

International  
Commission  
on Missing  
Persons

**icmp**

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
• 2018 •



# **REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN 2018**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Director-General's Report	06		
Report by the Chair	13		
<b>I. ABOUT ICMP</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>III. CROSS-CUTTING PROGRAMS</b>	<b>24</b>
1.1. Governance	17	3.1. Civil Society Initiatives	25
1.2. Board of Commissioners	17	3.2. Science and Technology	26
1.3. Conference of State Parties	19	3.3. Data Systems and Coordination	27
1.4. Financial Committee	20	3.4. Assistance to Justice	28
<b>II. WHAT WE DO</b>	<b>21</b>	3.5. Training Programs	29
		3.6. Missing Migrants Program	30
		Profile: Meron Estefanos	31
		3.7. Disaster Victim Identification	32
		3.8. Cooperation	33
		<b>IV. THE MISSING</b>	<b>34</b>
		4.1. Profiles of the Missing	37
		The Paris Principles	38

## V. FEATURED PROGRAMATIC RESULTS

### 45

5.1. Europe	46
5.1.1. Albania	46
5.1.2. Western Balkans	47
Regional Cooperation	47
Joint Declaration	47
Framework Plan	48
First meeting of the Missing Persons Group (MPG)	49
Bosnia and Herzegovina	49
ICMP Donates DNA Lab Equipment To Sarajevo University	49
Joint Declaration Citing Efforts to Account for Missing Persons from the 1990s	42
Regional Framework Plan	43
Implementing Recommendations on Identifying Human Remains in BIH Mortuaries	50
Profile: Fikret Bacic	50

5.2. Latin America and the Caribbean	51
5.2.1. Colombia	51
Assisting the Search Unit in Colombia in addressing the issue of missing persons	51
5.2.2. Mexico	52
Working with civil society in Mexico	52
Profile: Graciela Perez Rodriguez	53
5.3. Middle East and North Africa	54
5.3.1. Iraq	54
Profile: Farid Abdulla Aziz	56
5.3.2. Syria/MENA Program	57
Profile: Fadwa Aziz – Families for Freedom	59

## VI. MEDIA COVERAGE 61

# DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT



Kathryne Bomberger  
Director-General

In 2018, the International Commission on Missing Persons carried existing programs forward while embarking on new initiatives in line with its global mandate as a treaty-based intergovernmental organization.

The Syria/MENA program, launched in 2017, engaged in a steady and systematic effort to reach out to civil society organizations representing families in Syria, in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq, along the Mediterranean migration routes, and in Europe. Through dialog, we were able to assess the concerns and needs of families of the missing and make it easier and less traumatic for them to report a missing loved one. We began implementing Data Partnership Agreements in order to help CSOs develop and improve their data collection capabilities, and we launched a Small Grants project to help CSOs and family organizations work on the issue of missing persons more effectively. Apps that make ICMP's Identification Database Management System fully accessible were adapted and translated into Arabic, and an outreach program was undertaken to encourage families to report missing persons through the Online Inquiry Center. In June, I had an opportunity to visit the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan, where 80,000 Syrian refugees are living, and also to meet CSOs and families of the missing in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, and in November I had very constructive talks in Beirut with senior Lebanese government officials. In early December, a group of Syrian CSOs visited ICMP's Headquarters in The Hague, where they were briefed on the strategy we have developed over more than two decades that brings together institutional and legislative initiatives, support for civil society and the latest practical application of forensic science. On Human Rights Day, 10 December, ICMP organized a Profiles of the Missing event in coordination with Syrian CSOs, at the European Union's Representation in Berlin. This public discussion brought representatives of the Syrian diaspora together with European policymakers. Speakers highlighted the need to ensure that the issue of the missing is addressed in a substantive and systematic way in an eventual peace settlement and that a sustainable missing persons process is ready to be implemented as soon as a peace agreement is signed.

ICMP's program of more than two decades in the Western Balkans remains one of the most impressive examples of what governments and families of the missing can accomplish. More than 70 percent of the 40,000 persons missing from the conflicts of the 1990s have been accounted for and almost 90 percent of the 8,000 persons missing from Srebrenica have been identified. Throughout the year, ICMP continued to work with its partners in the Western Balkans to help them account for the 12,000 people who

are still missing from the conflicts of the 1990s. In April, senior officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina visited Headquarters to agree on a strategic path forward. ICMP worked intensively to prepare for the summit of the Berlin Process countries in London on 10 July, at which leaders from the region renewed their commitment to the missing persons process and agreed to a Framework Plan that would facilitate regional cooperation on this issue. During the London meeting, the heads of government – including the leaders of France, Britain, Germany and Italy – signed a Joint Declaration reiterating their support for the missing persons process and citing ICMP's *Declaration On The Role Of The State In Addressing The Issue Of Persons Missing As A Consequence Of Armed Conflict And Human Rights Abuses*. On 6 November, at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague, representatives of the authorities that are responsible for accounting for missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia signed the Framework Plan, and the first meeting of the regional Missing Persons Group, established under the Plan, was held in Herceg Novi at the beginning of December.

In July, ICMP signed a Cooperation Agreement with Albania, where it has been working on a pilot project since 2017. The agreement was ratified by parliament in November, allowing ICMP to begin implementing a comprehensive program to help the authorities locate and identify missing persons from the communist era, at Dajti, near the capital, and at a former forced labor camp in Ballsh in the south of the country. On 27 November, ICMP teams began collecting genetic reference samples from families.

ICMP worked steadily during 2018 to help the authorities in Colombia develop a coordinated and effective program to account for 85,000 missing persons from five decades of conflict. ICMP was cited in the 2016 Peace Agreement as an international partner to the Colombian authorities on the issue of missing persons. In 2018, it began preparatory work, with support from the German Development Agency, and in December launched an 18-month program supported by the European Union. In July, representatives of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace from Colombia visited ICMP Headquarters in The Hague for a series of briefings.

In Mexico, the CADHAC human rights organization began, in December 2018, to implement a USAID-funded project that incorporates ICMP. The project involves helping the State of Nuevo Leon to develop an effective missing persons process, which could in future serve as a model for other Mexican states.

In November, ICMP hosted a three-day workshop with four members of Sri Lanka's newly-established Office on Missing Persons (OMP). In 2016, ICMP participated at roundtables in Sri Lanka and made contact with local stakeholders. The country's missing persons legacy from almost three decades of conflict runs into the tens of thousands, and the visit by the OMP pointed up the fact that in key areas, including data processing, ICMP can provide invaluable assistance.

In Iraq, ICMP renewed its relationship with key stakeholders in 2018. In the first half of the year, we began a program to facilitate and standardize the collection and secure storage of data on missing persons, working with local authorities and CSOs, and at the same time we continued to provide training in a broad range of operations for partners in CSOs and the authorities. On 26 July, Baghdad Mayor Thikra Alwash joined participants at a workshop co-organized in Baghdad by ICMP to highlight the connection between the missing persons issue and the agenda on women, peace and security, and in August, ICMP organized a conference at the National Museum in Baghdad to mark International Day of the Missing, which drew representatives from key ministries. In November, with ICMP Chair Thomas Miller, I met with senior members of the Iraqi government and representatives of the international community in Baghdad and on 11 December a delegation of senior Iraqi officials, led by Martyrs' Foundation Minister Najiha Abdulamir, visited ICMP Headquarters in The Hague. Through these consultations, we were able to clarify the working relationship with our Iraqi partners and establish a strong framework within which to develop our program in Iraq.

On 11 June, at a conference organized by ICMP in Rome, representatives from Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Malta, endorsed a Joint Process to account for missing Mediterranean migrants, an historic initiative that immediately received support from key international organizations. In the second half of the year, ICMP prepared a comprehensive survey of existing capacity in the four Joint Process countries to address the issue of missing migrants, which was ready for distribution at the beginning of 2019.

Coinciding with the launch of the Joint Process, ICMP organized a Profiles of the Missing event at the Swiss Embassy in Rome, at which representatives of families, including those with first-hand experience of the Mediterranean crossing, shared a platform with policymakers and representatives of international organizations.

ICMP organized another Profiles event at the Paris Peace Forum on 12 November, highlighting the key connection between peacebuilding and accounting for the missing.

It used the occasion to launch an initiative under the title, “Accounting for the Missing is an Investment in Peace” highlighting Eight Principles that articulate the obligations of governments in respect of missing persons.

ICMP continued during the year with major initiatives related to the development and use of massively parallel sequencing (MPS) DNA tests to increase the power of DNA identification testing. A powerful new assay designed by ICMP and supported by QIAGEN Corporation was in development throughout the year, using QIAGEN’s line of MPS instruments. In June, corporate partners at Verogen provided an Illumina FGx MPS instrument to the ICMP laboratory in The Hague, for optimization on degraded bone samples and the development of an MPS-based training program. November marked the first application of MPS testing on actual case samples, allowing a conclusive DNA match of five individuals that did not have sufficient reference samples to permit a match with standard DNA testing. For three of these individuals, the closest relatives available were first cousins – such a capability of kinship matching on highly degraded samples was a milestone in the global progress in forensic DNA identification methods.

In the first half of May, we conducted training sessions on Next Generation Sequencing for colleagues and external partners, and within the Center for Excellence and Training, we will now develop a training curriculum for forensic specialists who wish to apply this technology. In March, investigators from the Missing Person Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina received training in the use of ICMP’s Anthropology database (MS Access Anthro) for accessing data on cases stored at the Krajina Identification Project. In May, July, August and September, ICMP delivered training courses in various parts of Iraq, to strengthen national capacity in the learning and development arena. In July, scientific seminars were organized and colleagues visited Erasmus University in Rotterdam to contribute to the scientific community in the Netherlands. In addition, a bio-anthropologist from the Perus Working Group in Sao Paulo was one of several scientists from around the world who spent time with ICMP learning about our civil society strategy, data systems, blood and saliva sample collection, and activities related to archaeology and anthropology. In September, Director of Science and Technology provided DNA Advocacy training to International Criminal Court prosecutors to enhance their knowledge in the use of DNA Evidence in court. Also in the second half of the year, our Forensic Coordinator in Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the Visiting Scientist Program at the Forensic Anthropology Unit of the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner, and gave lectures at the University of Wyoming and at Bryn Mawr

College. Throughout 2018, continuous professional development was promoted through the participation of colleagues at scientific conferences, including the 70th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, in Seattle in February, the Seventh QIAGEN Investigator Forum in San Antonio, Texas, in May, and the Chartered Society for Forensic Sciences Autumn Conference in Northampton in the UK.

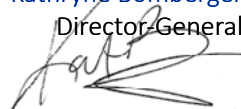
In September, ICMP chaired the scientific advisory board at the annual meeting of the EC-funded Visage Consortium in Lyon, which is developing DNA methods of determining skin, eye, and hair color, biogeographic ancestry, and age characteristics using DNA, and in October, ICMP conducted an International Society for Forensic Genetics DVI workshop in Porto, Portugal. Also in October, ICMP former and current Science & Technology staff were among the authors of an article on post-mortem DNA sampling in mass fatalities, published in the influential journal, "Forensic Science International: Genetics".

During November, the Data Systems & Data Coordination program completed the initial phase of its work with Leiden University / Humanity X to explore facial recognition software and establish if social media can support the validation of missing persons reports. A prototype was integrated in the iDMS.

In August, we launched ICMP's new Arabic and Kurdish-language Facebook pages and during the year we took steps to expand the content on our website offered in Spanish, Arabic, Kurdish and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, as well as in English. In August, to mark International Day of the Disappeared, ICMP published testimony from survivors and activists working on the frontline of the missing persons issue. In the second half of the year, we launched a video introduction to the ICMP laboratory system and a step-by-step video guide to using the Online Inquiry Center.

This varied range of activity has been undertaken within a clear and coherent framework that reflects ICMP's global mandate, and in 2018, we were able to take significant steps forward, to fulfil our treaty obligations and to justify the confidence that has been placed in us, by governments, by international partners and by families of the missing.

Kathryne Bomberger  
Director-General



# REPORT BY THE CHAIR



---

Ambassador (ret) Thomas J. Miller  
Chair

Across the world in 2018, conflict, migration and climate change created scenarios in which large numbers of people went missing – victims of people trafficking, incommunicado detention, extrajudicial execution and natural disasters, among other things.

At the Paris Peace Forum, convened by President Macron in November 2018, ICMP presented Eight Principles that lay out the obligations of governments to account for missing persons. The Paris Principles will be an invaluable tool in peacebuilding – and ICMP will now invite governments to apply them as a framework for coherent and effective action.

ICMP has had the practical capacity to advance its advocacy for an effective global strategy on missing persons as a result of steps taken since 2016 to put its legal, financial and administrative structure on a secure footing.

During 2018, the organization introduced a series of measures that allow it to maintain the highest employment standards, to recruit qualified staff in a competitive market, and to ensure that staff have the support they need in order to carry out their duties.

The regulatory framework that has already been put in place provides transparency and makes ICMP a reliable partner for supporting and beneficiary governments. In June, USAID added ICMP to its list of Public International Organizations, which will facilitate USAID funding in the future. ICMP has also had extremely productive discussions with the European Union and with individual donor governments. These discussions have been based on two things – a growing perception that the issue of missing persons affects a broad range of global policy areas, and at the same time an appreciation that ICMP's track-record over more than 20 years shows an organization that has the discipline, the expertise, and the determination to deliver concrete results. It has consistently been accorded the highest approval rating by its external financial auditors.

In 2018, substantial donations were received from the EU for ICMP's programs in the Western Balkans, Iraq, Syria, Colombia and Albania. The Colombia Program was supported by the German Development Agency, GIZ Colombia; the US State Department Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the German Federal Foreign Office, and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development supported ICMP's Iraq Program; while the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and USAID supported the Western Balkans Program. Funding was received from Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Foreign

Ministries of Sweden and the Netherlands, as well as the City of The Hague for ICMP's Headquarters; while Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs supported the Missing Migrants program. In addition, special project funding came from Brazil for technical assistance in cases from that country. ICMP's efficient use of resources has also been recognized in the private sector. QIAGEN and Microsoft both provided significant assistance in equipment and software during 2018.

In 2018, Chile and Cyprus ratified the ICMP Agreement, joining Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden and the UK, all of which have already done so.

On 18 December, representatives of states and organizations that support the work of ICMP gathered at our Headquarters in The Hague for the second Conference of State Parties (CSP). The first CSP was held in October 2015, just under a year after ICMP became a treaty-based intergovernmental organization. At the 2018 meeting, Chile assumed the presidency of the CSP, taking over from the United Kingdom. Several of the country representatives made extremely helpful interventions, encouraging observer states to accede to the Agreement, and encouraging colleagues to explore ways of delivering core funding.

In October, we learned with great sadness that our colleague and friend, Wim Kok, had passed away at the age of 80. The Commissioners, Directors and staff will remember with the greatest respect and gratitude the contribution that Wim Kok made to ICMP during almost 17 years of service. He played an indispensable role in steering ICMP's course to an organization with global reach operating from Headquarters in The Hague. He was a kind and gentle man who remained active and passionately committed to doing good right to the very end. He is mourned by all of us.

Taking on new programs and geographic areas, securing new and increased funding, and implementing internal improvements that make ICMP an excellent place to work – 2018 was a year of progress for ICMP, and this meant, above all, that we were able to continue performing a unique service to help families learn the fate of their loved ones.

Ambassador (ret) Thomas J. Miller  
Chair

## I. ABOUT ICMP

---



## I. ABOUT ICMP

ICMP was created at the initiative of US President Bill Clinton in 1996 at the G-7 Summit in Lyon, France. It spearheaded efforts by the authorities in the former Yugoslavia to locate and identify those who were missing as a result of the conflicts of the 1990s. To date, more than 70 percent of the 40,000 missing have been accounted for, an unprecedented achievement anywhere in the world.

ICMP is focused on developing and applying good governance and rule-of-law-based strategies to address the issue of the missing in different societies and situations around the world, and brings a unique element of technical assistance to its activities. In November 2001, it established a missing persons DNA identification system that has become the benchmark for technical innovation and performance in the field. ICMP has also developed an Identification Database Management System (iDMS) that manages all data pertaining to the missing persons process.

As a consequence of ICMP's success in the former Yugoslavia, and with the financial support of a growing number of donor governments, in 2003 ICMP's mandate and sphere of activity were extended by supporting governments to address the global issue of missing persons, including cases arising from natural disasters.

On 15 December 2014, the Foreign Ministers of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Belgium and Luxembourg signed a Treaty establishing ICMP as a treaty-based international organization with its own system of governance and international capacities.

It provided for a new organizational structure and stipulated that ICMP would establish its Headquarters in The Hague, a move that was completed in 2017.

ICMP's mandate is to secure the co-operation of governments and other authorities in locating persons missing as a result of conflicts, human rights abuses, disasters, organized violence and other causes and to assist them in doing so. ICMP also supports the work of other organizations in their efforts, encourages public involvement in its activities and contributes to the development of appropriate expressions of commemoration and tribute to the missing.

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 seven have ratified: the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Chile, Cyprus and Serbia.

## 1.2. Board of Commissioners

ICMP's Board of Commissioners comprises distinguished individuals active in the fields of diplomacy and human rights. Membership has grown from six in 2015 to eight today. The Board meets annually to discuss ICMP's overall goals, fundraising and program implementation.



### In Memoriam

H.E. Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands served as an ICMP Commissioner from June 2002 until his death at the age of 80 in October 2018. Mr. Kok played a key role in ICMP's evolution from its origins in the Western Balkans to its present status as an intergovernmental organization that operates programs all over the world. Working at the highest levels of international politics and diplomacy, he persuaded policymakers and government leaders that accounting for the missing and upholding the rights of families of the missing are indispensable elements in maintaining peace and security.

The members of the Board are:



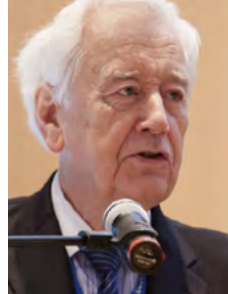
Ambassador (ret)  
Thomas J. Miller  
(Chair)

ICMP Commissioner  
since May 2011.



Her Majesty Queen  
Noor of Jordan

ICMP Commissioner  
since June 2001.



H.E. Ambassador  
Rolf Ekéus

Former OSCE High  
Commissioner on  
National Minorities.  
ICMP Commissioner  
since April 2005.



H.E. Ambassador  
Knut Vollebaek

Former Norwegian  
Foreign Minister.  
ICMP Commissioner  
since September  
2013.



Rt. Hon. Alistair  
Burt

UK government  
minister and  
Member of  
Parliament. ICMP  
Commissioner since  
December 2013.



Judge Sanji  
Monageng

Judge of the  
International  
Criminal Court in  
The Hague. ICMP  
Commissioner since  
May 2017.



Ms. María Eugenia  
Brizuela de Ávila

Former Minister of  
Foreign Affairs of  
El Salvador. ICMP  
Commissioner since  
February 2019.



Mr. Bert Koenders

Former Minister of  
Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands. ICMP  
Commissioner since  
February 2019.



Ambassador Dirk  
BrengeImann

German  
Ambassador to the  
Netherlands. ICMP  
Commissioner since  
May 2019.

### 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* and includes signatory and other states that participate in an observer capacity. 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.

International organizations may be invited to participate in meetings of the CSP as observers. The CSP was constituted in 2015 under the terms of the ICMP Agreement. The number of participating States Parties and observers (States Signatories, other states and International Organizations) has grown from three State Parties (that had signed and ratified the agreement) and seven observers, including two State signatories, in 2015, to a total of 17 in 2018, with six State Parties. The CSP's Financial Committee has met annually and has provided the primary forum in which ICMP's financial strategy has been developed together with donors. All ICMP's governing bodies have adopted their Rules of Procedure and complied with their corresponding obligations.

In 2018, Chile and Cyprus acceded to the ICMP Agreement. ICMP reached out to observer and donor governments, governments in program areas, and to third countries inviting them to accede. To ensure broader participation, 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.

Representatives of states and organizations that support ICMP's work gathered on 18 December at ICMP's Headquarters in The Hague for the second CSP to be held since ICMP was established as an intergovernmental organization following the signing of the ICMP Agreement in 2014. Chile assumed the CSP presidency from the United Kingdom, and the meeting was chaired by Chile's Ambassador to the Netherlands Maria Teresa Infante.

ICMP Director-General Kathryne Bomberger briefed the CSP on ICMP's evolution over the preceding three years, citing a significant expansion of operations, including major

new programs related to Syria, Colombia, Mexico and missing Mediterranean migrants, as well as existing programs in Iraq and the Western Balkans, and work with partners in countries such as Mexico, Sri Lanka, and Brazil. ICMP Director of Policy and Cooperation Andreas Kleiser reviewed aspects of ICMP's governance, and ICMP Director of Corporate Services Simon Short reviewed ICMP's operating methodology.

Belgium, Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom are currently either Parties, or Signatories to the ICMP Agreement. In addition, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States are Observers to the CSP. The ICC (OTP), the EU, Interpol and the IOM participate in the CSP as observer organizations.

#### **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 4 June 2018, the Committee noted that the ICMP's external auditors (KPMG) had once again provided the organization with the highest approval rating and that ICMP's funding strategy continues to highlight the importance of establishing long-term financing agreements with key donor countries to cover Headquarters (or "core") costs. ICMP's cross-cutting programs and country programs depend on support from Headquarters, and ICMP is consequently obliged to secure adequate funding for these core services, beyond program funding.



International Commission on Missing Persons

## II. WHAT WE DO

---

# The Missing: A Global Challenge



ICMP is the only international organization tasked exclusively to work on 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 is the co-founder of the Missing Persons Institute in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it helped create the Kosovo Government Commission on Missing Persons. It also assisted in the creation of many state level laws on missing persons in the Western Balkans, Iraq and elsewhere. ICMP also helped create and facilitates the work of the Joint Process, to enhance domestic capabilities and cooperation among these states in accounting for missing migrants, and the Regional Missing Persons Group – for the former Yugoslavia. 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 its partners a unique, specialized online Identification Data Management System (iDMS) that manages all data pertaining to its missing persons process. ICMP also operates one of the world's leading high-throughput, human identification DNA laboratories. The DNA-led process takes place in partnership with responsible agencies and institutions in partner countries, ensuring that it contributes to and supports good governance and democratic responsibility.

- ICMP has processed 71,792 post-mortem samples
- Of this number, it has successfully obtained 51,770 DNA profiles
- The post-mortem samples came from 26 countries (based on place of recovery, not nationality)
- These DNA profiles represent close to 27,000 individuals (unique profiles)
- ICMP has retrieved and profiled more than 102,000 AM reference samples from family members (ante-mortem or AM profiles)
- ICMP has made more than 42,000 DNA matches – representing 20,473 individuals
- ICMP's key activities are implemented through its cross-cutting programs.



ICMP maintains a dedicated Learning and Development program, for staff and external partners

### III. CROSS-CUTTING PROGRAMS



ICMP's key activities are implemented through its cross-cutting and thematic programs



### **3.1. Institution and Civil Society Development**

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, truth, reparations and legal and socio-economic protection. 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 families of the missing participate in the process of accounting for their relatives, and that they and civil society participate in the creation of institutions, legislation, and policies relevant to missing persons. In the absence of political will from the State, ICMP devises programs to respond to requests for assistance from civil society actors to empower them in generating will and recognition of responsibility from the State.

### **3.2. Science and Technology**

In 1999, ICMP made a groundbreaking decision to use advanced DNA technologies to identify large numbers of missing and disappeared persons from conflict and human rights abuses. In 2001, it established a large-scale DNA human identification laboratory system and with the cooperation of governments and families of the missing, it incorporated DNA as the first line of identification. This decision resulted in an unprecedented number of persons recovered and identified from conflict and contributed to securing the rights of hundreds of thousands of families of the missing. A large-scale approach to locating and identifying the missing, including high-throughput extraction automation and regardless of the ethnic, religious or national origin of the missing person represented a historic shift from earlier attempts to find missing persons on a case-by-case basis, in a selective and politicized manner. ICMP works quickly and efficiently with government and



ICMP's human identification system relies on its integrated DNA laboratory located in The Hague



ICMP's technical programs include expertise in forensic archeology and anthropology

other stakeholders to address large-scale challenges that may be politically and legally complex. It supports institutional and legislative responses that sustain effective missing persons process and at the same time contribute to good governance – an approach that gives ICMP a unique role among International Organizations. ICMP's technical assistance is primarily supported by three interrelated mechanisms, a standing capacity to conduct high-throughput identifications using DNA testing and kinship matching, a forensic Archaeology and Anthropological Division (AAD) with expert capabilities in the location, recovery and examination of human remains, and a custom-designed Identification Data Management System (iDMS), which ICMP operates and which it also provides to governments. ICMP's technical resources and expertise have been utilized in multiple instances of mass disaster, post-conflict identification, and human rights investigation.

### 3.3. Data Systems and Coordination

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. Managing large quantities of data from complex missing persons scenarios is essential to proper chain of custody and the provision of scientific identifications that can be used to secure the rights of surviving families of the missing. ICMP makes the iDMS available to government authorities and others engaged in missing persons investigations and provides training in its use. The iDMS can also 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. It is an online resource that has been developed on the basis of ICMP's long-standing experience of helping governments, families of the missing and others. The OIC is a place where concrete and usable information is collected and stored so that it can be utilized when it is needed in the search for missing persons. Visitors can submit a missing person report by providing details, for example, name, date of birth, place where the missing person was last seen. Additional information about a missing person can also be submitted. This information will only be shared with the express consent of those who have provided it.

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 assists governments and families of the missing in the process of collecting missing persons data and biological reference samples for DNA testing.



ICMP collects blood reference samples for DNA testing

ICMP's data systems abide by the highest standards of data protection. As an international organization, based in The Hague, ICMP can securely hold data and help centralize data that has been collected by multiple actors for specific purposes. For example, ICMP holds data collected from families of the missing and data obtained from governments in the Western Balkans in order to help them locate large numbers of missing persons. ICMP's centralized data system has allowed large numbers of missing persons to be located and identified.

### **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, other specialized forensic capacity, including testimony, reports and depositions for criminal investigations and prosecutions. For example, ICMP has cooperated with the South African Missing Persons Task Team of the Office of the National Prosecuting Authority and provided DNA testing and DNA identification match reports on victims of forced disappearance during the Apartheid era. It has also cooperated with the South African Police Service's Victim Identification Unit for DNA analysis in particularly challenging cases, and it has provided expert testimony on its procedures and DNA science at the South Africa High Court. Assistance to justice is a crosscutting activity that emphasizes accountability as part of all missing persons investigations, including Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) operations, as in the case of the downing of flight MH17. ICMP continues to support the Netherlands in its efforts to identify all victims of the downing of MH17 to standards required in criminal investigations. ICMP has provided testimony and other evidence in more than 30 international and domestic trials for war crimes, human rights abuses and genocide. ICMP has cooperation agreements with the Kosovo Specialist Prosecutor's Office and the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has provided assistance to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), and it has concluded a cooperation agreement with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

### 3.5. Training Programs

ICMP's key program activities include training in the application of specific thematic competencies. ICMP's Center for Excellence and Training (CET) provides learning and development resources that have been progressively developed to meet the organization's outreach needs and training goals. Resources 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, and monitoring and feedback.

The CET is closely linked to ICMP's Quality Management System (QMS), and is one of the pillars of quality assurance in forensic science, including documented training on the standard operating procedures that define technical work. The CET provides formal, documented coordination of all training activities related to staff competence, implementation of new methods, induction of new staff, individual training records for professional development, definition of training best practice, organization of standard training presentations, and training feedback, as well as organization and conduct of training at ICMP facilities and elsewhere. The CET coordinates with relevant experts to ensure the appropriate definition of training goals through needs assessment and the professional delivery and outcome monitoring of training activity.

The CET is a mechanism for the dissemination of ICMP's cutting-edge technical developments in investigating missing persons cases, including new systems that are based on next-generation DNA techniques such as Massively Parallel Sequencing, as well as standards and policies spanning technical subject matter, and such issues as civil society, governance and data protection.

Through the CET, ICMP provides training and learning and development opportunities 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. In Iraq, for example, ICMP is expanding the knowledge base of stakeholders in harmonized data systems and recovery and identification of mortal remains using advanced forensic techniques. It is providing learning and development to all stakeholders, including civil society, families of the missing, academics, the media, law

enforcement, parliamentarians, and Iraqi authorities and technical experts. It operates on the validated premise that even where systems are in place, they cannot be utilized in an optimal way without a corresponding and targeted training program.

### 3.6. Missing Migrants Program

ICMP's Missing Migrants Program aims at enhancing cooperative efforts to account for migrants who have gone missing or have died. 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. In 2018, at ICMP's invitation, representatives of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Malta met in Rome on 11 June to launch a Joint Process to enhance domestic capabilities and cooperation among these states in accounting for missing migrants. Participation from other European states, as well as of countries of transit and origin is being sought.

- The Joint Process emphasizes the paramount importance of cooperation among countries of destination, countries of origin, and transit countries. As a key element in the opening phase of the Joint Process, ICMP launched a systematic assessment of capacities and resources in Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Italy. The main areas being investigated are forensics, law enforcement and emergency response systems, and protection and assistance frameworks that support families of missing migrants. A centralized database could facilitate the use of data collected in countries of origin, transit countries and destination countries, drawing together identification elements across distances and jurisdictions, one of the major challenges in addressing the issue of missing migrants. Such a system could make use of very significant developments that have already been made in Next Generation Sequencing, and which are now being applied in ICMP's DNA laboratory system. This could deliver substantial improvements in identification capacity when forensic procedures are used together with customized database management.

Within the Missing Migrants Program, ICMP is also enhancing inter-agency cooperation among international and other organizations. In June 2018, after the inaugural meeting of the Joint Process, ICMP convened an Inter-Agency Roundtable focusing on identifying



ICMP Director-General Kathryn Bomberger speaking at the One Young World (OYW) Summit in October 2018 about the Missing Migrants Program



The Missing Migrants Program "Joint Process" meeting in June 2018

avenues to support the Joint Process. IOM, INTERPOL, EUROPOL, ICRC, OHCHR, FRONTEX, and the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes participated in the roundtable and expressed their support for the activities of the Joint Process.

In order to highlight the plight of families of missing migrants, ICMP organized a Profiles of the Missing event at the Swiss embassy in Rome on 11 June. Family members shared their experiences with policymakers and representatives of international organizations working on the migration issue, and effective strategies to account for missing migrants were examined. The event was organized in partnership with civil society organizations, Migrants of the Mediterranean, the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, Yazda, the Eritrean Refugee Rights Initiative, and the Italian Coalition for Freedom and Civil Rights.

### Profile: Meron Estefanos

Meron Estefanos is a Swedish-Eritrean journalist and human rights activist. She was born in Eritrea and at the age of 14, she moved to Sweden with her father. She is the co-founder of the International Commission on Eritrean Refugees, an advocacy organization



Meron Estefanos

for the rights of Eritrean refugees, victims of trafficking, and victims of torture. Her work revolves around helping migrants who directly reach out to her or whose families contact her for help. She is also co-author of “Ghost Boat,” an investigation into the disappearance of 243 men, women and children who left Libya for Europe in 2014.

“The first phone call that I received from a boat in distress was in 2010,” she recalls. “There were 425 people on board. They didn’t have enough fuel or water or food. I could hear screaming. They told me their lives were in my hands. I didn’t want to take that kind of responsibility, but they gave it to me. They said – after God, we are depending on you.”

Ms Estefanos receives around 100 calls a day, or if a boat is in distress, and family members are also reaching out, as many as 500 calls a day. She believes the countries of the Mediterranean have the means to account for large numbers of missing migrants and refugees, and can do this effectively if they adopt a pragmatic and systematic approach. “Families have a right to know what has happened to their loved one, and only with the assistance of the authorities can this be achieved,” said points out.

Ms Estefanos participated in ICMP’s Profiles of the Missing event in Rome in 2018.

### 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. ICMP continues its efforts to broaden cooperation internationally in order to deliver DVI responses more reliably and equitably to all countries affected by disasters.

### 3.8. Cooperation

ICMP maintains partnerships with a number of other international organizations and NGOs. Cooperation with other organizations is crucial 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 Iraq, ICMP has an agreement with the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), while in relation to Syria it is developing an agreement with the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM). In addition, in 2016, ICMP launched the Inter-Agency Committee on Missing Persons, which includes IOM, INTERPOL, the ICC, the ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF and Europol. ICMP also works with a number of NGOs and universities and continuously seeks to expand these relationships through its Civil Society Initiatives Program. ICMP also maintains a partnership with the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) and will continue to support efforts to find the remaining missing persons from the MH 17 disaster.

Following Hurricane Frank, which led to at least 1,500 fatalities and left more than 1,000 missing in the Philippines and China in June 2008, ICMP worked together with INTERPOL to help the authorities in the Philippines identify victims. ICMP's assistance was focused on identifying passengers and crew from a ferry, the "Princess of the Stars", which capsized near Cebu City, leaving more than 700 people missing. It is estimated that an additional 500 people went missing from vessels that sank in the same area as a result of the typhoon. Disaster Victim Identification teams in Cebu City, made up of experts from the Philippines National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), ICMP and INTERPOL and its member countries, operated a sophisticated and effective identification system utilizing DNA-matching techniques provided by ICMP. ICMP trained Philippine nurses and police officers in ante-mortem data collection and DNA sampling from the families of 777 victims and rapidly provided DNA identifications for 449 victims. Typhoon Frank was the first joint operation carried out by ICMP and INTERPOL under an Agreement on Cooperation on Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) signed by the two organizations in November 2007. This rapid response demonstrates that a well-managed DVI platform that incorporates DNA-based identifications can achieve results. This is a function that is strategically significant as countries scramble to address more frequent and varied disaster scenarios related to climate change.

## IV. THE MISSING

---



## 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. During this period, there has been a striking evolution in the manner in which the issue of the missing is addressed, particularly following conflict and disasters. There has also been a corresponding rise in awareness of the need for a concerted international response to the worldwide challenge of missing persons. Recent advances have been propelled by international efforts to foster the development of peaceful states through good governance initiatives, and transitional justice and rule-of-law strategies that attempt to redress the legacy of violent conflict and massive human rights abuses. Such strategies have had resonance in cases of persons missing as a result of disasters and other causes, where law-based, forensic approaches are becoming the norm.

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.

A range of responses to the issue of missing persons have been developed, and these responses can be deployed systematically.

Effective strategies often depend on transnational cooperation.

Through its Profiles of the Missing events and its other advocacy and public outreach activities, ICMP has actively sought to develop and communicate the various different and interconnected strands of this emerging consensus.

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 the missing persons 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 must be rooted in the rule of law. It must be based on *rights*. When governments act to account for missing persons, they are not 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.

Profiles of the Missing: the panel brought together by ICMP at the Paris Peace Forum



## 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 was organized in Stockholm in June 2017. A third was held in Rome in June 2018, a fourth was organized as part of the Paris Peace Forum, in November 2018, and a fifth event was organized in Berlin, in December 2018.

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 discussions also consider the mechanisms that exist at the international and domestic levels to address the issue of missing and disappeared persons and they review effective strategies based on a modern, rights-based, rule-of-law approach.

On 11 June 2018, speaking at the Profiles of the Missing event in Rome dedicated to missing Mediterranean migrants, ICMP Commissioner Thomas Miller highlighted the enormous challenges faced by countries in the Mediterranean region and noted that ICMP launched an international policy debate on the issue at the UN Security Council in January 2016.

On November 12, at the Paris Peace Forum, ICMP launched an international initiative to advance the responsibility of States to account for missing persons. The presentation followed a Profiles of the Missing format, with representatives of families of the missing sharing a platform with policymakers. Under the title, “Accounting for the missing is an investment in peace”, the initiative highlighted Eight Principles that are enshrined in the *ICMP Declaration on the Role of the State in Addressing the Issue of Persons Missing as a Consequence of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Abuse*:

## The Paris Principles

At the PARIS PEACE FORUM on 12 November 2018, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) revisited the ICMP *Declaration on the Role of the State in Addressing the Issue of Persons Missing as a Consequence of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Abuse* with a view to promoting the application of the Declaration's principles universally and in all circumstances where persons go missing or disappear, including disasters, organized crime, irregular migration and other causes. The eight "Paris Principles" reflect and advance an emerging global consensus on how to address the issue of persons going missing.

### 1. **State responsibility**

*States bear a responsibility for ensuring lasting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion – resolving the fate of missing and disappeared persons, and protecting persons against disappearance, is an integral element in securing this objective.*

In recent decades, there has been a shift in how the missing persons issue is addressed. In particular, law-based institutional approaches, the use of modern forensic methods and advanced data processing systems have made it possible to locate missing persons with a level of effectiveness that was not possible before. However, despite the progress now being made, there are still insufficient standards relating to the responsibility of States to address this issue in all its aspects.

The obligation to conduct comprehensive and effective investigations of human rights abuses lies with the State, regardless of who committed violations and abuses (State or non-State actors). Failure to investigate the fate and whereabouts of missing persons in an effective way, including the circumstances of their disappearance, can constitute a continuing breach of fundamental human rights of both the missing persons and their family members.

### 2. **Substantive rights**

*The right to dignity and to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or degrading treatment, the right to a family life and to privacy, and the right to*

*recognition as a person before the law – are all invoked when a person goes missing or is a victim of enforced disappearance.*

The situation of persons going missing can involve multiple human rights abuses in respect of the persons themselves and in respect of the family of the missing. Regarding the missing person, abuses frequently include violations of the right to security and liberty, as well as the dignity of the person; the right to life; the right not to be subjected to torture or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to a family life and the right to recognition as a person before the law.

In the absence of effective and official investigations, disappearances concurrently represent grave abuses of the rights of relatives and others, including violations of due process, the prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, and violation of the right to a family life and the right to recognition as a person before the law. These rights are enshrined in international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in regional instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the American Convention on Human Rights.

In addition, certain missing persons cases are classified as a separate offence by international instruments. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) provides a definition of enforced disappearance in cases involving State actors. The Statute of the International Criminal Court provides for the crime of enforced disappearance as a crime against humanity. These legal instruments enshrine States' obligations to conduct effective investigations regarding missing persons. The right to life in particular rests on the procedural guarantee that abuses will be officially investigated irrespective of whether such abuses are considered attributable to actions or omissions by the State.

### 3. **Capacities**

*Investigations are credible only if they are capable of establishing the facts – adequate capacities cannot be ensured ad hoc or through philanthropy: they require official and sustained efforts and permanent provisions.*

According to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), and also under the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, an effective investigation must be official, transparent, independent, impartial, and capable of establishing the circumstances in a given case. The ECtHR has also made it clear that “the procedural obligation to investigate under Article 2 [ECHR] where there has been an unlawful or suspicious death is triggered by, in most cases, the discovery of the body or the occurrence of death. Where disappearances in life-threatening circumstances are concerned, the procedural obligation to investigate can hardly come to an end on discovery of the body or the presumption of death; this merely casts light on one aspect of the fate of the missing person. An obligation to account for the disappearance and death, and to identify and prosecute any perpetrator of unlawful acts in that connection, will generally remain.” [Varnava and others v Turkey, Grand Chamber, 2009]

#### 4. **Cooperation**

*The issue of missing persons does not respect borders: it has an international dimension – cooperation between States and with international institutions is an indispensable element in effective measures to account for the missing.*

Effective investigations on the issue of the missing cannot be carried out in isolation, but require cooperation between authorities, and with international organizations, that exchange information on the missing to uphold the rights of victims. Cooperation is effective if it secures the participation and gains the trust of the families of the missing. Key human rights related to the participation of families include the rights to freedom of expression and association.

Families of the missing must be able to report their missing persons and share personal information necessary to an effective investigation, domestically and across borders. The right to share information with whomever a person may choose is inherent in the rights to freedom of expression and association, Articles 19 and 22 of the ICCPR. Article 19 of the ICCPR, in particular, States that the right to freedom of expression shall include the “freedom to seek, receive and impart information” also across borders. According to the Human Rights Committee’s (HRC) General Comment 34, Article 19 protects all forms of

expression and the means of their dissemination. Also, the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms stipulates the right to access and to communicate with international bodies.

#### 5. **Procedural rights**

*Rights have meaning only if violations and abuses are investigated. Persons who go missing or are victims of enforced disappearance are entitled to protection under the law; relatives and others close to a missing or disappeared person have the right to an effective investigation.*

No missing persons investigation or processing of relevant data can take place without protecting the families of the missing against infringements of their dignity and privacy. Ensuring family's rights during investigations is a precondition to securing their participation. Many of the key principles of data protection in the missing persons context can be given effect through practical measures, in particular through their incorporation in data processing systems that are comprehensive, suitable for international cooperation and secure. A comprehensive system integrates all data processing requirements on the issue of the missing.

The right to privacy is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 12) and regional instruments, such as the ECHR (Article 8). The right to privacy clearly includes the right to be left alone, but it does not end there: it includes the right of persons to control their data. Other relevant international and regional instruments, including the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the ICCPR guarantee an individual's right to privacy (Articles 17). In its General Comment 16 on Article 17 (Right to privacy) of the ICCPR, the HRC stated that every individual should be able to ascertain which public authorities or private individuals or bodies control or may control his or her data files.

#### 6. **Truth**

*The right to the truth means that the circumstances of disappearances are made known – including establishing cause and manner of death in cases where the missing person is deceased.*

Missing persons processes must be capable, through reliable and feasible means, of establishing the facts that have led to a person having gone missing, including the person's death. There is a very clear value to DNA analysis as a primary means of human identification. Identifications based on fingerprints require among other things that post-mortem fingerprints can still be taken, and that ante-mortem reference prints exist and can be located. The same applies to the use of dental records, which also tend generally to be available only for older people in more developed countries. The advantage of using DNA is that all victims and their relatives have it. There are also limitations to DNA identifications. There can be legal limitations, where the protection of sensitive personal data is not guaranteed, for instance. There may also be institutional limitations in the case of the lack of a clear mandate for one institution to maintain central data processing capability or central records on missing persons, or where magistrates lack the human resource capacities for issuing death certificates. There may also be financial constraints. Many State entities operate on annual budgets, and DNA-led processes currently cost more in the short term than non-scientific approaches, which tend to incur similar costs only in the longer term.

Creating international resources, such as ICMP, has reduced the financial burden on authorities confronted with large numbers of missing persons. It has also enabled research and development to reduce cost overall. For instance, the need to obtain several DNA references samples from close relatives is a significant short-term cost factor. Therefore, reducing the need to obtain multiple references from close relatives also reduces cost. In addition, if methods that reduce the need for multiple close relatives to provide reference sample also reduce the volume of genetic material from post-mortem samples that is required, then the affordability of DNA-led processes will be greatly improved even in the short term. Using the new method of Massively Parallel Sequencing, for instance, ICMP was recently able to issue DNA match reports on three siblings identified by kinship matching only to first cousin references.

## 7. **Justice**

*Criminal activity is behind the vast majority of disappearances – the justice system must lead efforts to investigate disappearances and prosecute those responsible.*

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has stated that the international community should, “endeavor to recognize the right of victims of gross violations of human rights, and their families, and society as a whole to know the truth to the fullest extent practicable.” Those whose human rights have been violated are entitled to all possible information regarding the circumstances of human rights abuses. In addition to the right to the truth, the right to justice must be ensured.

The justice system, including courts, prosecutors, law enforcement and related institutions, constitutes the most comprehensive investigative resource in any country. Working with and through justice and related institutions represents the strongest possible commitment to dealing with the past in a non-discriminatory, law-based manner, and contributes directly to building the credibility of these institutions.

## 8. **Rule of law**

*Rule-of-law failures are a cause and a consequence of persons going missing or disappearing – all measures to address the issue must uphold and advance the rule-of-law.*

Persons go missing as a result of arbitrariness and lawlessness in many parts of the world, and failure to investigate their whereabouts and the circumstance of their disappearance further erodes the rule-of-law. Reinstating the rule-of-law must begin with those most affected by past abuse and lawlessness, in particular with families of the missing. Their participation in developing fairer institutions critically advances the public trust. Missing persons processes that are consistent with international human rights norms ensure participatory decision-making, legal certainty and avoidance of arbitrariness, bring answers to families of the missing, and result in more justice for society at large.

On 10 December, speaking at the Profiles of the Missing event in Berlin, Her Majesty Queen Noor said families of the missing are entitled to solidarity, from governments and others as well as solidarity from all of us to understand the nature of their struggle. The event was organized at the Representation of the European Commission in Berlin bringing together representatives of families of the missing, from Syria and elsewhere, together with experts and senior policymakers to examine strategies that families can adopt in order to access their rights to truth, justice and reparations.

## V. FEATURED PROGRAMATIC RESULTS

---



## V. FEATURED PROGRAMATIC RESULTS

### 5.1. Europe

#### 5.1.1. Albania

##### Launch of Albania Program

As many as 6,000 people are believed to have disappeared during the period of Communist rule in Albania, from 1945 to 1991. In July 2018, Albania and ICMP signed a Cooperation Agreement, and in November the Albanian Parliament ratified the agreement, which enables ICMP to assist the authorities in their efforts to search for and identify persons who went missing during the communist era. The agreement regulates ICMP's status in Albania, and lays out the duties and responsibilities of the signatories in the missing persons process. The initial phase of ICMP's program, which is funded by the European Union, is focused on 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.



Albania and ICMP signed a cooperation agreement in July 2018

## 5.1.2. Western Balkans

### Regional Cooperation

In the Western Balkans ICMP has supported regional cooperation in the search for the missing; it has worked effectively to foster the development and cooperation of civil society organizations with one another and with governments, and it has pioneered the application of state-of-the-art DNA and advanced database informatics to locate and identify large numbers of missing persons.

To date, of the 40,073 people who were missing in the Western Balkans at the end of the conflict, 23,258 have been accounted for. Of this number, 15,303 identifications were made using DNA. In order to make these DNA identifications, ICMP gathered reference samples (blood or saliva) from 93,355 relatives of missing persons – through outreach campaigns to families of the missing in Europe, North America and Australia. DNA profiles from family members were then compared with 44,217 DNA profiles extracted from unidentified human remains found in mass and clandestine graves.

### Joint Declaration

In July 2018, the prime ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Croatia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Bulgaria, France, Italy,



Signing of the Joint Declaration by regional leaders in London in July 2018



ICMP convened the first meeting of the regional Missing Persons Group in Herceg Novi, Montenegro

Slovenia and Poland signed a Joint Declaration in London. The Joint Declaration, among other things, reiterated their commitment to supporting efforts to account for the 12,000 people who are still missing as a result of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. It upholds the rights of all families of the missing to truth, justice and reparations, and reflects the key elements of the successful missing persons strategy that ICMP has spearheaded in the Western Balkans since soon after the end of the conflict. This strategy has made it possible to account for 28,000 of the 40,000 people who were missing at the end of the conflict, an achievement that has not been equaled anywhere in the world.

### **Framework Plan**

On 6 November 2018, at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague, the representatives of the authorities that are responsible for accounting for missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia signed a Framework Plan that lays out steps to boost their cooperation and increase their effectiveness in accounting for missing persons throughout the region.

Under the Framework Plan, which is supported by the United Kingdom, ICMP is making its Site Locator software available to facilitate data exchange. ICMP also maintains the regional database of missing persons from the conflict, and it is helping to ensure access to DNA testing and matching of biological samples, as well as providing technical assistance in resolving NN cases, supporting excavations, facilitating regular multilateral

meetings of the responsible institutions, and ensuring the engagement of families of the missing in the process.

### **First meeting of the Missing Persons Group (MPG)**

On 4 December 2018, ICMP convened the first meeting of the regional Missing Persons Group (MPG) in Herceg Novi, Montenegro. The MPG will supervise operations under the Framework Plan signed in November.

At the two-day meeting in December, the MPG clearly defined the next steps to resolve as many as possible of the estimated 12,000 missing persons cases that are still outstanding. This includes action to resolve NN cases in mortuaries through targeted pilot projects, procedures for sharing data on the missing, and potential locations of clandestine gravesites among the members of the MPG, as well as joint participation at excavations of mutual interest.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

#### **ICMP Donates DNA Lab Equipment to Sarajevo University**

In March 2018, ICMP presented Sarajevo University's Faculty of Natural Science with a comprehensive range of equipment facilitating the establishment of a new DNA laboratory at the university.



ICMP donated DNA lab equipment to Sarajevo University

### Implementing Recommendations on Identifying Human Remains in BIH Mortuaries

In November 2017, following a four-year effort spearheaded by the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with the BIH Missing Persons Institute (MPI) and with technical assistance from ICMP funded by the European Union, ICMP and the MPI announced the preliminary results of a project to review more than 3,000 unidentified (NN) human remains held in mortuaries throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project resulted in 121 new identities, 968 re-associations with previously identified cases, and recommendations to the Prosecutor regarding steps that need to be taken in order to resolve most of the remaining cases. ICMP published an Infographic on the project in the fall of 2018. It will continue to provide technical assistance to the MPI and prosecutors' offices to resolve the remaining NN cases.

#### Profile: Fikret Bacic



Fikret Bacic

When the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina broke out, Fikret was working in Germany. Twenty-nine of his family members, including his two children, his first wife and his mother, were killed in the village of Zecovi near Prijedor on 25 July 1992. Their bodies have not yet been found. In 1998, Fikret returned to live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to help find his missing family members and to ensure that they would have a final resting place. “For more than 20 years since the war, I’ve helped in the effort to account for many missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but I still haven’t found any of the members of my family,” he says. Currently, he is spearheading the effort to memorialize all of the Prijedor children who were killed, although this initiative has not gained the support of the local authorities. “At this moment we have a list of 102 children who were killed in Prijedor during the conflict, but even though we organized a successful petition four years ago, the local authorities are still refusing to put this item on their agenda.” He remains resolute: “I will not give up as long as I am alive, and even after my life in this world, I believe that my two sons from my second marriage will continue on my path.” Fikret urges anyone who may have information about missing persons – not just in Bosnia and Herzegovina but anywhere in the world – to report what they know, and “help to ease the suffering of family members who are living a life of uncertainty”.

## 5.2. Latin America and the Caribbean

### 5.2.1. Colombia

#### Assisting the Search Unit in Colombia in addressing the issue of missing persons

More than half a century of armed conflict in Colombia resulted in the disappearance of tens of thousands of people. ICMP first became engaged in the country in 2007 following a request by the Prosecutor's Office. ICMP is mentioned in the 2016 Peace Agreement signed by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, as one of the international partners mandated to work with the parties to the Agreement in implementing point 5 related to victims of the conflict, and in particular on the issue of missing persons. Between September and December 2018, with the support of the German Cooperation Agency, GIZ, ICMP completed a comprehensive mapping of family associations and civil society organizations engaged in the missing persons process in Colombia. This landmark mapping will serve as a tool to facilitate collaboration with CSO groups, and to inform the design of institutional engagement with CSOs. In the last semester of 2018, ICMP also completed a process of dialogue with the Search Unit for Missing Persons, established under the Peace Agreement, to design activities for ICMP to support the Search Unit. In December 2018, ICMP secured support from the European Union for a program of assistance to the Search Unit and enhancing the capacity, public participation and engagement of families in efforts to account for their missing relatives.



ICMP first became engaged in Colombia in 2008 following a request from the Prosecutor's Office

### 5.2.2. Mexico

#### Working with civil society in Mexico

More than 26,000 persons are estimated to have disappeared in Mexico in the last decade, principally as a result of violence related to organized crime.

On 10 December 2018, Sister Consuelo Morales, the Executive Director of Citizens in Support of Human Rights (CADHAC), a civil society group based in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo Leon, announced the launch of a USAID-funded four-year initiative supported by ICMP to account for missing persons in the state. ICMP has been working with CADHAC since 2014, assisting efforts by family groups and other NGOs to collect data related to missing persons. Under the USAID CADHAC-ICMP program, both organizations will work with the Prosecutor General's office and other authorities in Nuevo Leon to support efforts to account for missing persons. ICMP's assistance will focus on developing technical and institutional capacities in the fields of science and technology and data systems to deal with extremely complex cases of missing persons in Nuevo Leon.



Mexico: ICMP meeting with the CADHAC team and the Prosecutor General's office of Nuevo Leon

**Profile: Graciela Perez Rodriguez**

Graciela Perez Rodriguez is a mother and a human rights defender whose daughter, brother and three nephews disappeared in 2012 while they were traveling back to Tamaulipas in Mexico from the United States. “Since the day that I started searching, I have never stopped. I dedicated my life to searching for disappeared persons and defending the rights of their family members in Mexico,” she says.

Graciela was awarded the 2017 annual Tulip Human Rights prize by the Dutch government. She is a founder of Milynali-Red CFC, a collective that helps to search for the disappeared, and a founding member of the Forensic Citizen Science project, which established the National Citizen Registry of Disappeared Persons in Mexico. “We need each other, the only way we can feel strong is by being there for each other,” she says. “We gather together, we breathe, and we continue to search.”



Graciela Perez Rodriguez

## 5.3. Middle East and North Africa

### 5.3.1. Iraq

#### Support to families of the missing and training

Estimates of those who are missing in Iraq as a result of more than four decades of conflict and human rights abuses run from 250,000 to one million. ICMP has been working with authorities in the country since 2005 to help establish a sustainable and effective process to account for missing persons. ICMP's objectives for the Iraq program include to:

- Assist the Iraqi authorities in developing comprehensive strategies that can identify gaps in the current institutional and legislative landscape and propose solutions through a continuous dialogue and participatory processes;
- Provide continued support for the establishment of a system of central records of all missing persons from Iraq's recent past, as well as enhancing data processing and protection mechanisms and instituting centralized data processing systems connecting responsible authorities and institutions;



ICMP meeting with Iraqi authorities at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague

- Provide expertise and technical advice on the formation of an institutional and legislative framework to secure rights to justice, truth and reparations and corresponding procedural and administrative rights, with a particular focus on ensuring that the specific rights of women survivors are upheld;
- Assist the Iraqi authorities in developing a coordinated strategy for locating and recovering missing persons, based on impartial and transparent evidence-based criteria, and additionally, developing forensic quality assurance standards in laboratories and at crime scenes to permit effective utility in justice proceedings; and
- Help to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in their work with families of the missing and in building bridges with government authorities.

ICMP held roundtables, training workshops and working group meetings in Baghdad, Erbil and Duhok during 2018 to promote efforts by the domestic authorities to account for the missing, and to address the impact of this issue on Iraqi communities, especially women.

ICMP held workshops in April, June and September for the Cross Sector Task Force on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Eighteen Federal Iraqi Government and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) ministries are part of the task force.

ICMP also provided training for staff from the domestic authorities who are collecting genetic samples from relatives of the disappeared. The aim of this training was to prepare CSOs and government institutions to connect with vulnerable populations that have been affected by conflict for a long time, and to enhance understanding of the challenges and opportunities of outreach campaigns in Iraq.

As part of the Mortuary Assessment project, staff from the Archeology and Anthropology Department visited more than 10 mortuaries across the country to conduct needs assessment and attain a better understanding of the capacities and workflow of these mortuaries. ICMP is now producing a set of recommendations on introducing international standards in provincial offices throughout the country.

In the course of the year, ICMP continued to build missing persons data collection and processing capabilities within relevant ministries and departments, including the medico-legal departments. It also worked with domestic partners to develop mechanisms to consolidate and share data through the establishment of a centralized missing persons identification center in Baghdad.

ICMP worked with stakeholders in Iraq to facilitate data entry and data analysis using the Identification Data Management System (iDMS) and to develop and implement relevant Standard Operating Procedures and Chain of Custody provisions. As part of ICMP's Mortuary Assessment project, staff from the Archeology and Anthropology Department visited more than 10 mortuaries across the country to conduct needs assessment and attain a better understanding of the capacities and workflow of these mortuaries. ICMP is now producing a set of recommendations on introducing international standards in provincial offices throughout the country.

In cooperation with the Foundation for Art in Life, ICMP organized an event at the National Museum in Baghdad to mark International Day of the Disappeared on 31 August 2018. Among other things, the event highlighted the central role of memorialization in a successful societal response to the issue of missing persons.

#### **Profile: Farid Abdulla Aziz**



Farid Adballa Aziz

Farid Abdulla Aziz, a 53-year-old man from Hawraman, Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, fled with his family to Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. When the war ended in 1988, his family returned to Iraq. Because Farid was married, he decided to stay in Iran. After five months, he received a letter from a relative saying his family had been detained on the Iraqi border and sent to Topzawa Concentration Camp in Kirkuk, Iraq. He later learned that his family had been moved to the Nugra Salman Desert area. "When I received this news, I was paralyzed. Nothing was left for me in this world except God. I do not know how I spent those days. I have heard stories of people who were taken to Nugra Salman. Stories of abuse, torture and the killing of women, children and men." To know the fate of his

family, Farid returned to Iraq, “I have looked into every possible lead in order to find out the truth about the fate of my family, but I could not discover anything. It will never be like in the past. Although it is 30 years since they disappeared, their memory is like an open wound to me.”

### 5.3.2. Syria/MENA Program

ICMP’s Syria/MENA Program, launched in 2017, focuses on establishing the foundations for an effective process to address the issue of the missing. The program places the rights of families of the missing at the center of the effort to account for their relatives, regardless of the circumstances of the missing person, their ethnic, or religious background, or their role in the conflict. The program is being implemented among refugees and along migratory routes. A systematic and effective missing persons program has the capacity to resolve a large number of cases, enabling families to access their rights to the truth, to justice and to reparation. This is fundamental to upholding the rule of law and will play a major role in any post-conflict settlement. As such, resolving missing persons cases contributes in a significant way to creating conditions that will make it possible for refugees to return to their homes.

During 2018, the Syria/MENA program conducted 25 outreach seminars, working closely with civil society organizations. A small grants program at the end of the year drew 17



Representatives of families from Syria at the Profiles of the Missing event in Berlin, Germany, in December 2018

proposals from CSOs, of which eight were accepted after review. In addition, two Data Partnership Agreements were signed with CSOs, enabling them to expand and improve their efforts to gather information that can be used as part of a systematic effort to locate and identify those who have gone missing as a result of the conflict.

In the week leading up to the International Day of the Disappeared on 30 August, in order to raise awareness about the challenges facing families of the missing – and the steps families have taken to address these challenges – ICMP published a series of interviews with Syrians whose family members have disappeared. In Berlin on 10 December, ICMP brought representatives of families from Syria and elsewhere together with experts and senior policymakers at a Profiles of the Missing event to examine strategies that families can adopt in order to access their rights to truth, justice and reparations. Before the Berlin event, a short video was produced featuring one of the panelists, highlighting challenges that families of the missing face and describing effective strategies to meet day-to-day difficulties.

Multiple on-line campaigns were launched focusing on the rights of families and explaining how to report a missing using ICMP's Online Inquiry Center (OIC). Overall, during 2018 the Syria/MENA team received 415 online reports via the OIC.



ICMP staff and Syrian civil society organizations during a workshop at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague

### Profile: Fadwa Aziz – Families for Freedom

Fadwa is a lifelong Syrian political dissident, who was imprisoned between 1992 and 1994. Her son, Maher Tahan, aged 34, and her partner, Abdulaziz Al Kheir, 66, were forcibly disappeared after leaving Damascus International Airport in September 2012. Since the detention of her family members, Fadwa has spoken out continuously on behalf of families of detainees, insisting on the right to know the whereabouts of thousands of men and women who have disappeared in Syria. When Fadwa was detained, her husband smuggled in a secret radio to keep her company in detention. She says it is the only thing she has left from him now and she carries it with her everywhere. Fadwa currently lives in Berlin with her other son, missing the warmth of Damascus. She speaks often about her home in the city, with its huge library. It was a home always open for those who wanted to stop by, to find a free place to debate or spend the night. Fadwa has promised a massive party open to all when, as she puts it, “the boys come home”.



Fadwa Aziz

## VI. MEDIA COVERAGE

---

The work of ICMP received extensive media coverage in 2018. ICMP organized conferences in different European countries, to highlight the global challenge of missing persons and to help coordinate the international response to this challenge. Throughout the year, media outlets seeking information about the global issue of missing persons and enforced disappearances approached ICMP.

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

- Albania: Explaining Albania, Albanian Daily News
- Angola: Angola FR
- Argentina: Espanol Yahoo
- Australia: The Sydney Morning Herald, Brisbane Times, The Canberra Times, The Age, Il Globo, Daily Bulletin, Australasian Science, Australian Business, The Conversation
- Bangladesh: The Daily Star
- Belgium: Metro
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: N1 TV, Al Jazeera Balkans, TV Hayat, BHT, FTV, TV1, RTRS, Klix, Dnevni avaz, Oslobodjenje, Fena, Srna, Balkan Insight, Radio Free Europe, Glas Srpske, Nezavisne novine, Faktor, Bljesak, Fokus, Vecernji list, BUKA, Nova Sloboda, Start, Frontal
- Brazil: BBC Brasil (PT), G1- Globo.com, UOL Notícias, O Globo, Estadão, R7.com, BOL Notícias, Correio Braziliense, ISTOÉ, Estado de Minas, O Povo Online
- Canada: National Post, LaPresse.ca, Yahoo! News Canada, News- MSN CA, Vancouver Sun, Montreal Gazette, Digital Journal, Calgary Herald
- China: Xinhua News
- Croatia: Dnevnik.hr, Dnevno.hr, Vidi.hr
- Ecuador: Ecuador TV
- Finland: Kaleva.fi, Turun Sanomat, Savon Sanomat

- France: Le Figaro.fr, Portail Orange, Radio France Internationale, Boursorama, Yahoo News (FR), La-Croix.com, France 24 (EN), TV5MONDE, RFI- English
- Germany: Artikel-Press.de, Open PR
- Greece: Ekathimerini.com
- Hong Kong: FM104 Metro Finance
- India: Yahoo! India News
- Iraq: Iraqinews.com, Kurdistan News, Iraq Akhbar, Iraq – ReliefWeb, Kurdistan 24,
- Ireland: The Irish Sun
- Italy: ANSA, Il Post, Diariodelweb.it, Virgilio Notizie, Stream24- Il Sole 24 Ore
- Jordan: The Middle East North Africa Financial Network, Jordan News Agency- Petra
- Lebanon: Lebanese News Agency (EN), Annahar, Lebanon Files
- Malaysia: Berita Harian Online, The Sun Daily
- Malta: TimesOfMalta.com
- Mexico: WOW, El Mañana, Reporte Indigo
- Mozambique: Sapo.mz
- Namibia: Namibia Press Agency
- The Netherlands: NOS.nl, Kamerstukken- Rijksoverheid.nl, Trouw.nl, Expatica.com, NPO Radio 1, Overheid.nl
- New Zealand: The New Zealand Herald, Yahoo! New Zealand- News
- Norway: Aftenposten, Verdidebatt
- Pakistan: Dunya News, Business Recorder
- Palestine: Uprooted Palestinian
- Philippines: Manila Metro News, Yahoo! News Philippines
- Poland: Aktualnosci24, Fakty- Interia.pl
- Qatar: Al Jazeera English, Gulf Times
- Saudi Arabia: Arab News
- Senegal: SeneNews.com
- Serbia: B92, Danas.rs, Vesti.rs, Tanjug
- Singapore: Yahoo Singapore
- South Africa: All Africa
- Spain: El Confidencial, Hoy.es, Eurasia Review, ABC.es- Agencias, Euractiv.es
- Taiwan: Taiwan News Online
- UAE: The National, Al Arabiya English, Big News Network.com

- UK: Daily Mail Online, The Telegraph, British Medical Journal, The Guardian, Yahoo! News UK, Middle East Eye, The National
- United States: Associated Press, The Washington Post, National Public Radio, Voice of America, The Seattle Times, ReliefWeb
- Venezuela: Venezuela Star

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 currently has around 5,000 followers to its English-language and Arabic-language Facebook pages and around 3,000 to its Kurdish-language Facebook page.

ICMP is recognized on the international media scene as a reliable, relevant and professional partner and source on topics related 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. From its inception in 1996 until 2016, more than 90 percent of ICMP's funding was provided by government sources, with the United States, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom being the biggest contributors. In more recent years, the European Union has become one of ICMP's primary donors.

ICMP works continuously to identify sources of funding for its programs and activities. In 2018, a large proportion of the organization's effort was once again concentrated on fundraising and the expansion of its donor base. In addition to maintaining the engagement of current donors, ICMP approached numerous prospective donors, including corporations and foundations and was able to secure some significant in-kind contributions, notably from Qiagen and Microsoft.

ICMP made a substantial effort to secure agreements with donors to continue funding for Iraq. This resulted in securing a grant from the European Union, and a continuation of funding from Canada Germany and the United States. Additional engagements from donors were also explored for ICMP's Syria/MENA Program. Further, ICMP secured a major contribution from the European Union to implement a new program in Colombia. A significant grant was also provided by the United Kingdom for a Western Balkans regional program.

The government of the Netherlands continued its assistance to ICMP's core costs and in late 2018 approved a three-year, EUR 1.5 million funding agreement to support and strengthen ICMP's Headquarters. Furthermore, the governments of Ireland and Sweden provided funding for ICMP's core costs, which ensured stability and security for Headquarters operations.

In 2018, the Government of Switzerland continued to fund ICMP's Missing Migrants Program. As part of this program, ICMP will work with the authorities in Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Malta to assist in identifying thousands of migrants who died or went missing during the perilous sea crossing to the continent.

During 2019, ICMP will continue working on maintaining and expanding its donor database to raise funds for programs, including Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) efforts and it will continue to collaborate with universities, private industry and others to incorporate new technologies, as it has done with Humanity X, an organization that helps peace and justice organizations adopt to new technologies.

## VIII. LOOKING AHEAD

---

### **Colombia**

Through its project with the Search unit, ICMP will seek to maximize the momentum created by the peace process to help Colombia address all cases of missing and disappeared persons. ICMP will work on promoting leadership and joint collaboration of families of the missing to support an impartial and inclusive process of accounting for missing persons in a manner that is effective and secures the rights of victims, and it will transfer knowledge in forensic archaeology and anthropology and data processing to the Search Unit. It will also facilitate education and engagement of families of the missing and civil society organizations in the activities of the Search Unit and enhance the capacity of civil society organizations to collect, protect, manage, process, analyze and share data related to missing persons.



Mexico: ICMP will continue to work closely with CADHAC to support the state of Nuevo Leon

ICMP, with its partner CADHAC will support the state of Nuevo Leon in a manner that complies with the General Law on Missing Persons and the procedures and guidelines of the National Search Commission. ICMP and CADHAC will seek to bring, through the experience in Nuevo Leon, a case study of best practice that can in turn be adopted by the Federal government and other States in Mexico. ICMP's priority is to transfer experience and resources to help the new Government to launch a sustainable and effective missing persons process.

## Iraq

In the second half of 2018, ICMP engaged in comprehensive and constructive discussions with the Iraqi authorities that are responsible for accounting for the missing, principally the Martyrs' Foundation, the Medico-Legal Directorate of the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs in the Kurdistan Regional Government, to meet their priorities in locating and identifying persons missing as a consequence of Da'esh crimes, with a focus on missing Yezidi, as well as persons missing from other periods of Iraq's history.

In addition, ICMP is working with the Iraqi authorities to continue to develop comprehensive strategies, including:

- Identifying gaps in the current institutional and legislative landscape and



ICMP will continue to support the Iraqi authorities in the process of accounting for the missing

proposing solutions through a continuous dialogue and participatory processes;

- Providing continued support for the establishment of a system of central records of all missing persons from Iraq's recent past, as well as enhancing data processing and protection mechanisms and instituting centralized data processing systems connecting responsible authorities and institutions;
- Providing expertise and technical advice on the formation of an institutional and legislative framework to secure rights to justice, truth and reparations and corresponding procedural and administrative rights, with a particular focus on ensuring that the specific rights of women survivors are upheld;
- Assisting the Iraqi authorities in developing a coordinated strategy for locating and recovering missing persons, based on impartial and transparent evidence-based criteria;
- Additionally developing forensic quality assurance standards in laboratories and at crime scenes to permit effective utility in justice proceedings;
- Delivering a Learning & Development program that expands the knowledge base of Iraqi stakeholders in harmonized data systems, recovery of human remains and identification using advanced DNA techniques. Stakeholders will include

civil society, families of the missing, academics, the media, law enforcement, parliamentarians, Iraqi authorities and technical experts; and

- Helping to strengthen the capacity of CSOs in their work with families of the missing and in building bridges with government authorities.

## Syria/MENA

Consultations ahead of the European Union's 2019 Brussels III conference on Syria revealed that more than half of those surveyed believed the issue of missing persons, including victims of enforced disappearance and detainees, is the most important topic in the field of justice and cohesion. ICMP will work to ensure that families are able to provide data to a secure centralized system, and it will offer partners access to effective data processing and protection mechanisms through the iDMS. It will gather information related to the issue of mass and clandestine graves in North East Syria, preparatory to establishing an effective missing persons process in Syria as soon as a peace settlement has been reached. Key stakeholders will be invited to participate at an intergovernmental meeting on the Syrian missing persons issue, to be held in June 2019 at ICMP's headquarters in The Hague. The objective of the meeting is to advance cooperation among European and Middle Eastern countries on the issue of refugees, migrants and displaced persons who have gone missing in their country of origin, or along migratory routes. The meeting will focus on the shared challenge that European and Middle Eastern countries face in addressing the issue of missing persons among populations of non-citizens and with a view to exploring options to address this challenge. States that are hosting refugee, displaced and migrant populations have very different resources and capacities available to address this shared challenge. Strategies that have proved effective in some countries can be applied more broadly. Advancing models of cooperation that embrace shared principles is an important step towards finding solutions.

ICMP will organize a series of roundtable policy discussions with Syrian families of the missing, civil society organizations and representatives of other relevant organizations and agencies, to identify and address key issues related to persons who have gone missing in Syria as a consequence of the conflict, whether inside Syria or as refugees in other countries or along migratory routes. This will support the development of a shared and common understanding of the needs of survivors, and of Syrian society more

broadly, for building strategies to address the missing persons issue. It will also develop a unified advocacy strategy among civil society organizations and families of the missing so that they are able to influence policymaking at the highest level, and to prepare the ground for a strategic and coherent missing persons process in relation to Syria.

In 2019, ICMP will continue implementing its MENA 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.

## Western Balkans

The governments of the United Kingdom, Sweden and Norway, as well as the European Union, are supporting ICMP's program to help Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia to account for the 12,000 persons who are still missing from the conflicts of the 1990s.

In the context of the Framework Plan signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia in November 2018, ICMP will work with the relevant institutions in these countries to make the Regional database of active missing persons cases fully operational, ensuring that data on active cases is shared securely and transparently among national partners and the public. Progress on this project, which is being supported by



ICMP will continue to help countries of the Former Yugoslavia to account for 12,000 persons who are still missing from the conflicts of the 1990s

the UK, will be reviewed at the sixth annual summit within the Berlin Process, in Poznań, Poland, in July 2019.

Countries in the region will have continuous access to ICMP's cutting edge DNA-led testing and matching. ICMP will continue helping civil society organizations and family associations with training, education and capacity building.

## **Albania**

In Albania, ICMP will assist the authorities with excavation and identification of victims of the Communist regime at the Dajti and Balsh locations.

## **Missing Migrants**

Through the Joint Process, ICMP will help support cooperation among countries in the Mediterranean to locate and identify missing migrants and to improve reporting of missing migrants and data collection in support of DNA matching and other types of forensic investigation. It will also support effective data processing and data sharing among domestic institutions and between international and other organizations, and it will help authorities reach out to families in countries of origin, with the support of humanitarian and other organizations, and help participating countries to establish a centralized database on missing migrants.

## **Global Forum on Missing Persons**

In 2019, ICMP will organize expert discussions within the framework of its Global Forum on Missing Persons. The Global Forum is established under the Agreement on the Status and Functions of ICMP, which established ICMP as a fully-fledge International Organization in 2015. The Forum 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. Immediate objectives will include **supporting** efforts to set standards in the field of missing persons in line with the Paris Principles, and developing ICMP's Center for Excellence and Training.

## IX. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

---

## Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2018

	2018	2017
	USD	USD
Restricted donors' contributions	9,612,804	7,319,903
Unrestricted donors' contributions	828,860	668,291
Other income	162	349
<b>Total income</b>	<b>10,441,826</b>	<b>7,988,543</b>
Staff costs	(6,791,699)	(4,833,428)
Other operating expenses	(3,610,651)	(2,993,080)
Depreciation	(126,968)	(91,981)
<b>Total operating costs</b>	<b>(10,529,318)</b>	<b>(7,918,489)</b>
Finance income	362,625	352,043
Finance costs	(591,130)	(271,405)
<b>Net finance (cost) / income</b>	<b>(228,505)</b>	<b>80,638</b>
<b>(Deficit) / surplus for the year</b>	<b>(315,997)</b>	<b>150,692</b>
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</b>	<b>(315,997)</b>	<b>150,692</b>

**Statement of comprehensive income**  
for the year ended 31 December 2018

	2018 USD	2017 USD
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	233,110	207,549
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>233,110</b>	207,549
<b>Current assets</b>		
Accounts receivable	537,839	672,151
Other receivables	403,544	412,661
Cash and cash equivalents	3,645,741	6,922,302
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>4,587,124</b>	8,007,114
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,820,234</b>	8,214,663
<b>RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Reserves</b>		
Accumulated surpluses	238,828	554,825
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Liabilities for employee benefits	15,063	1,408,942
Accounts and other payables	679,111	641,331
Deferred income	3,887,232	5,609,565
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>4,581,406</b>	7,659,838
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>4,820,234</b>	8,214,663



**ICMP Headquarters**

Koninginnegracht 12  
2514 AA The Hague  
The Netherlands  
T +31 708506700

[icmp@icmp.int](mailto:icmp@icmp.int)  
[www.icmp.int](http://www.icmp.int)

 [@TheICMP](https://twitter.com/TheICMP)  [/TheICMP](https://www.facebook.com/TheICMP)