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DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT

Kathryne Bomberger
Director-General
In 2017, ICMP secured long-term support from key donors and completed a comprehensive internal restructuring. We were able to place our cross-cutting programs and country programs on a solid and sustainable footing and move forward with an ambitious program to implement our global mandate: working with governments and other authorities to locate and identify persons missing as a result of conflicts, human rights abuses, disasters, organized violence and other causes.

Program funding from the EU, the US, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Ireland, the Czech Republic and Luxembourg allowed ICMP to launch a Syria program, augment its Iraq program, and launch a new project in Colombia and a Missing Migrants Program in the Mediterranean, while maintaining its program in Bosnia and Herzegovina and expanding its activities elsewhere in the Western Balkans.

On 24 October, we formally opened our new Headquarters and DNA laboratory in The Hague. Since establishing our presence in The Hague in 2015, we have systematically built up the headquarters function, and in 2017 we completed the inauguration of the state-of-the-art laboratory. The biotechnology company QIAGEN donated next-generation DNA lab facilities. QIAGEN is one of several leading companies with which ICMP has developed a relationship that has made it possible for us to stay at the cutting edge of forensic genetics. The Hague has given a warm welcome to ICMP, and we have responded by participating wholeheartedly in the institutional life of the city.

At the new Hague Headquarters there is now space for up to 20 staff on the administration floor, while, in addition to laboratory facilities, a full IT infrastructure has been established. A scaled down Corporate Services core team, along with Data Systems staff and data storage capacity, remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with a small number of Policy and Cooperation staff.

A salary and grading system that is standard in other international organizations was introduced, ensuring that ICMP salaries are paid according to a transparent and competitive scale and that skills and qualifications are properly recognized and rewarded.

Throughout the year, we worked hard to implement a core element of our mandate, namely to coordinate the activities of the international community in the field of missing
persons. On 18 December we organized the 2nd Inter-Agency Committee on Missing Persons in The Hague. The meeting took stock of the assistance that international agencies have provided to European Governments in their efforts to address the issue of missing migrants and examined strategies for making these efforts more timely and more effective.

During 2017, ICMP advanced its efforts to engage with stakeholders in Asia and in Central and South America, working on projects with partners in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Vietnam, El Salvador, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, among other places. Preliminary correspondence related to possible projects in Africa was also undertaken. From the continuing violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to Boko Haram activities in Nigeria and neighboring countries, counter-terrorism in Kenya, and migration across the whole of North Africa, the issue of missing persons is now recognized as a central element in diverse crises affecting the continent, and ICMP stands ready to work with families of the missing, government authorities, and other international agencies to tackle this problem.

With renewed funding and with our headquarters fully functioning, we were able to augment existing country programs and launch new programs in 2017.

The Iraq program became our largest field operation. During the year, we expanded our activities, setting in place systems that will help to identify those missing from Da’esh crimes. We promoted dialogue among stakeholders, among other things, helping to overcome the obstacles to providing assistance in the excavation of sites in Sinjar. In January 2017, we launched a Canadian-supported program to safeguard mass graves in areas of Iraq liberated from Da’esh occupation and respond to demands from victims’ families for justice and accountability. In February 2018, ICMP handed over the first DNA-based identification produced under the program to the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence (CIGE), which has its headquarters in Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, ICMP also worked with CIGE to enable its staff to facilitate DNA matching by accessing ICMP’s Identification Data Management System. At the same time, we monitored and mentored field activities of government personnel, carried out advanced training programs, and supported NGOs, mainly family organizations, through our small-grants program.
Meanwhile, ICMP launched a Syria Program, to gather missing persons information from displaced Syrians residing in countries neighboring Syria. ICMP staff participated in meetings with Syrian NGOs and legal experts and collaborated with the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) to coordinate a visit of Syrian groups to ICMP’s facilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to learn about that country’s successful approach to accounting for the missing. The Syria Program is being implemented among refugees and along migratory routes. Enabling families to access their rights to the truth, to justice and to reparation is fundamental to upholding the rule of law and will play a major role in any post-conflict settlement. The key aims of the program are to build capacity among families and others to participate in a process of accounting for persons who are missing as a result of conflict violence, displacement, migration, or arbitrary detention, to develop a participatory process of data collection among families, and to prepare the ground for a future rule-of-law-based effort to account for missing persons.

Steady progress was achieved in the Western Balkans during 2017. In early March, ICMP organized a meeting in London between His Royal Highness Prince Charles and representatives of the Regional Coordination of Families of the Missing at which family representatives highlighted the steps that are now necessary to account for the 12,000 people still missing across the region. A follow-up workshop was organized by ICMP and the UK embassy in Pristina at the end of March, implemented by UNDP.

The Parliament of Serbia ratified the ICMP Agreement in June 2017.

In November, ICMP and the BIH Missing Persons Institute announced the preliminary findings of the NN (Nomen Nescio / No Name) Working Group, which was set up in 2013 to review the large number of unidentified human remains in mortuaries throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among other things, the Working Group recommended that a comprehensive round of blood sample collection should be organized to collect samples from families whose relatives were identified before the introduction of DNA testing in 2001.

In Belgrade at the start of December, ICMP launched the Site Locator, a new on-line application that offers an accessible way for members of the public to provide information that may lead to the discovery of clandestine graves. At the same time, it launched the Database of active cases of missing persons from the territory of the former Yugoslavia,
in which Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo are all fully participating.

At a meeting with Prime Minister Edi Rama in Tirana on 29 September, ICMP invited Albania to sign the ICMP Treaty and discussed preparations for the launch of an EU-assisted program to help the Albanian authorities account for the missing from the 1945-91 period.

In Colombia, ICMP supported the legislative procedural and institutional process that will ensure that the institutions, especially the Search Unit, established under the 2016 peace agreement can operate successfully. Between April and September, ICMP Headquarters staff conducted three missions to Colombia, where they worked with a team of locally-hired consultants. At the end of October, ICMP submitted an assessment of the missing persons process, with recommendations for the future, to the new head of the Search Unit, Ms Luz Marina Monzon. These steps prepared the way for the launch of an ICMP field presence in Colombia in 2018.

Elsewhere in Latin America, ICMP worked with long-standing partners and developed new relationships.

On 14 September, we received an initial consignment of bone samples that will be analyzed under a program through which ICMP is helping the Brazilian authorities identify victims of enforced disappearance from the 1964-85 military dictatorship. Two more batches, of 200 samples each, were to be delivered in April and July 2018, and a further 250 samples were to be delivered in October 2018. Testing of all samples is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

In November, ICMP signed a partnership agreement with Citizens in Support of Human Rights (CADHAC), an organization in the northern Mexico state of Nuevo Leon that has developed an original and successful approach to addressing the issue of missing persons. ICMP also took advantage of the opportunity to discuss avenues of cooperation with senior officials in Mexico City. Mexico faces one of the world’s most severe missing persons challenges, and strategies developed by ICMP in other countries may prove to be effective there.
At the end of 2017, ICMP received funding from the governments of Switzerland that made it possible to launch a program to improve the capacities of countries in the Mediterranean, including Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus, to account for missing migrants. This is an area of strategic importance, for ICMP and for the world, since major migratory patterns, not just in the Mediterranean but in Central America, South Asia and elsewhere, have generated related missing persons crises.

Throughout 2017, in different circumstances around the world ICMP was able to deploy its cross-cutting programs energetically and effectively – this has delivered tangible results and has contributed to political stability and the rule of law.

Kathryne Bomberger
Director-General

Kathryne Bomberger
Director-General
In 2016, the ICMP Commissioners devoted considerable time and energy to the twin tasks of charting the organization's strategic direction and securing the funds that are needed so that ICMP can implement its global mandate. I am happy to report that substantial progress was made in both areas. The meeting at UN headquarters in New York at the start of the year gave an important boost to the process of formulating broad parameters for an effective international response to the challenge of missing persons. At the UN conference it became clear that there is a new awareness of the scale of the missing persons issue and – importantly – of the manner in which it affects a whole swathe of interconnected challenges facing the international community: the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, instability in many parts of Africa, the migration crises in the Mediterranean, and in Central America and South Asia. These unfolding tragedies have created large...
In the course of 2017, ICMP successfully completed the complex process of introducing new administrative, financial, communications and program structures. The provision of core funds by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Ireland and Luxembourg made it possible to complete the Headquarters transition, while funds from the EU, the US, the UK, Germany, Sweden and other donors enabled a substantial expansion in country programs.

As a voluntarily funded organization ICMP has to make the case for funding every year – and this is something we have been able and willing to do. Our operating budget in 2017 was US$ 10.3 million, and at the end of 2017 our country programs were fully funded through 2018 and some through 2019.

The small but efficient headquarters operation that we have established in The Hague will provide our programs with the support they need. Our model has been to focus on program implementation and we have been able to do this in a manner that meets all of our donor requirements and delivers tangible benefits to stakeholders – families of the missing, civil society, and authorities in countries that are grappling with extensive missing persons issues.

ICMP’s cross-cutting programs – Institution and Civil Society Development, Science and Technology, Data Systems and Coordination – and its thematic programs – Assistance to Justice, Disaster Victim Identification, Missing Migrants and Refugees, and the Center for Excellence and Training – enable a holistic response to a complex problem. It is a response that ICMP has honed and developed over more than 20 years in different parts of the world. It is a response that works.

During 2017, we launched programs in Colombia, where the 2016 Peace Agreement cited ICMP as a partner in establishing an effective post-conflict missing persons process, and among the Syrian diaspora, particularly in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, to establish structures that will make it possible to account for the missing from the Syrian conflict when a peace settlement comes into view. Also in 2017, we began preparing the way for a joint process under which countries can begin to share capacity and information to account for missing migrants.
At the same time, ICMP expanded its Iraq program, working on a variety of issues, including the effort to account for people who went missing in those parts of the country that were previously occupied by so-called Islamic State. And in the Western Balkans we helped the authorities to conduct a thorough review of unidentified remains in the country’s mortuaries. This is a process that we believe can deliver a significant number of new identifications.

At the end of the year, ICMP experienced a sudden and very personal loss. On 30 November, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, who had become a Commissioner only in June 2016, died of a heart attack. Dr Pitsuwan had engaged policymakers from ASEAN member states and other Asian nations in a dialogue on the issue of missing persons. He was an experienced and skillful diplomat; we are honored to have been – even for a short time – his colleagues.

In 2017, we ensured that ICMP, the only international organization that is exclusively tasked with addressing the global challenge of missing persons, is fit for purpose. As a result of this we have been able to justify the enormous hopes that have been placed in our organization, and we will continue to do so.

Ambassador (ret) Thomas J. Miller
Chair
I. ABOUT ICMP
I. ABOUT ICMP

ICMP works with governments, civil society organizations, judicial institutions, international organizations and others throughout the world to address the issue of missing and disappeared persons from armed conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, migration, organized crime and other causes.

As the only international organization that is exclusively dedicated to this issue, ICMP is actively engaged in developing institutional and civil society capacity, promoting legislation, fostering social and political advocacy, and developing and providing technical expertise to locate and identify the missing.

1.1. Governance

The Board of Commissioners oversees the work of ICMP. The Director-General manages and directs the organization, while cross-cutting programs are managed by directors. The Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons establishes a Conference of State Parties and a Financial Committee. To date, nine States have signed the Agreement and five have ratified: the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, El Salvador, Chile, Cyprus and Serbia. The following countries are observers in the Financial Committee: Canada, Germany, Switzerland and the United States. The following are observers in the Conference of States Parties: Canada, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), INTERPOL, the International Criminal Court (ICC).
1.2. Board of Commissioners

ICMP’s Board of Commissioners is chaired by Ambassador (ret) Thomas J. Miller and comprises distinguished individuals active in the fields of diplomacy and human rights.

In Memoriam

Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Foreign Minister of Thailand and Secretary-General of ASEAN, became an ICMP Commissioner in June 2016. Dr. Pitsuwan was actively involved in raising the profile of the missing persons issue in Asia. He played a proactive role at the annual meeting of the Commissioners in Stockholm in June 2017, bringing valuable expertise particularly in the context of supranational structures in Asia and elsewhere. He died of a heart attack on 30 November 2017 in Bangkok at the age of 68. He was, as ICMP Director-General Kathryne Bomberger noted at the time, “effective and resourceful and quickly identified strategies that had the greatest likelihood of enabling ICMP to contribute to the effort to address the issue of missing persons in Asia.”
Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt
UK government minister and Member of Parliament. ICMP Commissioner since December 2013.

H.E. Ambassador Rolf Ekéus
Former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. ICMP Commissioner since April 2005.

Judge Sanji Monageng

Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan
ICMP Commissioner since June 2001.

H.E. Wim Kok
Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands. ICMP Commissioner since June 2002.

H.E. Ambassador Knut Vollebaek
Former Norwegian Foreign Minister. ICMP Commissioner since September 2013.
1.3. Conference of State Parties

The Conference of State Parties (CSP) represents State Parties to the Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons. The ICMP Board of Commissioners and the Director-General invite the CSP to meet at least once every three years. The CSP considers ICMP’s reports on activities, proposes policy directives for the Board of Commissioners’ program of work, and recommends to State Parties measures to advance the aims of the Commission.

Non-State Parties, and international or other organizations may be invited to participate in meetings of the CSP as observers.

1.4. Financial Committee

Article V of the Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons establishes a Financial Committee to represent State Parties that have supported ICMP financially during a reporting period. The Financial Committee considers ICMP’s report on activity for the past year and the coming year, adopts recommendations relating to ICMP’s financial management, and reviews and approves ICMP’s Financial Regulations and reporting format.

Meeting in The Hague on 29 May 2017, the Financial Committee noted that ICMP’s Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2016, formulated in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards, had received an unqualified audit opinion and that ICMP’s funding strategy stresses the importance of establishing long-term financing agreements with key donor countries to cover core costs. Capacity to initiate new programs was discussed in light of the fact that all resources are directly or indirectly linked to ICMP’s cross-cutting or country programs. Participants expressed support for ICMP’s successful initiative to bring its personnel policies into line with other international organizations.
II. WHAT WE DO
ICMP is the only international organization that is exclusively dedicated to the issue of missing persons
II. WHAT WE DO

ICMP works with governments to develop or enhance institutional capacity to address the issue of missing persons efficiently and impartially. It helps in the drafting of legislation and other policy instruments to safeguard the rights of families of the missing, and it works to empower civil society organizations to advocate for victims’ rights.

ICMP also directly assists governments in their efforts to conduct missing persons investigations. It has been involved in the excavation of more than 3,000 mass and clandestine gravesites and the application of advanced forensic techniques in more than 40 countries.

ICMP maintains and offers to its partners a unique, specialized online database, the Identification Data Management System (iDMS), which manages all data pertaining to its missing persons process. ICMP also operates the world’s leading high-throughput DNA human identification facility. To date, as many as 20,000 missing persons from around the world have been identified with the assistance of ICMP’s forensic science capability.

ICMP’s key activities are implemented through its cross-cutting programs.
III. CROSS-CUTTING AND THEMATIC PROGRAMS

3.1. Civil Society Initiatives

ICMP helps domestic and international authorities to implement effective missing persons processes. It assists governments in building national capacities, ensuring public involvement and addressing the needs of judicial institutions. It helps in the creation of law-based, sustainable structures that are transparent, inclusive and accountable. It promotes State ownership of the missing persons process, thereby strengthening national institutions, reinforcing the rule of law, and enhancing public trust. ICMP seeks to secure the rights of survivors and families of the missing to justice and social and economic benefits. It encourages the active participation of civil society and in particular the families of the missing through education, training and grant-making programs aimed at empowering family members and others. It works with survivor groups to rebuild trust between rival groups and, with states in transition, to ensure that civil society participates in the creation of institutions, legislation and memorialization relevant to missing persons. ICMP also responds to requests for assistance from civil society actors.
3.2. Science and Technology

ICMP’s DNA identification system established the concept of large-scale DNA-led human identification processes. ICMP provides standing capacity for highly specialized missing persons casework that constitutes a major portion of the world’s throughput capabilities, and has been widely utilized in many instances of mass disaster, post-conflict identification, and human rights investigation. ICMP’s technical programs also include expertise in forensic archaeology and anthropology.

3.3. Data Systems and Cooperation

ICMP develops and implements data systems related to missing persons through its iDMS, which makes it possible to centralize, collect, document, standardize, store, protect and share information concerning the process of locating and identifying missing persons worldwide. ICMP makes the iDMS available to government authorities and others engaged in missing persons investigations and provides training in its use. The iDMS can be accessed through the Online Inquiry Center (OIC), which makes it possible to report a missing person from anywhere in the world, and to follow progress that has been made in the reported case. The OIC provides partner organizations – including
NGOs, law enforcement, government authorities, and courts – with secure access to data on locating and identifying the missing. The design of the iDMS platform facilitates collaboration and integration of information from various jurisdictions, which is necessary to resolve cases of missing persons that take place in a trans-border or an international context. ICMP’s data systems abide by the highest standards of data protection.

3.4. Assistance to Justice

As its specific mandate and functions are increasingly incorporated in global initiatives, ICMP actively engages with governments to support a rule-of-law-based approach to investigating enforced disappearances and cases of missing persons. ICMP provides expert evidence and other specialized forensic capacity, including testimony, reports and depositions for court cases. ICMP has provided evidence in 30 criminal trials to both international and domestic courts. In November 2017, the sentencing of Ratko Mladic by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) highlighted the capacity of international justice mechanisms to establish the facts surrounding war crimes and to punish perpetrators. ICMP staff have on numerous occasions provided expert testimony at the ICTY, including at the Mladic trial.

3.5. Center for Excellence and Training

ICMP’s key program activities include training in the application of specific thematic competencies. The Center for Excellence and Training (CET) provides standardized learning and development resources that include readily available and peer reviewed presentations and documented sets of information material. The CET maintains guidelines on defining learning needs, and on effective delivery of training, coaching, mentoring and continuous professional development, to government representatives engaged in the missing persons process, family members of the missing and other civil society representatives, and prosecutors and court appointed experts. The CET is also a mechanism for the dissemination of ICMP’s cutting-edge technical developments, including new systems based on Massively Parallel DNA Sequencing, as well as standards and policies spanning technical subject matter, and such issues as civil society, governance and data protection. ICMP maintains training programs in its country missions and in its HQ.
3.6. Missing Migrants Program

In June 2017, ICMP launched its Missing Migrants Program. Thousands of people have gone missing trying to cross the Mediterranean since 2014, while untold numbers have perished in North Africa on the dangerous smuggling routes to the coast. In 2017, a new and horrific aspect of this mass migration was revealed, as new reports documented systematic migrant enslavement.

Families of missing migrants are routinely left without news of their relatives’ fate. The uncertainty and pain experienced by thousands of surviving families in countries of origin and in Europe as a result of insufficient investigative and cooperative capacities, and the huge number of migrants who have gone missing underpin the urgent necessity of addressing this problem and setting in place effective remedial measures.

Efforts to tackle the issue and provide support for the families who are left behind are severely hampered by a lack of basic information. The bodies of deceased migrants are often not found, and if they are found, identification is in many cases difficult since irregular migrants by necessity often travel without documents and their families may not report them missing.
States are obliged to investigate the fate and whereabouts of missing persons in an effective way, including the circumstances of their disappearance, inter alia, under Articles 2 (right to life) and 3 (prohibition of torture) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); especially as migrant deaths often relate to criminal activity, including war crimes and trafficking in human beings. The high number of persons who have gone missing as a result of the migration crisis carries the real risk of compromising fundamental guarantees affecting the families of the missing, and thus potentially undermining the rule of law.

ICMP’s Missing Migrants Program aims to strengthen the capacity of government authorities in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Malta, and, over the longer term, in other countries, to locate and identify individuals who have gone missing as a result of migration across the Mediterranean. In support of this overall goal, ICMP began efforts in 2017 to establish a joint operational group of European government authorities to investigate the fate of missing migrants and the circumstances of their disappearance in the Mediterranean region, to map national and regional processes and current capacities to address the fate of missing persons in the region, to improve the capacity of domestic authorities to manage data, including data in support of DNA comparisons and other types of investigation, and to support a unified system for processing data on persons missing as a result of migration.

On 18 December, International Migrants Day, ICMP announced that the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland had granted 400,000 USD to support ICMP’s Missing Migrants Program in 2018 and 2019.

3.7. Disaster Victim Identification

Since 2004, working in collaboration with Interpol, ICMP has engaged in Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) operations around the world.

It is in the nature of many events that generate large numbers of missing persons – conflict, migration, natural disasters – that multiple jurisdictions are involved, and effective responses demand a high degree of international coordination. To this end, INTERPOL and ICMP have developed a permanent “DVI Platform” to serve as a global resource for the coordination and conduct of DVI operations.
In DVI, generally, the challenge is often focused on the need to make identifications from few or distant relatives, and on the need for high-throughput extraction automation, two areas in which ICMP, working with a range of technology partners, is a world leader. During 2017, ICMP explored cooperation agreements with a number of partners, including the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management, to deliver DVI responses.

### 3.8. Cooperation

ICMP maintains partnerships with a number of other international organizations and NGOs. Cooperation with other organizations is key to address the complex challenge of missing persons. Currently, ICMP maintains agreements with the International Organization for Migration, INTERPOL and the International Criminal Court. In addition, in 2016, ICMP launched the Inter-Agency Committee on Missing Persons, which includes a number of organizations, including, IOM, INTERPOL, the ICC, the ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF and Europol.

ICMP also works with a number of NGOs and universities and is seeking to expand these relationships during 2018 through its Civil Society Initiatives program.
IV. THE MISSING
ICMP works with governments, civil society organizations, justice institutions, international organizations and others throughout the world to address the issue of people who have gone missing as a result of armed conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, organized crime and other causes.
IV. THE MISSING

From its origins in the Western Balkans in 1996 through its operations in other parts of the world, ICMP has been at the forefront of developing an entirely new way of looking at the issue of missing persons. Since the beginning of 2016, conferences organized by ICMP at the United Nations in New York and within the context of its Profiles of the Missing series have demonstrated very clearly that a new global consensus on this issue is emerging.

First, there is an understanding that the challenge of missing persons, like the comparable challenges of organized crime, of drug smuggling, of people trafficking, is a distinct phenomenon. Deeply woven into a matrix of related problems – political instability, military conflict, climate change, government corruption – it must nonetheless be understood as a stand-alone issue. This is key to effective action.

Second, a range of tried and tested responses to the issue of missing persons has been developed and these responses can be deployed systematically.

Third, effective strategies often depend on transnational cooperation.

In countries such as Sri Lanka, Mexico, Colombia, Syria and Iraq, where the numbers of missing persons range from the tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands, addressing this issue is an essential component in resolving major political and societal challenges. The actual number of missing persons translates into an exponentially larger group of citizens – relatives, friends, neighbors, and workmates – which means that addressing this issue is a prerequisite for constructive social dialogue.

This is why a sustainable approach to the issue of missing persons must be rooted in the rule of law. It must be based on rights. When governments act to account for missing persons, they aren’t simply adopting a progressive and pragmatic political option: they are fulfilling their mandatory obligations under international and domestic law.
The process of accounting for the missing is significantly more effective when families of the missing – civil society – work in partnership with the relevant authorities. This cooperation may be purely pragmatic – it may take decades before the vocabulary of forgiveness and reconciliation becomes appropriate – but it will nonetheless deliver tangible results in the short and medium term.

The use of modern forensic methods and the creation of dedicated databases have made it possible to locate and identify missing persons with a level of efficiency and certainty that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

However, as strategies have been honed, the practical challenges have mutated and multiplied. For example, while the number of migrants going missing in the Mediterranean declined slightly in 2017, new missing persons cases emerged from migration-related people trafficking and human slavery in North Africa. At the same time, the forced migration of Rohingya from Rakhine state in Myanmar raised the prospect of a corresponding spike in the number of missing persons, particularly missing children, creating a new missing persons crisis in Southeast Asia.

Throughout 2017, conditions in Syria, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other places around the world ensured that the number of people who disappeared in violent circumstances continued at unimaginably high levels. Meanwhile, countries such as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Nepal, which have a significant historical legacy of missing persons, struggled to establish and implement agreed strategies and provide the possibility of justice to families of the missing.

ICMP is working to ensure that in these and other countries the issue of missing persons is tackled effectively and that this is understood to be an indispensable part of guaranteeing the rule of law for all.

In 2017 ICMP reached out to observer and donor governments, governments in program areas, and to third countries inviting them to accede to the ICMP Agreement. To ensure broader participation in the interim, ICMP has invited a number of countries to participate in the Conference of States Parties and where appropriate in its Financial Committee as observers. It is planned to enlarge observer participation further. Reopening the treaty for signature is also an item of discussion that ICMP may propose to its original signatory parties.
4.1. Profiles of the Missing

Profiles of the Missing is a series of international panel discussions on the global challenge of missing persons. The first Profiles event was held in The Hague in July 2016. A second event was organized in Stockholm in June 2017.

In the Profiles discussion format, family members who have missing loved ones as a result of conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, organized crime, forced migration and other causes describe their personal experience and explain the social and political strategies they have developed in order to seek truth, justice and reparation. As well as exploring the emotional toll of not knowing the fate of a loved one and the negative consequences that survivors often face when reporting a missing person or when dealing with the authorities in the aftermath of a disappearance, discussion may examine how survivors can assert their rights. Profiles also considers the mechanisms that exist at the international and domestic levels to address the issue of missing and disappeared persons and reviews effective strategies based on a modern, rights-based, rule-of-law approach.

Profiles of the Missing events are a forum in which families of the missing can describe their personal experience and interact with policymakers.
On 1 June 2017, speaking at the Profiles of the Missing event in Stockholm, Her Majesty Queen Noor stressed that concrete and effective scientific, legal, political and social strategies can help governments and stakeholders to account for the hundreds of thousands of people who go missing as a result of conflict, disasters and other causes.

The Stockholm meeting was hosted by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and included speakers from Iraq, Syria, Sweden, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Commissioners of the ICMP.
V. FEATURED PROGRAMATIC RESULTS
V. FEATURED PROGRAMATIC RESULTS

5.1. Europe

5.1.1. Albania

Launch of Albania Program

ICMP Director-General Kathryne Bomberger met Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama in Tirana on 29 September 2017 to discuss next steps in establishing a program to help the government of Albania to account for those who went missing during the Communist period (1945 to 1991) and other cases of missing persons. After this, ICMP worked closely with the Ministry of Interior of Albania to finalize the text of a Cooperation Agreement that will regulate ICMP’s assistance to Albania and detail the privileges and immunities that are necessary for ICMP to fulfil its functions in Albania.

The initial phase of the project will include efforts to identify missing persons recovered from the mass grave discovered near Mount Dajti northeast of Tirana in 2010 and from a site in Ballsh in southern Albania.

The ICMP program to assist Albania is funded by the European Union.
5.1.2. Sweden

Remembering Swedish victims of the Southeast Asian tsunami

On 2 June, following their annual meeting, the ICMP Commissioners visited the site in Stockholm where a memorial to the Swedish victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was being developed. They joined relatives of the victims and members of the jury of the competition for the design of the memorial site, and the authorities from the Södra Djurgårdens Park and took part in a short ceremony remembering victims. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, ICMP helped identify more than 900 individuals. Among these, ICMP helped to identify 42 of the 543 Swedish victims.
Profile: Ingrid Gudmundsson

Ingrid Gudmundsson is a retired Mathematics teacher from Akersberga outside Stockholm. Her daughter and grand-daughter, and her former husband went missing in Thailand as a result of the December 2004 tsunami. Immediately after the tsunami, Ingrid launched an aid project for children from the town of Khao Lak, near Phuket, where her daughter, Linda, and her grand-daughter, Mira, had disappeared. Linda had returned to Khao Lak from a visit to China, where she had bought materials for the jewelry that she was making. She and Mira were among 36 Swedes, including Ingrid’s former husband, who were staying in resorts at Khao Lak. Of the 36, only 11 survived. Ingrid’s former husband was identified using DNA in February 2005, her daughter was identified in March and her grand-daughter in July of the same year.

Ingrid visited Khao Lak five times in the first year and has returned every year since. Over the last 12 years, her charity, “Indahjälpen” (http://indahjalpen.se.), has supported the Ban Bangsak School in Khao Lak and the students there, especially 21 “godchildren”. They also support another program, the “Life Home Project” outside Phuket Town, a center for young women and children who have AIDS or are infected with HIV.

“After two weeks, I thought I must do something. I was in shock. I read about Thai children who had lost their parents.” She set out to find Tsunami victims who weren’t receiving direct international aid. On her first visit to Khao Lak, she and her other daughter, Anna, delivered a “school kit”, the notebooks and pens and other basic items that children would need on their first day at school. Ingrid set about raising money to help students who had lost at least one parent (many had lost both). The charity pays the salary of five teachers and has raised funds for 21 pupils that can be accessed on their 19th birthday, giving them the means to go to university if they so choose.
5.1.3. Western Balkans

Database of Open Missing Persons Cases

The Regional Database of Active Missing Persons Cases began several years ago under the aegis of ICMP. The Database will boost efforts to account for the roughly 12,000 people who are still missing: it is a mechanism by which countries can share their own data with others in a transparent manner and receive updates in real time.

In January 2017, the Ministry of Croatian Defenders and ICMP signed an agreement on the participation of Croatia in the Database. ICMP had already concluded agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro, and signed an agreement with Serbia at the end of 2017.

The Database ensures that the data is accessible and searchable by the competent authorities in participating countries on the basis that these authorities reciprocally provide their data relative to active missing persons cases for inclusion in the Database.
Launch of Site Locator

On 29 June, ICMP launched a new on-line application called the “Site Locator” to assist in locating sites, such as mass or clandestine graves. The Site Locator is intended for global use, but was initially launched in the Western Balkans. It is an easy-to-use application that can be accessed at ICMP’s Online Inquiry Center. Information can be provided anonymously, or may include contact details.

The Site Locator is part of ICMP’s Identification Data Management System (iDMS).

HRH the Prince of Wales meets families of the missing

On 8 March, at a meeting facilitated by ICMP’s Western Balkans Program, HRH the Prince of Wales met relatives of the missing from Southeast Europe at Clarence House in London. Family representatives explained the steps that must be taken in order to maintain the effort to account for those who are still missing. HRH reiterated his view that dealing with the issue of the missing is a fundamental and indispensable element in successful and sustained recovery from conflict.

A follow-up workshop was organized by ICMP and the British embassy in Pristina, on 29 March implemented by UNDP.
**Kosovo Stocktaking**

On 28 April, ICMP presented its third Kosovo Stocktaking Report at a press conference in Pristina. The previous Stocktaking Reports were published in 2005 and 2010. The report provides a detailed account of progress in accounting for those who went missing during the conflict, together with recommendations on how more progress can be made.

In the 17 years since the end of the conflict, more than 6,000 cases of human remains have been recovered on the territory of Kosovo, and almost 900 on the territory of Serbia. Since 2002, more than 2,500 missing persons cases have been resolved through the use of effective forensic work, including DNA testing. Approximately 2,000 cases were identified by traditional methods, including visual identifications prior to 2002. Today, the number of missing persons is estimated to be more than 1,600.

One of the challenges that must be addressed is to resolve the issue of up to 400 sets of unidentified remains in Pristina Mortuary, which may be the result of misidentifications in 1999 and 2000, before DNA testing was introduced as the primary means of human identification.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina: NN (Nomen Nescio / No Name) Project**

On 30 November 2017, ICMP and the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina announced the preliminary results of the NN (Nomen Nescio / No Name) Working Group, set up in 2013 to review cases of unidentified remains in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s 12 mortuaries. The MPI, the prosecutors’ offices and ICMP continue to work proactively and systematically to find clandestine graves and follow up with exhumation and DNA identification – but since 2009, despite the innovative use of aerial imagery and other techniques, the number of clandestine graves that have been found has decreased annually. ICMP believes that there is a very strong possibility that many of the unidentified human remains stored in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s 12 mortuaries are a legacy of the period prior to 2001 when individuals were identified on the basis of visual recognition, which had a high risk of error that could potentially result in misidentification. On the basis of this hypothesis, in 2013, the BIH Chief Prosecutor ordered a review of all the unidentified
cases in mortuaries in order to establish the scope of technical problems and at the same time examine why it has not been possible for over a decade to match the DNA profiles from human remains in the mortuaries to 8,000 reported cases of missing persons, for which families of the missing had provided sufficient reference samples. The preliminary results show that 115 persons have been identified, and the remains of 948 persons who have already been identified through the use of DNA, have been re-associated, meaning that bones from the same skeleton were identified and can now be interred with the rest of that person’s remains. This still leaves thousands unidentified – but it points very clearly to the presumption that a large number of identifications made before the introduction of DNA testing in 2001 may have been incorrect.

During 2017, the MPI, with ICMP assistance, was in direct contact with family associations throughout the country to ask families that did not provide blood samples – since their relatives had already been identified using traditional methods – to do so. ICMP secured EU funding to facilitate this additional blood collection through a targeted pilot project.
By the end of 2017, ICMP had completed the initial review and sampling of approximately 3,000 NN cases, containing close to 6,500 sets of human remains, stored in the 12 mortuary facilities across BIH. The issue of NN cases is regional: as well as 3,000 such cases in BIH, Croatia has more than 900 NN cases, Kosovo around 400 and Serbia reports 450. ICMP estimates that one quarter of the approximately 12,000 active missing persons cases can be resolved through a joint regional effort made by national partners to resolve the interrelated issues of NN cases and misidentifications which occurred prior to ICMP’s introduction of a DNA-led process in 2001.

Profile: Kada Hotic

Kada Hotic lost fifty members of her extended family in the Srebrenica Genocide, including her husband, her son, her two brothers and her brother-in-law. Kada is the Vice President of the Mothers of Srebrenica Association. Dynamic and forthright, she says she became involved in the association as a way of coping with grief. “I’m working to ensure that what happened is not forgotten, and helping others too. While I have life, I will do everything in my power to tell the truth to those who will listen.”

Kada highlights the role of survivors’ associations in campaigning for the Podrinje Identification Project (PIP) to be established in 1999 so that human remains recovered from mass graves in the Srebrenica region could be stored with dignity ahead of identification. Located in Tuzla, the PIP conducts human remains analysis and DNA sampling, and coordinates the identification process for missing persons from Srebrenica. In 2010, ICMP handed over the management of the PIP to the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Tuzla municipal government.

Kada was one of a group of family representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina who visited The Hague in November 2017 to see ICMP’s new DNA laboratory system. “ICMP is the greatest gift we could have had,” she says. “With ICMP, we’ve literally uncovered the truth about genocide and the truth cannot be denied. We are grateful to ICMP because it helped us to unearth the truth.”
Kada’s family members were identified using DNA. “Of my son’s remains I only have three small bones,” she says. “Imagine when I think of these things and he’s my child.” She adds that her husband’s remains were found with gunshot wounds. “He had a silver pocket watch and a bullet went through the watch and at half past four the watch stopped working. I believe that’s when his heart stopped.”
5.2. Latin America and the Caribbean

5.2.1. Brazil

Identifying Sao Paulo mass grave victims

In September, ICMP and the Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappearances, part of the Brazilian Ministry of Human Rights, signed an agreement under which ICMP will assist the Brazilian authorities with the identification of victims of enforced disappearance from the 1964-85 military dictatorship.

A clandestine mass grave was discovered in the Perus cemetery in Sao Paolo in 1990. The remains of about 1,047 individuals, buried between 1971 and 1975, were found in the grave. They were subsequently moved, and some were kept in suboptimal conditions at a city ossuary.

The Perus Working Group was established in September 2014, bringing legal, and scientific personnel together with families of the missing to spearhead a coordinated attempt to identify the remains.

Biological samples were sent from Brazil to ICMP’s laboratory system.
In February 2018, the Perus Working Group announced the first identification of a victim buried at the cemetery, Dimas Antonio Casemiro, who was killed by agents of the military regime in April 1971. The identification was confirmed following analysis of biological samples sent from Brazil to ICMP’s laboratory system.

ICMP’s capacity to process such a large number of post-mortem samples, and samples that have been subject to the severe degradation that results from improper storage and the passage of time, will help Brazil in this complex case, in which a very large number of degraded bone samples will have to be processed.

Profile: Dr. Samuel Ferreira

Dr. Samuel Ferreira is the Scientific Coordinator of Brazil’s Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappearances and the scientific coordinator of the Perus Working Group.

“I collect every family blood sample myself, accompanied by a representative of the Special Commission,” he says, stressing that the identification project is premised on the needs and aspirations of the families of the missing. “We go when and where the families want us to go. We collect samples according to the wishes of the family and with the formal consent of the family.” Dr Ferreira also notes that family members have full access to the different stages of the identification process and participate in meetings that are held with project staff every three months to discuss next steps. The families were directly involved in the working group’s decision to seek ICMP’s assistance in identifying remains from the Perus cemetery.

“Brazil has excellent official DNA laboratories,” Dr Ferreira says “but we do not work on a large scale and with large numbers of severely degraded bone samples. In this case, we have around 1,300 bone samples to be processed and many of them are degraded samples, so we needed a laboratory to work in partnership that could process the samples within the timeframe the project requires. I am sure that we will have a very productive and successful partnership with ICMP.”
5.2.3. Colombia

Helping Colombia to establish the Search Unit for missing persons

ICMP first became engaged in Colombia in 2008 following a request by the Prosecutor’s Office. Following this, ICMP was invited by the parties to the Final Peace Agreement to support Colombia’s efforts to address the missing persons issue (ICMP’s role is outlined in Joint Communiqué 62 of October 2015 and in points 5 and 6 of the Final Peace Agreement). The Agreement, and the process set in motion through the Integral System for Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non Repetition (SIJVRNR), recognizes the central role of victims and civil society organizations in accounting for missing persons. ICMP was specifically mandated to assist in setting up the Search Unit and to help it to become fully operational. The work of the Search Unit is critical to the process of accounting for missing persons from the 50-year conflict. ICMP received funding from Sweden and Germany in 2017 to assess the emerging missing persons process, with a focus on assisting the Search Unit in its start-up phase. ICMP met with the Director of the Search Unit, Luz Marina Monzón, in October 2017 to present its assessment and proposed program. During 2017, ICMP prepared a roadmap for securing support from relevant institutions to improve the coordination of different agencies working on the missing persons issue together with the Search Unit. This effort was built on ICMP’s success in bringing...
Colombian institutions together to work on complex technical issues during its 2008-2010 program (which included the adoption of a unified consent form, unification of technical protocols, the reinvigoration of the work of the Search Commission, the adoption in 2009 of a national policy on missing persons through CONPES 3590, and the drafting of the emblematic Law 1408 of 2010 on Homage to Victims of Forced Disappearance).

5.2.4. Working with civil society in Mexico

In November 2017, ICMP signed an agreement with Citizens in Support of Human Rights (CADHAC), a civil society group based in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo Leon. Under the agreement, ICMP will make its Identification Data Management System (iDMS) available to CADHAC so that the organization can upload and systematize its existing database of 1,800 missing persons cases and add new information in an efficient and secure manner. The database includes information on the missing person, relatives, the place where the person disappeared and the context of the disappearance, among other details. Only family members and those they authorize have access.
ICMP has been working with CADHAC since 2014, assisting efforts by family groups and other NGOs and the Attorney General’s office in Nuevo Leon to account for missing persons. ICMP has focused on developing institutional capacities and activities that will sustain cooperation among government agencies, civil society and families of the missing.

Profile: Sister Consuelo

At 70 years old, Sister Consuelo Morales projects a remarkable combination of energy and compassion. A native of Monterrey, she spent time working with disadvantaged communities in Vera Cruz and in Mexico City before returning to Nuevo Leon in 1992. Along with other nuns and social activists, she founded CADHAC (Ciudadanos en Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos) the following year.

CADHAC’s mission is to help people who have been wrongfully imprisoned, and to offer assistance to families of the disappeared. It has developed an innovative operating method that brings together families of victims, civil society and the authorities.
“Collaborative work makes the difference in CADHAC’s approach,” Sister Consuelo says. “All the actors – families of victims, authorities and organized civil society – working together in this mechanism of transparency, accountability and the battle for justice are an exceptional example of collaborative practice. In a country like Mexico, civil society does not tend to trust the authorities and the authorities do not usually work or interact with civil society, at least not in an effective way.”

By promoting a collaborative approach, CADHAC has been able to change the way the issue of the missing is viewed by the general public, by the police, by prosecutors and by the judicial authorities. This has resulted in the introduction of more systematic and effective ways of investigating cases of disappearance and prosecuting those responsible.

According to Sister Consuelo, “The success of this dynamic has been the openness to accountability and the political will of state officials, in a context where these actions are not common, together with the active participation of and pressure from a civil society organization on the authorities to fulfill their duties. Also, the active participation of victims’ families has been very important, because their courage to battle for justice and truth is the motor that drives our work to demand that the authorities fulfill their obligations.”
5.3. Middle East and North Africa

5.3.1. Iraq

During 2017, ICMP maintained its three-pronged approach to addressing the issue of missing persons in Iraq: institutional reform and legislative assistance, civil society and family engagement, and forensic technical assistance and support in DNA-led Identifications.

ICMP facilitated efforts to create a central structure to search for all missing persons, regardless of background, circumstances, or timeframe of disappearance. It also worked with partners to promote initiatives that can help strengthen the role of the courts, and it worked with ministries throughout Iraq to help establish a Central Record of Missing Persons, using ICMP’s Identification Data Management System (iDMS) and Online Inquiry Center (OIC), which will allow all families of the missing to report a missing person.

ICMP held a number of roundtables, workshops and working group meetings in Baghdad and Erbil in 2017 and promoted efforts to advance implementing legislation under the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPPED).

ICMP proposed an agreement with the Commission for Investigation & Gathering Evidence (CIGE) established by the Kurdistan Regional Government in September 2014 to document Da’esh crimes against Yezidis. The agreement, signed at the beginning of 2018, will provide access to ICMP’s Identification Data Management System (iDMS), and ICMP will provide CIGE with an Ante-Mortem Data Questionnaire adjusted to conform to CIGE’s mandate.

ICMP will provide CIGE with support in data entry and data analysis through training activities. In addition, ICMP will assist CIGE in developing and implementing relevant Standard Operating Procedures and Chain of Custody provisions, including relevant forms, as well as ensuring the secure archiving of documentation and retention of samples. At a workshop organized by ICMP in Erbil on 25 October, participating
organizations from Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region explored ways of
strengthening civil society advocacy, and on 10 December, Human Rights Day, ten
of ICMP’s civil society partners in Iraq issued a joint statement pledging to work
together towards truth, justice and reparations.

In their statement, the civil society organizations noted that the missing persons issue
spans geographic, cultural, social and religious borders, and that since a majority of
those who go missing are men, it is women and children who have to live with the
consequences, and their rights are routinely ignored.

ICMP maintained its training program for Iraqi officials working on the missing
persons issues and provided on-site monitoring and mentoring in forensic best
practice, including assisting the work to retrieve human remains from the 2014
Da’esh massacre of Iraqi security personnel at Camp Speicher in Tikrit. ICMP also
provided direct technical assistance, including DNA-matching that identified a Yezidi
woman from Sinjar.

Profile: Judge Ayman

Judge Ayman Mostafa heads the Commission for Investigation and Gathering
Evidence (CIGE) established by the Kurdistan Regional Government in September
2014 to document Da’esh crimes against Yezidis and other ethnic and
religious groups

Judge Ayman, 40, studied Forensic Criminology in the UK and public policy in South
Korea. He was a Judge of the First Instance court in Deralok, Dohuk Governate.

“We are working to gather and document the evidence that recognizes and
identifies the crimes committed by Da’esh members against civilians in Sinjar and
surrounding areas,” he says. “Victims come to register a complaint against Da’esh
members and we record the details of their suffering during abductions, attempted
murder, sexual enslavement, rape, displacement, forced conversion to Islam and
child soldiers.”
Asked about the biggest obstacles facing CIGE, Judge Ayman alludes to the lack of coordination among government agencies and the instability in the areas where field work is undertaken. However, he says the Commission is able to carry out its core tasks: “CIGE can provide the families with support throughout the identification process by building sustainable bridges of relationship with families based on trust and confidence.”

ICMP has been able to help CIGE, by sharing two decades of experience in accounting for the missing and by deploying “a team of experts equipped with technology that facilitates the required time and effort for the identification of missing persons,” he says.

Judge Ayman stresses that “in parallel with the legal tasks of determining the cause of death in order to bring justice to families, there is always a humanitarian perspective in every case: each individual should help grieving families to cope with and heal from their loss.”
Profile: Dalal Ali Khairo, a member of the Yezidi community in Iraqi Kurdistan

At ICMP’s Profiles of the Missing event in Stockholm in June 2017, Dalal Ali Khairo, a member of the Yezidi community in Iraqi Kurdistan, gave moving testimony on the plight of women and girls after the Da’esh occupation of Sinjar in August 2014.

Dalal was 16 when she, her mother and sisters were abducted by Da’esh militants. She spent a year in captivity before she escaped. She described her experiences in “Shrin – I Will Remain the Daughter of the Light”, published in 2016 in Germany.

She stressed that “ISIS committed these atrocities not knowing that one day we would be able to tell all of this to you.” Accounting for the missing involves the public exposure of perpetrators and the long-term prospect of justice, she said.

Dalal was living with her father and four siblings when Da’esh took over the town. “We were told by a Sunni neighbour that we should not be afraid for our lives, because they would not do us any harm,” she explained to Britain’s Independent newspaper. However, male members of the families, including Dalal’s 16-year-old brother Fauaz, were separated from the women and children and taken away. No trace has ever been found but evidence of mass graves found in the area suggests
they were systematically massacred by militants. Dalal’s nine-year-old brother was among the younger boys forced to become child soldiers, while being trained as suicide bombers and fighters.

Dalal, her mother and two sisters were forced to hand over their money, jewellery, mobile phones and belongings before older women were forced into household labour and the younger ones distributed to the Da’esh strongholds of Raqqa, Mosul and Tal Afar.

When Da’esh’s military defeat made it possible to escape, Dalal went to Dohuk, where she found her father alive with remaining family members. She volunteered for the German International Society for Human Rights and helped distribute aid to refugees. Aid workers volunteered her name for a quota of Yezidi women resettled to Germany by the local government in Baden-Württemberg, which took her in alongside more than 1,000 survivors.

More than 500 former inhabitants of her hometown have already been found in mass graves. Dalal’s mother was taken to Syria by Da’esh, at least one brother is dead and her younger sister is still missing.
5.3.2. Syria: Launch of Syria Program

During 2017, ICMP established a Syria Program, which is being implemented among refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Libya and Iraq and along migratory routes. Under the program, an exercise was undertaken to map civil society organizations working on issues related to Syria, and study trips to ICMP’s offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina were organized for Syrian legal experts in November 2017 and for members of the Syrian NGO Families for Freedom in December 2017. The Program seeks to build capacity in affected communities to engage proactively in and sustain a process of accounting for the missing. Empowerment of and participation by families is being enabled through training, and by developing a knowledge base about the rights of victims and survivors. ICMP’s Online Inquiry Center (OIC) and Identification Data Management System (iDMS) have been made available in Arabic and other relevant languages, making it possible to collect, analyze, protect and share data, securely and easily. The Program seeks to enhance the capacity of families of the missing, Syrian civil society groups, and legal experts to address the issue of missing persons, and to acquire technical and legal knowledge about relevant international standards, including those on data protection. It will also contribute to a future strategy to account for missing persons inside Syria. These steps will contribute to the restoration of the rule of law and the credibility of transitional justice.
Profile: Muhanad Abulhusn

Muhanad Abulhusn is from the predominantly Druze city of As-Suwayda in southern Syria. He and his brother were held incommunicado for extended periods by the Syrian regime. Muhanad studied engineering in Syria and was involved in human rights work from 1999, when he was a youth volunteer in the EuroMed program. He spent several years in the US and Dubai before returning in 2010 to Syria, where he worked for the Syrian Justice and Accountability Center. He was detained twice, the first time for a period of six weeks and the second when his wife was pregnant with their son. When he learned in 2014 that he might be detained a third time, he left the country.

Muhanad maintains contact with others who were imprisoned with him, though he notes that “there are three or four whom we’ve never heard about afterwards”.

In 2013, when he was on a training course in Lebanon, Muhanad’s mother called him with the news that his younger brother had been detained. She urged him not to return to Syria because then she would know that at least one of her sons was safe. He did return, however, and tried to find out what was happening to his brother and other detainees. Muhanad’s brother was released after 60 days, but “many have never seen the light. One of them was with my brother in the same detention facility; they were arrested on the same day. My brother was released but the other passed away.”

Muhanad is now working on a research project at the University of Utrecht examining the social context of genocide in the Syrian conflict.
VI. MEDIA COVERAGE
VI. MEDIA COVERAGE

The work of ICMP received extensive media coverage in 2017, as did the events organized to mark the new DNA lab opening at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague. In 2017, ICMP organized conferences in Europe, North America and Asia to highlight the global challenge of missing persons and to help coordinate the international response to this challenge. Throughout the year, ICMP was approached by media outlets seeking information about the global issue of missing persons and enforced disappearances.

Stories about ICMP and interviews given by ICMP staff appeared in a wide array of media outlets across the globe, including the following media:

- Albania: Lajmi i Fundit – GazetaExpress, Gazeta Panorama
- Australia: ABC Adelaide, The Sydney Morning Herald
- Austria: Wiener Zeitung, News.orf.at
- Belgium: RTL Info, DH.be
- Bolivia: Bolivia EN Tus Manos
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: N1 TV, Al Jazeera Balkans, TV Hayat, BHT, FTV, TV1, TV PINK, RTRS, TV N1, TV HEMA, Dnevni avaz, Oslobodjenje, Fena, Srna, Balkan Insight, Radio Free Europe, Glas Srpske, BH Dani, Nezavisne novine, Faktor, Bljesak, Fokus, Vecernji list, BUKA,
- Brazil: UOL Noticias, ISTOÉ, Diario de Pernambuco, Brasil 24/7, Agência Brasil – EBC
- China: China.org.cn, Xinhua News
- Colombia: EL Tiempo, Caracol Radio, W Radio
- Congo: BizCongo
- Croatia: Jutarnji list, Index, Net.hr, HRT
• Czech Republic: Info.cz
• El Salvador: La Página
• France: L’Express, Le Point.fr, Libération, Boursorama, Euronews, France Soir, France 24, Sciences et Avenir, Orange actu,
• Germany: ZDF, Deutsche Welle. Der Tagesspiegel, Stuttgarter Zeitung, Presseportal.de, FinanzNachrichten.de,
• Hong Kong: Bastille Post
• India: India.com, Business Standard, One India, Daily News and Analysis, Business Insider India, Reuters India, The Tribune
• Indonesia: The Jakarta Post
• Ireland: Independent.ie, The Irish Times
• Israel: Haaretz, Channel 10
• Italy: Il Piccolo
• Japan: The Japan Times
• Korea: Naver
• Luxembourg: 5minutes.lu
• Malaysia: The Star Online, The Malay Mail Online, The Borneo Post
• Malta: Breaking News
• Mauricius: Orange Mauritius
• Mexico: Grupo Milenio, Noticieros – Televisa
• Morocco: Médias24
• Namibia: Namibia Press Agency
• The Netherlands: NOS.nl, De Volkskrant, NRC.nl, Rijksoverheid.nl, NPO Radio 1, Omroep West, EenVandaag, Overheid.nl, De Groene Amsterdammer, Nederlands Dagblad, National Geographic, The Hague Online, Diplomat Magazine, Nieuwsbundelingen.nl
• New Zealand: MSN NZ, Yahoo! New Zealand – News
• Nigeria: Pulse
• Norway: Aftenposten
• Pakistan: Geo.TV, Pakistan Today
• Panama: Telemetro Panamá
• Peru: El Comercio
• Qatar: Al Jazeera
• Philippines: GMA Network
• Russia: Newsvideo
• Serbia: RTS, Blic, Tanjug, RFE, Vesti, Kurir
• Singapore: Yahoo Singapore
• South Africa: The Citizen
ICMP continued to develop its website and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube) over the course of the year. This resulted in an increasing number of followers, visitors, and interactions on social networks.

ICMP is recognized on the international media scene as a reliable, relevant and professional partner and source when it comes to topics that relate to the issue of missing persons and enforced disappearances.
VII. FUNDRAISING

ICMP is voluntarily funded and seeks support from five categories of donors: governments, multilateral organizations, foundations, corporate funding sources (including through in-kind donations and corporate social responsibility), and private donations. Since its inception in 1996, more than 90 percent of ICMP’s funding has been provided by government sources. The United States, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom were the biggest contributors to ICMP, in addition to the European Union as the 3rd largest contributor. In terms of current program funds, the largest contributor to ICMP’s activities is the European Union.

Corporate donors in 2017 include Qiagen, which provided in-kind support in equipment for ICMP’s newly established laboratory in The Hague.

In 2017 ICMP also secured funding from the Government of Switzerland for its Missing Migrants Program.

During 2018, ICMP will continue working on maintaining and expanding its donor database to raise funds for programs, including Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) efforts and the Center of Excellence and Training, and it will continue to collaborate with universities, private industry and others to incorporate new technologies.
VIII. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Independent Auditors’ Report to the International Commission on Missing Persons

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of International Commission on Missing Persons ("the Commission"), which comprise the statement of financial position of the Commission as at 31 December 2017, and the statements of comprehensive income, cash flows and changes in net assets of the Commission for the year then ended, and notes, comprising significant accounting policies and other explanatory information (further referred to as “the financial statements”).

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Commission as at 31 December 2017 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

Basis for Opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors’ Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information
Directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Director-General’s Report, but does not include the financial statements and our auditors’ report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Directors’ and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements
Directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with IFRS, and for such internal control as Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, Directors are responsible for assessing the Commission’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless Directors either intends to liquidate the Commission or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Commission’s financial reporting process.
Statement of Comprehensive Income

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>43,482</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>7,988,543</td>
<td>7,154,288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff costs</td>
<td>(4,833,428)</td>
<td>(4,718,325)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other operating expenses</td>
<td>(2,993,080)</td>
<td>(2,196,169)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>(91,981)</td>
<td>(65,624)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating costs</strong></td>
<td>(7,918,489)</td>
<td>(6,980,118)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance income</td>
<td>352,043</td>
<td>97,913</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance costs</td>
<td>(271,405)</td>
<td>(270,525)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net finance (cost) /income</strong></td>
<td>80,638</td>
<td>(172,612)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for the year</td>
<td>150,692</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comprehensive income</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</strong></td>
<td>150,692</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Statement of Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>USD</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and equipment</td>
<td>207,549</td>
<td>141,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-current assets</strong></td>
<td>207,549</td>
<td>141,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivables</td>
<td>672,151</td>
<td>583,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other receivables</td>
<td>412,661</td>
<td>257,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>6,922,302</td>
<td>4,250,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current assets</strong></td>
<td>8,007,114</td>
<td>5,091,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>8,214,663</td>
<td>5,233,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reserves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accumulated surpluses</td>
<td>554,825</td>
<td>404,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee benefits</td>
<td>57,568</td>
<td>1,805,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>57,568</td>
<td>1,805,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts and other payables</td>
<td>1,992,705</td>
<td>378,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred income</td>
<td>5,609,565</td>
<td>2,644,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>7,602,270</td>
<td>3,023,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td>8,214,663</td>
<td>5,233,003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IX. LOOKING AHEAD

Colombia

ICMP will continue working with Colombian stakeholders ent to help address the large number of persons missing as a result of the 50-year conflict. ICMP will take concrete steps to assist authorities and other stakeholders in Colombia in making rapid and effective progress in addressing the issue of missing persons in the context of the Peace Agreement signed between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) on 24 November 2016. It will seek to maximize the momentum created by the Peace Agreement to address all cases of missing and disappeared persons and to fill strategic gaps in the existing ordinary institutional framework. ICMP will work on promoting political will and institution-building and coordination to boost efforts to account for missing persons in a manner that is effective and secures the rights of victims; it will enhance capacities and strategies to collect, protect, manage, process and analyze data related to missing persons; it will transfer knowledge to boost the capacity of national institutions to search for and locate, recover and identify missing persons, among other things by incorporating cutting-edge, cost-effective and sustainable mechanisms suited to addressing large-scale missing persons scenarios; and it will contribute to securing the capacity, public participation and engagement of families of the missing in efforts to account for missing persons and to secure their rights.

Iraq

ICMP will augment its program in Iraq by assisting the Iraqi authorities create a sustainable strategy to account for all missing persons, regardless of their sectarian or national origin, or the circumstances of their disappearance. The strategic discussion will be launched through a policy forum facilitated by ICMP. The discussions will include the relevant Iraqi and KRG authorities, families of the missing and Civil Society Organizations.
ICMP will also continue to help the Iraqi authorities in their efforts to develop credible missing persons investigations, including effective responses to those missing as a result of Da’esh actions. Through its Science and Technology Program, ICMP will provide access to its high-throughput DNA testing and will provide training in laboratory processes and archaeology and anthropology.

**Syria**

In 2018, ICMP will continue implementing its program to reach Syrian refugees and displaced families living in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey to introduce its data collection and data processing mechanisms and lay the foundations for a post-conflict Syria initiative to address the issue of large numbers of missing persons.

ICMP will also explore the options of holding data collection and data processing seminars for large numbers of Syrian refugees living in Europe.

**Albania**

In Albania, ICMP hopes to finalize the Host State Agreement with the government in Tirana to assist in identifying persons who went missing during the communist era.

**Western Balkans**

In the Western Balkans, ICMP will work with the government of the United Kingdom and with the European Union, to launch a regional initiative to continue helping the countries of the former Yugoslavia – including, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia to account for the 12,000 persons who are still missing. The initiative will include:

- Maintaining and developing the database of active missing persons cases from conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in order to ensure that data on missing persons is shared securely and transparently among domestic agencies from states in the region;
- Facilitating an effective policy dialogue for national partners to resolve “no name” (NN) and misidentified cases. ICMP estimates that one quarter of the
approximately 12,000 active missing persons cases can be resolved through a joint regional effort made by domestic agencies to resolve the interrelated issues of NN cases and mis-identifications that occurred prior to ICMP’s introduction of a DNA-led process in 2001;

• Ensuring continued access to DNA testing and matching of missing persons cases for national partners in affected countries of the Western Balkans. Through its Center for Excellence and Training, ICMP will develop domestic capacities in terms of DNA testing and matching of missing persons cases so that in due course the process can continue without ICMP’s day-to-day support;

• Enabling access to ICMP’s genetic reference profiles database through an online matching module for domestic agencies so that they can conduct DNA matching themselves after the end date of the project. This will increase local ownership and sustainability of the process, while ensuring protection of the genetic references provided to ICMP in confidence by families of the missing;

• Establishing a missing persons Regional Group through which national partners can continue dialogue and enhance cooperation in order to address the issue of missing persons.

• Facilitating cooperation between the countries in identifying other sources of data or records that may be relevant to locating the missing;

• Facilitating cross-border operations to recover mortal remains. Often referred to as joint excavations, ICMP will facilitate cooperation between states to ensure that when one country (where the human remains are buried) conducts an excavation it allows other countries to monitor the process if the persons exhumed are assumed to belong to families now residing in another country. ICMP has successfully facilitated such operations in the past, and plans to reinvigorate this activity. This is critical to transparency and trust-building.

ICMP intends to provide continuous access to its cutting edge DNA-led process of testing and matching as well as support to civil society organizations and family associations in capacity building, training and education.
X. MISSING MIGRANTS

In June 2018, ICMP will organize a meeting in Rome with authorities of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Malta to launch an historic initiative to account for migrants and refugees who died or went missing in the Mediterranean region on their journey to Europe.

Global Forum on Missing Persons

In 2018, ICMP will organize expert roundtable discussions within the framework of its Global Forum on Missing Persons, which seeks to bring together officials, civil society organizations and others to examine key aspects of the process of accounting for missing persons, and propose practical and coordinated global strategies. These roundtables will be organized as part of ICMP’s Iraq, Syria, Western Balkans and Colombia programs.