

the missing

Around the world today there are millions of reported cases of missing persons from armed conflict and human rights abuses. The problem of missing and disappeared persons has intensified in the course of the last two decades. Climate change and environmental degradation have led to natural disasters and mass migration. Political instability in many parts of the world has resulted in endemic human rights abuses and failures by states to uphold the rule of law. While the issue of missing persons is only one facet of a global deficit in human security, it is a crucial one. Failure by governments to account for large numbers of persons who go missing for involuntary reasons is a fundamental abrogation of the rule of law. State responsibility and action is therefore essential both domestically and internationally.

mandate

ICMP is an independent, treaty-based international organization, headquartered in The Hague, with more than 20 years of experience in 40 countries. It is the only international organization tasked exclusively to work on the issue of missing persons. It helps governments build rule-of-law institutions that successfully and impartially search for and identify missing persons, and it supports efforts to develop legislation to enable families of the missing to assert their rights. ICMP has assisted authorities in using advanced forensic techniques, including its pioneering use of modern DNA methods to locate and identify missing persons from a variety of circumstances in different parts of the world. ICMP maintains the world's only non-profit, high-throughput standing capacity to conduct large-scale, DNA-led human identification. ICMP also responds to requests for documentation and expert testimony from international and domestic courts on matters related to war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and other crimes under international law.

cross-cutting programs

ICMP operates five cross-cutting programs. **The Institution and Civil Society Development Program** contributes to transitional justice, provides legislative support, and supports the development of networks of civil society organizations that advocate for truth, justice and the rights of family members of missing persons. ICSD manages the Global Forum on Missing Persons, which brings together experts, government officials and other stakeholders from around the world to develop understanding and promote action on the issue of missing persons. **The Science and Technology Program** provides state-of-the-art technical solutions through direct technical assistance including training and capacity building, as well as high-throughput DNA identification testing, and expertise in archeology and anthropology. **The Data Systems Program** maintains ICMP's Identification Data Management System (iDMS), which collects, stores, protects and shares data on missing persons securely. The iDMS can be accessed from anywhere in the world by those who wish to provide information on missing persons, using ICMP's Online Inquiry Center. **The Justice Sector Assistance Program** supports international and domestic legislative initiatives to account for the missing, based on democratic processes and the rule of law. **The Center for Excellence and Training Program** enables the transfer of skills, strategies and best practice developed by ICMP. It runs training courses in DNA identification testing, advanced database informatics, excavation of mass and clandestine graves, chain-of-custody procedures and crime-scene management.

history

ICMP was created at the 1996 G-7 Summit to address the issue of persons missing as a consequence of the conflicts in the Western Balkans. It spearheaded an effort that made it possible to identify more than 70 percent of these victims, including 7,000 of the 8,000 who went missing at Srebrenica in July 1995. Starting in 2004, it began working globally. In 2014, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden and Luxembourg signed an international agreement establishing ICMP as an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in The Hague to respond to the global challenge of missing persons. The treaty has since been signed by Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, and Serbia and is open for accession by all states.

commissioners

ICMP's current Chair is former US Ambassador Thomas Miller. Its Commissioners are Her Majesty Queen Noor / Ambassador Knut Vollebæk, former Foreign Minister of Norway / Ambassador Rolf Ekéus, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities / Alistair Burt, UK Minister of State for the Middle East and Minister of State at the Department for International Development / Judge Sanji M. Monageng of the International Criminal Court / former Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders / former Foreign Minister of El Salvador Maria Eugenia Brizuela de Avila.

funding

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