INTERNATIONAL NUREMBERG PRINCIPLES ACADEMY

Talk and Discussion

Nuremberg Academy Talk: »Forced Separation«

by Dr Rainer Huhle

Thursday, 07 May 2026, at 11 am

Room 619, Ground Floor, Nuremberg Palace of Justice, Bärenschanzstraße 72,
(Entrance of the International Nuremberg Principles Academy)
90429 Nuremberg, Germany

The event is held in English. No registration required.

Chair: Dr Viviane Dittrich, Deputy Director, International Nuremberg Principles Academy

"Forced separation" is an emerging concept that seeks to capture the realities of situations in which families are involuntarily divided across different political and social contexts. While international legal frameworks address many of these cases, their focus does not always reflect the full extent of the harm experienced by those affected. In his talk, **Dr Rainer Huhle** explores a series of such examples of forced separation and discusses how such situations are currently approached in international law and questions whether existing legal responses adequately account for the lived experiences of separated families. Particular attention will be paid to the separation of children from parents and extended family networks, as well as the long-term consequences for their lives.
By shifting the perspective from legal classification to the human impact of separation, the concept of forced separation highlights the suffering of families even in contexts where legal recognition or effective remedies remain limited.

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Dr Rainer Huhle is a political scientist and internationally recognised expert in human rights, transitional justice, and the protection of fundamental freedoms. He holds a PhD in Political Science and teaches Transitional Justice in the Master of Human Rights programme at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU), where he is also affiliated with the FAU Center of Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg. In 1989, he co-founded the Nürnberg Human Rights Centre. His career combines academic work with extensive practical experience. From 1997 to 1999, he was a founding expert team member of the first field office in Colombia of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. From 2003 to 2015, he served on the Board ("Kuratorium") of the German Institute for Human Rights, including as its vice president from 2006. From 2011 to 2019, he was a member of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, serving as vice-president from 2015 to 2019, and was one of the drafters of the "Guiding Principles for the Search for Disappeared Persons" adopted in April 2019. His research focuses on enforced disappearance, transitional justice, the UN human rights protection system, memory and memorialisation of human rights crimes, and legal strategies to combat impunity.

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