

Other funding
€ 0,00

EC signature date 14 May 2023
Last update: 14 July 2023

Permalink: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101086935

European Union, 2023