

Enforced disappearances and the white-van pattern

The state-attributable pattern of enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka — including but not limited to the 'white van' modality — which UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances figures place among the highest cumulative caseloads globally.

This article records the structural pattern, not individual cases. The case file defers absolutely to ITJP, PEARL, OMP and OHCHR on individual case work and to the families themselves on naming. The single most important fact in the case file is that the pattern continued after the armed conflict ended.

§1 Pattern and accountability gap

The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has registered tens of thousands of cumulative cases from Sri Lanka. OHCHR figures (cited in the omp-srilanka registry entry) consistently note 6,700+ accepted cases by the OMP and 16,700+ broader UN-recognised figures across decades. No senior official has been prosecuted. Families continue to file new cases.

The case file records the pattern as continuing — not historic — and routes families to the institutions that hold their files.

Sources

- OMP — official statistics.
- PEARL — disappearances reporting.
- ITJP — survivor testimony work.

What this is not

- This article does not name disappeared persons, families, perpetrators, or units.
- This article does not aggregate counts in TLTE voice — figures are cited to OMP/OHCHR/UN WGEID.