

Press Release

A Global Response to a Global Challenge

Two forensic experts from the Government of Chile have completed a three-day fact-finding visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, including meetings with staff at the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP). The visit reflects the emergence of a global response to the global challenge of missing persons, in which ICMP is playing a leading role.

The Servicio Médico Legal (SML) is the lead agency in identifying several thousand people who went missing in Chile during the period of military rule from 1973 to 1990. The Chilean authorities have adopted a systematic and law-based approach to finding the missing and to addressing the social tensions created by past human rights violations.

ICMP has been cooperating with the SML since 2008, providing DNA testing of 2,432 reference blood samples and 194 post-mortem samples from missing persons, and offering technical advice on DNA matching.

The visit by SML forensic experts Macarena Arias and Jorge Pinares was facilitated by the Embassy of Chile in Hungary, which is responsible for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The members of the Chilean delegation were briefed by ICMP Director-General Kathyrene Bomberger.

“The cooperation between ICMP and the Chilean forensic community has made it possible to exchange expertise and technical capacity, which is cost-effective and which at the same time enhances efficiency. ICMP values the Government of Chile’s resolute and enlightened approach to this issue,” Ms Bomberger said.

The members of the delegation were briefed on ICMP’s unique Forensic Database Management System (fDMS) and on the organization’s operations in Forensic Anthropology, Forensic Archaeology, and Forensic Science. In addition to touring ICMP’s DNA laboratory in Sarajevo, they visited the Podrinje Identification Center and ICMP’s Identification Coordination Division in Tuzla.

During their visit, the Chilean experts briefed their ICMP counterparts on the effort underway in Chile to consolidate an effective and sustained system of locating and identifying missing persons.

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ICMP was created in 1996, following the G-7 Summit in Lyon, France. ICMP endeavors to secure the co-operation of governments and other authorities in locating and identifying persons missing as a result of armed conflicts, other hostilities or violations of human rights and to assist governments or authorities in doing so. Since its establishment in 1996 ICMP has been funded through voluntary grants, donations and contributions from the following participating Governments: Canada, Czech Republic, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, The Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, The United Kingdom, The United States of America and The European Union.

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