

LIBYA FACTSHEET

An estimated 20,000+ persons have gone missing in Libya as a result of conflict, instability and human rights violations over of the last decades. An unknown number of persons have gone missing while crossing or leaving Libya on migratory journeys.

The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) Libya Program is working to ensure that Libya assumes responsibility for locating all missing persons in line with the rule of law and that the rights of families of the missing to justice and truth are secured, regardless of their background or the circumstances and timing of their disappearance.



Photo credit: REUTERS / Suhaib Salem

OBJECTIVES

- Enhance legislation related to the rights of victims and their families to **truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence**;
- **Harmonize cooperation** among institutions whose work is relevant to missing persons;
- Strengthen **evidence management, forensic practices, investigative capacity and DNA analysis capabilities**;
- Enhance excavation techniques of clandestine graves, chain-of-custody procedures, and identification based on **scientifically sound methods in line with the rule of law**;
- Support the collection of data in accordance with **data privacy and data protection standards**;
- Support the creation of a **central record** of all missing persons cases;
- Support relevant institutions and family associations and CSOs through **training and other assistance**;
- **Improve procedures** to report missing persons (including missing migrants).

BACKGROUND

From 2012 - 2014, ICMP worked with stakeholders in Libya to create data systems capability, including online missing persons tools, supported the development of the Libyan Identification Center, and provided dedicated training to Libyan experts. More than 11,000 genetic reference samples were collected from families of the missing, representing more than 2,500 persons who went missing in Tripoli, Sabha, Ben Walid, Sirte and elsewhere. ICMP helped to identify 150 people through a DNA-led process, and work began on improving forensic capacity and the institutional and legal framework. ICMP also worked to facilitate cooperation between the authorities and families of the missing and to enable families to play a meaningful role in the overall process.

In April 2021, ICMP issued an Assessment Report, which identified key legislative, institutional and technical steps, including amendments to Libyan legislation, development of data-protection legislation, measures to enhance legal certainty for families, and ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

In 2020, following the discovery of mass graves in Tarhuna, the Libyan government of national accord requested international support to help secure and investigate these graves, conduct human identification, and collect evidence to standards required for judicial processes. Following this, ICMP resumed its support program in the country.

About ICMP

ICMP is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization mandated to secure the cooperation of governments and others in locating missing persons from conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, organized crime, irregular migration and other causes, and to assist them in doing so. It is the only international organization tasked exclusively to work on the issue of missing persons. ICMP maintains one of the world's leading human identification laboratories at its Headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands.