

Press Release

A 21st Century Challenge

Sarajevo, 13 November 2014 - A new section of the ICMP website came on-line today, making available a massive volume of information on the issue of missing persons throughout the world. “The Missing” section examines the underlying forces – war, migration, organized crime, even climate change – that have turned the problem of missing persons into a major 21st century challenge. It explores the nature and scale of the problem, examines legal, social and political interpretations of what constitutes a missing person, and reviews in detail developments related to missing persons in more than 60 countries.

“This new feature represents a significant expansion of the information provided on the ICMP website, and it also represents a major contribution to analyzing and understanding a pressing global challenge,” said ICMP Director-General Kathyne Bomberger. “Societies recovering from the trauma of conflict, for example, cannot make progress towards reconciliation and recovery as long as victims remain unaccounted for and those responsible for war crimes and enforced disappearances elude justice.”

“‘The Missing’ looks at the steps that have been taken – in some countries more successfully than in others – to tackle the missing persons issue. In many countries, the role and responsibility of the State is unclear; in others, the authorities themselves are complicit in illegal detentions and enforced disappearances; while others simply lack the capacity to find missing persons, for example, in the wake of natural disasters,” said Bomberger.

ICMP is the only international organization exclusively mandated to address the issue of missing persons. Over nearly two decades, it has developed a comprehensive approach that involves fostering the development of institutions that will address missing persons issues under the rule of law, empowering families of the missing, and applying modern scientific means such as DNA in a systematic and effective way as a key measure to assist countries in accounting for the missing.

“The information in this section makes clear that in the 21st century the issue of missing persons requires a global response,” said Bomberger. “As the authorities in Mexico come to terms with

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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an epidemic of disappearances related to organized crime and corruption and as European governments debate whether or not to rescue thousands of migrants from the Middle East and Africa who are shipwrecked in the Mediterranean every year – to take just two examples – it is increasingly clear that the multi-faceted nature of the global missing persons problem must be addressed in a manner that matches its scale and its complexity.”

“The Missing” section can accessed at <http://www.ic-mp.org>.

Editors, please find additional material about ICMP at www.ic-mp.org/media-center/

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