

International
Commission
on Missing
Persons

icmp

ANNUAL
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REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN 2019

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DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT



Kathryne Bomberger
Director-General

In 2019, the International Commission on Missing Persons implemented its global mandate through a broad range of programs, often working in extremely challenging environments. With 165 staff members located at Headquarters in The Hague and in programs around the world, including those related to Iraq, Syria, the Western Balkans, Colombia, Mexico and Mediterranean Migration, we supported legislative and institutional development and civil society advocacy, and delivered state-of-the-art forensic expertise in database technology and DNA-led human identification.

A new challenge faced ICMP and the rest of the world as this report was being prepared in early 2020: the Covid-19 pandemic compelled us to find new ways to fulfill our objectives. For more on this, please see the Looking Ahead section on p 65.

In [Iraq](#), ICMP provided practical expertise at exhumations at sites including mass graves containing victims of Da'esh, assisted in outreach and reference sample collection at refugee camps, and trained forensic experts, government officials, civil society organizations and families of the missing. ICMP, an integral part of the Iraqi National Team, worked closely with the Martyrs' Foundation and the Ministry of Health's Medical Legal Directorate and liaised with the domestic authorities and the international community, including the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), to chart a way forward based on action points that ICMP agreed with the Government at the end of 2018. Positive progress was all the more remarkable as Iraq experienced considerable political turbulence in 2019.

Political turbulence also affected the operating environment of ICMP's [Syria/MENA](#) program. Plans to assist CSOs working in Northeast Syria had to be adjusted when fighting erupted at the end of 2019. However, we were able to complete a thorough study of the effort to exhume and identify human remains in areas recently liberated from Da'esh – this should enable action as soon as circumstances allow. During the year, we brought together Syrian CSOs from Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and European countries, as well as Syria, in a series of roundtables to facilitate the development of common policy positions on the issue of missing persons. Topics included the need for independent and impartial, centralized data systems capabilities and purpose-specific institutions and legislation that secure the rights of families of the missing. Four organizations began uploading large numbers of missing person reports to ICMP's Identification Data Management System (iDMS) and three signed data partnership agreements, while 10 signed small-grant agreements with ICMP.

We facilitated cooperation among states hosting Syrian refugees and developed a partnership with the International Impartial Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM). In March, ICMP took part in the European Union's Brussels III conference on Syria. More than half of those surveyed ahead of the conference cited the issue of missing persons as the most important topic in the field of justice and cohesion, underpinning the position of ICMP and other stakeholders that the missing persons issue must be a key element in any postwar settlement.

In the [Western Balkans¹](#), the Missing Persons Group (MPG) – formed by governments in the region in late 2018 with ICMP support – took steps to make the missing persons Regional Database fully operational and increased cooperation on information sharing and exhumations of clandestine grave sites. ICMP provided training and support for technical experts and civil society, and the success of ICMP's new Massively Parallel Sequencing (MPS) (See Box on Page 26) technology in identifying previously impossible cases boosted the overall regional effort.

In July, together with the UK, [ICMP chaired a meeting in Poznan](#), Poland on missing persons in the Western Balkans, as part of the Berlin Process Summit. Later that month, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia signed protocols on implementing the provisions of the Regional Framework Plan. ICMP had signed a Cooperation Agreement with the authorities in Pristina in March, and Kosovo institutions agreed to include ICMP's Site Locator on their websites.

Also in March, ICMP launched a program in [Albania](#) to help the authorities address the issue of 6,000 persons missing from the Communist era.

The pace of operations in [Colombia](#) picked up in 2019. ICMP opened an office in Bogota at the beginning of the year, and with support from the German Development Agency completed an overview of civil society organizations' efforts on the missing persons issue. The overview report was presented to the Search Unit, the agency tasked under the Peace Agreement to address the issue of missing persons, in June. In February 2019, through a new program supported by the European Union, ICMP began providing long-term support to the Search Unit. This program also includes workshops with CSOs and

1 Western Balkans refers to the ICMP program focusing on work in countries that were part of the former Yugoslavia.

family groups and small grants. ICMP is exploring options to help partners in Colombia establish a centralized data repository and DNA identification system.

In [Mexico](#), together with the organization Citizens in Support of Human Rights (CADHAC), ICMP launched a program in 2019 in the state of Nuevo Leon to help the state's Attorney General's Office and Medical Legal Institute improve its data systems and DNA capabilities.

ICMP's country programs were complemented by activities with partners elsewhere in the world. In 2019, we were engaged in projects with stakeholders in [Brazil](#), Mali, [Chile](#), Sri Lanka, and [Cyprus](#), and we explored cooperation with the International, Impartial Mechanism for Myanmar and the authorities in [Ukraine](#). In October, Afghanistan acceded to the ICMP Agreement, amid indications that ICMP assistance in establishing a missing persons institution in the country would be welcomed.

* * *

Since the beginning of the last decade, huge numbers of people have gone missing as a result of irregular migration, a challenge that governments have struggled to address. In 2019, [ICMP's Missing Migrants Program](#) helped stakeholders in the Mediterranean region to coordinate their efforts. In June, ICMP delivered an in-depth assessment of the capacities of the "Joint Process" countries – Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus – at a meeting of government representatives from these countries, held at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague. ICMP continued this discussion at a roundtable of the Inter-Agency Committee on Missing Persons and an Intergovernmental roundtable, both held at Headquarters, to develop a consensus on the basis of the ICMP assessment. Participants agreed that deployment of a central database can significantly enhance the process of reporting missing migrants.

In August, ICMP participated in the advisory board of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) missing migrants project, and in November, ICMP addressed the 110th session of the Council of the IOM, at which it was officially accredited as an Observer. In October, we took part in the fourth International Committee of the Red Cross conference under the ICRC's "Missing Persons Project", where we presented the perspective of state-led missing persons processes based on the rule of law.

* * *

The [DNA laboratory](#) made significant progress in 2019, notably in the application of Massively Parallel Sequencing (MPS) technology, which has the potential to increase identifications exponentially. In February, using MPS for the first time, we were able to present three new DNA match reports to the Missing Persons Institute in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These identifications were finalized just as the lab was granted ISO 17025 Accreditation – the culmination of a year-long effort to establish the new facility in The Hague. During the year, ICMP forensic staff delivered briefings, workshops and training for colleagues from the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Netherlands Forensic Institute, Leiden University and the Erasmus Medical Center of Rotterdam, as well as forensic scientists from agencies in countries where ICMP maintains programs. By July 2019, the 5th anniversary of the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, ICMP's work with the Netherlands Forensic Institute had helped to identify 296 of the 298 victims.

Throughout the year, the [Data Systems and Coordination Department](#) worked on upgrading the Matching Application, the key tool that makes it possible to compare DNA profiles from families of the missing with DNA from unidentified human remains. Data Systems also developed a new algorithm to manage names that are uploaded to the Identification Database Management System (iDMS), making it possible to prevent duplication of iDMS records.

In the second half of the year, the [Center for Excellence and Learning](#) was formally named after the late Wim Kok, who served as an ICMP Commissioner from 2001 until his death in 2018. The CEL staff, which was expanded at the beginning of the year, created new learning and development tools, such as Blended Learning and simulations, and delivered customized training at headquarters and in Baghdad and Bogota.

All of these activities were sustained through the disciplined use of resources and optimal deployment of ICMP's specialist expertise in rule-of-law-based missing persons processes. We will maintain this approach as we continue to work with governments and other partners, including families of the missing, to fulfill our global mandate.

Kathryne Bomberger
Director-General



REPORT BY THE CHAIR



Ambassador (ret) Thomas J. Miller
Chair

Throughout 2019, the International Commission on Missing Persons systematically improved its capacity to implement its treaty mandate – to secure the cooperation of governments and others in locating missing persons from conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, organized crime, irregular migration and other causes and to assist them in doing so.

ICMP worked hard to ensure that its programs fulfil donors' expectations and strategic aspirations. Our funding in 2019 – US\$16.2 million – was higher than in any previous year, which made it possible for us to move forward on a number of fronts.

In late February, when ICMP announced that it had made its first DNA matches using MPS, the donor of the MPS equipment, Dutch biotechnology company QIAGEN, publicly expressed satisfaction with its collaboration with ICMP. As these results came just a year after The Hague laboratory became fully operational, we are optimistic for the future.

In February, we welcomed the former Foreign Minister of El Salvador, María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila, and the former Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Bert Koenders, as members of the ICMP Commission, followed in May by the Ambassador of Germany to the Netherlands, Dirk Brengelmann. At the end of the year, in December, we used video conferencing to hold a virtual Board of Commissioners meeting, a first that will be repeated each December to complement the annual in-person Board of Commissioners meetings in June. The biannual meetings will allow us to maintain the momentum of discussion and action at Board level.

States are increasingly recognizing that accounting for the missing is an investment in peace; that it is an indispensable element in peacemaking and peacekeeping. They also recognize that ICMP, as the only international organization tasked exclusively with addressing this issue, has a unique role to play. With its small staff managing a portfolio of effective programs, ICMP applies financial discipline as it fulfils its global mandate. In 2019, several of our long-standing donors extended their support and major new donors were engaged. However, while efforts to secure program funding are moving forward satisfactorily, obtaining funding for Headquarters operations, which are essential to support country programs, remains a major challenge.

At its June meeting, the Board of Commissioners was briefed on the results of a three-year administrative and structural overhaul, which followed ratification of the ICMP Agreement and the move to The Hague. One of the key elements in this exercise was

the updating of Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. This has enabled ICMP to recruit and retain staff on terms that are comparable with other International Organizations. Small Grants Policy and Management guidelines were also completed, and we introduced a new Document Repository with more than 10,000 documents and more than 22,000 files, as well as a Procurement Planner.

Work was undertaken to develop a strategic security risk management framework and operational and security planning, which led to the issuing of a new Security Accountability and Crisis Management Framework in November. In the meantime, the Information Technology department laid the groundwork for a data security gap analysis in preparation for obtaining ISO 27001 accreditation. This will support assurances to families that data shared with ICMP is secure.

The systematic and detailed attention to efficiency, transparency and security reflects ICMP's commitment to fulfilling its mandate. We were able to do this in 2019 through the hard work and extraordinary talent of our staff, and by being responsive to the needs of our partners – an approach that we will continue to apply.

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 the Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons (hereinafter: the ICMP Agreement), thereby resolving to establish 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 and identifying 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, supported by directors who manage cross-cutting programs. The *Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons* establishes a Conference of States 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. Afghanistan became a State Party by way of accession in 2019, bringing the total number of States Parties to eight.

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 nine. The Board meets twice a year to discuss ICMP's overall goals, fundraising and program implementation.



The members of the Board are:



H.E. 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 Foreign
Minister of Norway.
ICMP Commissioner
since September
2013.



Rt. Hon. Alistair
Burt

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



Judge Sanji
Monageng

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



Ms. María Eugenia
Brizuela de Ávila

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



Mr. Bert Koenders

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



H.E. Ambassador
Dirk Brengelmann

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

1.3. Conference of States Parties

The Conference of States Parties (CSP) represents States Parties to the ICMP Agreement 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, constituted in 2015 under the terms of the ICMP Agreement, considers ICMP's reports on activities, proposes policy directives for the Board of Commissioners' program of work, and recommends to States Parties measures to advance the aims of the Commission.

International organizations may be invited to participate in meetings of the CSP as observers. The number of participating States Parties and observers (States Signatories, other states and International Organizations) has grown from three States Parties (that had signed and ratified the agreement) and seven observers, including two State signatories, [in 2015](#), to a total of 17 at its last [session in 2018](#), with six States Parties. The CSP's Financial Committee, which provides the primary forum in which ICMP's financial strategy is developed together with donors, meets annually. All ICMP's governing bodies have adopted Rules of Procedure and comply with corresponding obligations.

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 plans to encourage enlarged observer participation.

Belgium, Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom are currently either Parties, or Signatories to the ICMP Agreement, whereas Afghanistan became a State Party in November 2019 by way of accession. 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.

STATES PARTIES			
Party	Signature	Ratification R=Ratification, Acceptance, Approval or Notification A=Accession	Entry into force
Afghanistan		30-10-2019 (A)	29-11-2019
Belgium	15-12-2014		
Chile	14-12-2015	17-09-2018 (R)	17-10-2018
Cyprus	14-12-2015	07-06-2018 (R)	07-07-2018
El Salvador	18-11-2015		
Luxembourg	15-12-2014	17-05-2016 (R)	16-06-2016
The Netherlands	15-12-2014	17-06-2015 (R)	17-07-2015
Serbia	16-12-2015	21-07-2017 (R)	20-08-2017
Sweden	15-12-2014	14-04-2015 (R)	14-05-2015
United Kingdom	15-12-2014	14-04-2015 (R)	14-05-2015

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 States 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 6 June 2019, the Committee noted that the ICMP's external auditors (KPMG) had once again provided the organization with a positive, "unqualified" audit opinion 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. The Committee noted that ICMP's country programs depend on support from Headquarters, and ICMP is consequently obliged to secure adequate funding for these core services. The Committee acknowledged that to provide stability and long-term sustainability, Headquarters require dedicated grants of approximately USD 2.5 million per annum.



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 assists governments in their efforts to conduct missing persons investigations. It co-founded the Missing Persons Institute in Bosnia and Herzegovina, helped create the Kosovo Government Commission on Missing Persons, and helped create the Regional Missing Persons Group for the former Yugoslavia. ICMP has assisted in the creation of legislation on missing persons in the Western Balkans, Iraq and elsewhere. To enhance domestic capabilities and cooperation among states in the Mediterranean in accounting for missing migrants, ICMP helped create and facilitates the work of the Joint Process. 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 cooperation with responsible agencies and institutions in partner countries, ensuring that it contributes to and supports good governance and democratic responsibility.

ICMP Work in Numbers

- ICMP has processed 72,562 post-mortem samples, successfully obtaining 52,378 DNA profiles, which represent close to 27,000 individuals.
- The post-mortem samples were recovered in 30 countries
- ICMP has retrieved and profiled more than 102,000 reference samples from family members whose relatives are missing
- ICMP has made more than 44,400 DNA matches – representing 20,592 individuals



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



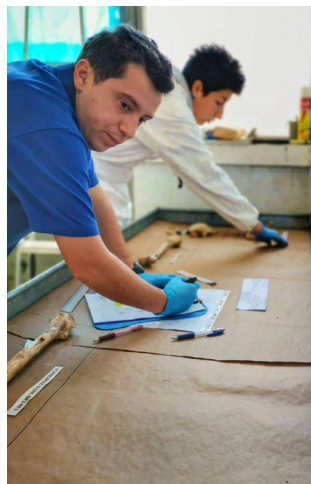
III. CROSS-CUTTING PROGRAMS

3.1. Civil Society Initiatives

ICMP helps domestic and international authorities 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 families of the missing through education, training and grant programs that empower recipients. It works with survivor groups to rebuild trust and with states in transition to ensure that families of the missing participate in the process of accounting for their relatives. It works to ensure that families and civil society participate in the creation of institutions, legislation, and policies relevant to missing persons. In cases where the State lacks political will, 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.



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

A large-scale approach to locating and identifying the missing, including high-throughput extraction automation that does not take the ethnic, religious or national origin of the missing person into account, 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 governments and 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 processes while promoting good governance – an approach that gives ICMP a unique role among International Organizations.



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



Massively Parallel Sequencing (MPS)

Massively Parallel Sequencing (MPS) is a DNA analysis technique that makes it possible to successfully test bone samples that are badly burned or otherwise highly degraded, and to compare DNA profiles from unidentified human remains with those of more distant relatives to establish conclusive kinship matches. MPS significantly increases the amount of genetic information that can be derived from a single biological sample and requires only very short intact fragments of DNA. The technique makes it possible to design DNA tests that target data from thousands of individual chromosomal locations.

MPS technology vastly increases the scope for human identification. In 2019, with support from QIAGEN Corporation, Spain's University of Santiago de Compostela, and Sweden's Linköping University and National Board of Forensic Medicine, ICMP began developing an MPS system specifically for missing persons applications. Identifications that were previously impossible are now being made at the ICMP DNA laboratory in The Hague at a steady rate with this MPS system.

With MPS testing as well as traditional systems, one of the central aims of the ICMP lab is the continued refinement of DNA methods, workflow, and integrated practices to advance global capabilities in missing persons identification. These capabilities are intended to be applied as a global standing capacity that can be turned to in response to episodic events, various longer-term situations or specialized projects, or as augmentation of capacity for partners. Through the Wim Kok Center for Excellence and Learning, ICMP disseminates this expertise to forensic practitioners worldwide.

ICMP's technical assistance comprises three interrelated mechanisms: a standing capacity to conduct high-throughput identifications using DNA testing and kinship matching; a forensic Archaeology and Anthropological Division with expertise in the location, recovery and examination of human remains, and the custom-designed iDMS, which ICMP operates and provides to governments. ICMP's technical resources and expertise have been used in several 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 identification Data Management System (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 of evidence that can be used to secure the rights of surviving families of the missing, and to the provision of scientific identifications. ICMP makes the iDMS available to government authorities and others engaged in missing persons investigations and provides training in its use. The iDMS can be accessed through the ICMP [Online Inquiry Center](#) (OIC), which makes it possible to report a missing person online 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. Information collected through the OIC is stored so that it can be used in the search for missing persons. Users can submit a missing person report by providing details, such as name, date of birth and place where the missing person was last seen. Information submitted to the OIC will only be shared with the express consent of those who provided it.

The iDMS platform facilitates collaboration and integration of information from various jurisdictions, which is necessary to resolve cases of missing persons that take place across national borders.

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

As an international organization based in The Hague, ICMP securely centralizes and holds 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. ICMP complies with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union without derogation. (See ICMP Work in Numbers on p.22)

3.4. Assistance to Justice

ICMP's assistance to the justice program activities have been extensive, in particular in the context of the ICTY and domestic trials concerning the wars in the former Yugoslavia, but more recently also under agreements with the ICC and UNITAD. In 2019, ICMP signed a cooperation agreement with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM). Much experience has been gained and processes have been developed for ICMP to support international and domestic criminal justice processes in an effective manner. Also, beyond criminal justice processes, judicial and law enforcement institutions are required to conduct effective investigations of the fate of missing persons and the circumstances of their disappearance as part of procedural human rights guarantees, in particular the right to life. ICMP's assistance to the justice program in the context of criminal justice is one facet of supporting a rule-of-law-based approach to the issue of the missing.

3.5. Training Programs

ICMP's key program activities include training in the use of specific thematic competencies. ICMP's Wim Kok Center for Excellence and Learning (CEL) provides learning and development resources to meet the organization's needs and training goals. Resources include readily available and peer-reviewed learning contents and guidelines on defining learning needs, effective delivery of training, coaching, mentoring and continuous professional development, and monitoring and feedback. The CEL promotes an extensive online learning program including tutorials and simulations of real world processes of missing persons investigations.



The Wim Kok Center for Excellence and Learning (CEL) provides learning and development resources

The CEL's work is closely coordinated with ICMP's Quality Management System (QMS). Through its documented training on standard operating procedures that define technical work, the CEL contributes to quality assurance in forensic science. The CEL coordinates all training activities related to staff competence, implementation of new methods, induction of new staff, and individual training records for professional development. It also defines training best practice, formulates standard training presentations, provides training feedback, and organizes and conducts training. The CEL uses needs assessments, professional training delivery and outcome monitoring to meet training goals.

The CEL disseminates MPS and other cutting-edge technical developments in investigating missing persons cases, as well as standards and policies related to the missing person issue.

Through the CEL, 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, as well as prosecutors and court appointed experts. In Iraq, for example, ICMP has trained civil society, families of the missing, academics, the media, law enforcement, parliamentarians, and technical experts in fields such as the use of harmonized data systems and advanced forensic techniques.

3.6. Missing Migrants Program

ICMP's Missing Migrants and Refugees Program supports the development of a sustainable process to account for migrants and refugees who have gone missing in the Mediterranean region. In June 2018, at ICMP's invitation, representatives of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta met in Rome to launch a Joint Process to enhance domestic capabilities and cooperation among these states in accounting for missing migrants. The participation of other European states, as well as of countries of transit and origin is being sought.

The Joint Process emphasizes the importance of cooperation among countries of destination, countries of origin, and transit countries. As part of the opening phase of the Joint Process, ICMP systematically assessed participating countries' forensics, law enforcement and emergency response systems capacities, and their protection and assistance frameworks to support families of missing migrants. The resulting draft "Proposals for Action" were presented at the second Joint Process meeting held on 13 June 2019 at ICMP Headquarters. The assessment found that effective and sustainable data processing solutions could facilitate the use of data collected in countries of origin, transit countries and destination countries, drawing together identification elements across distances and jurisdictions.



ICMP organized a workshop in Malta in February

The process to create national focal points to facilitate cooperation among states and support outreach to families of missing migrants began in 2019, and ICMP and the Italian Special Commissioner for Missing Persons explored avenues for cooperation based on a 2016 Agreement to assist in the specific cases of shipwreck victims. MPS and other significant scientific developments could be used in such work. ICMP also supports cooperation among international and other organizations. In 2019, ICMP convened a second roundtable to discuss avenues for assisting the Joint Process countries. The participants, representing IOM, INTERPOL, EUROPOL, ICRC, OHCHR, FRONTEX, UNHCR, and the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes, expressed their support for the activities of the Joint Process, including the implementation of the Proposals for Action.

Profile: Walid Khalil Murad

In December 2015, the vessel Walid Khalil Murad and his wife, Jinar, had hoped would bring them and their three children, Nishtiman, Nashwan, and Nashat, to safety in Europe capsized near the Greek coastline. Murad lost sight of his family: he has never found them. A member of the Yezidi community, Murad had escaped with his family from Sinjar in northern Iraq after their town was overrun by Da'esh.

"I am lost," Murad told a journalist from TIME Magazine. "Sometimes I talk to myself — I literally talk to myself — and say 'maybe, just maybe, they are still alive', then I say to myself, 'but the sea was very difficult, they did not have a chance.'"

Murad has spoken at events organized by ICMP, describing the challenges faced by all those who struggle to account for missing loved ones, particularly those who have been displaced and who must overcome language and administrative barriers to pursue the truth in countries other than their own. As he told TIME, "Put yourself in my place, not for a day, but just for one minute — imagine that you have lost your family the same way I lost my family." If he knew their fate, he says, "at least I could go and visit their graves, and just know that they are there."



Walid Khalil Murad

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. ICMP, working with a range of technology partners, is a world leader in both areas. 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 to address the complex challenge of missing persons.

ICMP maintains agreements with

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- INTERPOL
- The International Criminal Court (ICC)
- The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
- The Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office

In Iraq, ICMP has an agreement with the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD)

In relation to Syria, ICMP has an agreement with the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM).

In 2016, ICMP launched the Inter-Agency Committee on Missing Persons, which includes:

- IOM
- INTERPOL
- ICC
- ICRC
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- Europol
- UN OHCHR
- FRONTEX

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).

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, the manner in which the issue of the missing is addressed has undergone evolutionary change, 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. Though it is part of 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 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 seeks to develop, advance and raise awareness about 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 people – 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 is nonetheless a prerequisite for 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 in the past.

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](#)
- A fifth was organized in [Berlin in December 2018](#)
- A sixth was organized in [The Hague in December 2019](#)



The December 2019 Profiles of the Missing in The Hague highlighted efforts now underway to address the huge legacy of missing persons in Colombia

The December 2019 Profiles of the Missing in The Hague highlighted efforts now underway to address the huge legacy of missing persons in Colombia. As many as 120,000 people are missing from five decades of conflict in Colombia, and all sectors of society have been affected. Fourteen family members of missing persons and representatives of civil society organizations working on this issue travelled from Colombia to participate in the event.

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 or other causes describe their own experience and explain the social and political strategies they have developed in order to seek truth, justice and reparation. The events explore 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. Discussions also examine how survivors assert their rights, and review the international and domestic mechanisms that address the issue of missing persons, and the effective rights-based, rule-of-law strategies that can be deployed.

The Profiles of the Missing series has contributed to a new international discourse on effective, law-based strategies for addressing the global challenge of missing persons. This discourse is encapsulated in the Eight Principles derived from 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 principles are known as the Paris Principles as they were presented at the November 2018 Paris Peace Forum. In 2019, ICMP, highlighting the underlying premise that accounting for the missing is an investment in peace, continued to advance the Paris Principles.

The Paris Principles

At the PARIS PEACE FORUM on 12 November 2018, the 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.

V. FEATURED PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS



V. FEATURED PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS

5.1. Europe

5.1.1. Albania

In March 2019, at the request of the Tirana District Prosecutor, ICMP sent a team of forensic anthropologists to Tirana to assist Albanian experts at the Institute of Legal Medicine (ILM) in the anthropological examination of 13 sets of unidentified mortal remains excavated in 2010 from the Dajti site, near Tirana. Twenty-one post-mortem samples were taken in accordance with ICMP's standard operating procedures and in the presence of a representative of the Prosecutor's Office. The samples were labelled, packed and sent to the ICMP laboratory in The Hague for DNA testing and matching. Throughout 2019, ICMP reached out to families of the missing, explaining the importance of families providing genetic references in order to facilitate DNA-led identifications



ICMP submitted the first two DNA Match Reports to the Albanian authorities in October 2019

of missing persons. As a result, dozens of families provided genetic samples to ICMP. Subsequent to DNA testing of the families' reference samples and the post-mortem samples taken from the 13 cases of human remains stored at the ILM in Tirana, ICMP submitted the first two DNA Match Reports to the ILM in October 2019. The results, which will enable the authorities to identify two individuals who went missing during the Communist era, were announced at a joint [press conference](#) organized by ICMP and the EU Delegation in Tirana (see below). One additional DNA Match Report was delivered to the ILM in January 2020 after necessary additional testing.

5.1.2. Western Balkans

In the Western Balkans, ICMP has supported regional cooperation in the search for the missing, and fostered cooperation among civil society organizations and governments. It has pioneered the use of state-of-the-art DNA identification methods and advanced database analysis to locate and identify large numbers of missing persons.

Berlin Process Meeting in Poznan, Poland





Marking of the International Day of the Disappeared in Sarajevo

To date, more than 70 percent of the approximately 40,000 people who went missing during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia have been accounted for. Some 18,000 have been identified on the basis of ICMP DNA match reports. In order to make these DNA identifications, ICMP gathered reference samples (blood) from 93,727 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 44,604 DNA profiles extracted from unidentified human remains found in mass and clandestine graves.

On 4 July 2019 in Poznan, a meeting on accounting for persons missing from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia was held in the framework of the 6th Berlin Process Summit. The regional Missing Persons Group (MPG), which comprises representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, reported on progress it had made in implementing its Framework Plan. ICMP is facilitating the work of the MPG with support from the United Kingdom.

During the year, ICMP helped to improve cooperation among domestic institutions through the participation of national authorities in the Operational Group to Resolve NN (unidentified) Cases and the Operational Group for the Database of Active Missing Persons Cases from the former Yugoslavia. Besides regular meetings of the operational groups, national authorities participated in numerous bilateral and trilateral meetings organized by ICMP to resolve country-specific issues. The creation of the Database was a significant development as it was the first initiative of its kind in which countries that had formerly been at war agreed to share information collectively. As a direct consequence of this project, national authorities reported to ICMP a general increase in trust in other national authorities.

ICMP maintained its support for the Regional Coordination of Associations of Families of Missing Persons through its small grants program, enabling the families to monitor the implementation of the Joint Framework Plan and to advocate for their rights in an effective way. The flow of information to family associations was boosted through a series of info-sharing meetings across the region, with the participation of national authorities, providing a platform for families to ask questions and receive answers from those responsible for the process in their countries.

ICMP continued to support excavations in 2019. It assisted at 35 excavations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a result of which 38 cases of human remains were recovered. It conducted anthropological examinations of 277 cases of human remains, the majority of which had been excavated prior to 2019. ICMP collected 523 reference samples from families of the missing for the purposes of DNA analysis, and issued DNA match reports to the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby enabling the competent authorities to accurately identify 83 missing persons. In addition, ICMP submitted a number of DNA match reports during the year that were derived from Massively Parallel Sequencing techniques, enabling authorities in the region to make formal identifications that would not have been possible using older DNA technologies.

ICMP also continued to donate technical equipment to laboratories in order to expand the domestic capacity to sustain an effective missing persons process.

Profile: Mevlida Hadžihasanagić

Mevlida Hadžihasanagić is President of the Association for Searching for Missing and Detained Persons from Hadžići, a district near Sarajevo. During the war, Mevlida lost her sister and her brother-in-law. Her brother-in-law was abducted in front of his family. Mevlida raised her niece and nephew. “The easiest thing was to feed the children,” she says, “but the hardest thing, especially for them, was the trauma and the loss of their parents’ love.” Mevlida’s association works to account for 74 missing persons. The largest group consists of 46 men who were taken from their homes in Hadžići in 1992 and transported to a detention center in Lukavica, a suburb of Sarajevo. Witnesses later reported that the 46 could not be accounted for after a night of beatings. The association has received information regarding mass graves, but none have been found. Mevlida is determined to continue searching. “Unless we keep looking,” she says, “and unless we continue to try and prosecute the perpetrators, the victims will eventually be forgotten, and that would be the saddest thing.”



Mevlida Hadžihasanagić

5.2. Latin America and the Caribbean

5.2.1. Colombia

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 listed 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.



In 2019 ICMP began implementing the program, “Assisting Colombia to address the issue of Missing Persons”, funded by the European Union.



ICMP worked with stakeholders across the country to foster sustained political will on the issue of missing persons

In early 2019 ICMP began implementing the program, “Assisting Colombia to address the issue of Missing Persons”, funded by the European Union. The Program aims to strengthen the technical capacity of the Search Unit for Persons Listed as Disappeared, an institution created under the Peace Agreement. It also aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society to contribute to the efforts of the Search Unit. In addition to training experts from the Search Unit, ICMP is analyzing provisions for the preservation and custody of unidentified human remains in locations such as cemeteries, state laboratories and repositories. ICMP cooperates with family associations and civil society organizations to support the systematic collection of data to facilitate the submission of cases to the Search Unit. ICMP’s Small-Grants program supported 14 projects that were underway in 2019. ICMP also held workshops to increase the capacity of civil society to participate in the search process and interact with the responsible institutions.

During the year, ICMP developed a constructive relationship with the Search Unit. ICMP held training sessions on data systems for Search Unit staff and civil society partners. ICMP also deployed technical forensic staff to the field and implemented the joint plan for the assessment of alternative means to store unidentified human remains.

ICMP worked with stakeholders across the country to foster sustained political will on the issue of missing persons and an impartial approach by institutions in securing the rights of families of the missing.

Operational results in 2019 achieved with ICMP support include:

- Families of the missing from marginalized areas began formally taking part in the Search Unit’s Advisory Committee.
- Families of the missing across Colombia became involved in the overall missing persons process and their cases were documented.
- Financial assistance was provided to 20 CSOs, nearly half of which had not received external funding previously, and more than two-thirds of which are led by women.
- ICMP launched a program to support the UBPD in the collection of data from families of the missing through Data Partnership Agreements with Colombian CSOs

- ICMP and the UBPD are working on a cooperation agreement, which will include the transfer of data to a secure data system held by the UBPD;
- Families of the missing have enhanced their organizational strategies and knowledge about the missing persons process in training courses organized by ICMP.

ICMP was active in 18 of 32 departments and worked with around 50 CSOs from 24 departments.

One of the CSOs that received a small grant, the Association for the Integral Development of Victim, held gatherings for 40 children with missing relatives. Using art and play, the organization taught the children about a pre-colonial chieftain, human rights and disappearances. For more information, please see this [article](#).

Profile: Luz Dary



Luz Dary

Luz Dary, together with Fabiola Rodríguez and Laura Rosa Vélez, co-founded and runs Mothers for Life, an organization for displaced families and victims of enforced disappearance in the Colombian port of Buenaventura, which in recent years has become an arms and drug trafficking center where criminals run terror campaigns to control the civilian population.

Luz's brother, Luis Alberto Santiesteban, disappeared on 23 November 1998, and her cousin, Pedro Manuel Santiesteban Córdoba, disappeared on 23 April 2000. She herself has been a victim of displacement and sexual violence. Luz was also the legal representative of the Afro-descendant territory of La Gloria, a land with special protection under Colombian law given its ethnic and cultural characteristics.

Enforced disappearance for Afro communities has unique and special consequences on the process of mourning their loved ones. At birth the umbilical cord is buried under a coconut palm, to be unearthed at death to begin the ancestral song of praise. This bids farewell to the loved one and allows his or her spirit to be separated from the earth.

Luz says her work with Mothers for Life focuses not only on the search for missing relatives but also on memorial actions to heal a community that is still under threat, and on searching for and burying their loved ones in a manner that respects their

culture and customs. ICMP is an important partner, she says, by supporting her group's work as well as that of the government.

In 2019, ICMP supported the Mothers for Life in the development of a legal constitution and the strengthening of organizational capacities. ICMP also helped document 30 cases of disappearances in the Pacific region. Mothers for Life collaborates with and is supported by the Nidya Erika Bautista Foundation. It took part in the ICMP Profiles of the Missing event in December 2019 in The Hague.

5.2.2. Mexico

A state-led strategy to confront drug trafficking and organized crime as well as conflicts related to the use of natural resources has in the past decade involved a large number of killings, internal displacements and disappearances. The levels of insecurity in Mexico have created an environment in which individuals disappear, and in which their families, human rights defenders and civil society organizations are subject to threats and violence and risk being forcibly disappeared.



During 2020, ICMP will help Nuevo Leon to create a dedicated missing persons workflow in the DNA lab in Monterrey

In December 2018, ICMP signed a cooperative agreement with the civil society organization Citizens for the Support of Human Rights (CADHAC) to implement a four-year, USAID-funded project designed to build the capacity of the Prosecutor General of the State of Nuevo Leon in the fields of Science and Technology and Data Systems. Nuevo Leon has about 3,000 missing persons cases.

Prosecutor General Gustavo Adolfo Guerrero Gutiérrez and officials from USAID and CADHAC devised a four-year strategic plan during a [visit to ICMP Headquarters](#) in April 2019. On the basis of this plan, between May and September 2019, ICMP assessed the capacity of the Institute of Criminalistics and Expert Services of the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Special Prosecutor of Missing Persons of Nuevo Leon and other entities responsible for addressing the issue of missing persons. A work plan to address the assessment findings was approved by the Prosecutor General in November 2019. As part of the work plan, in December 2019, ICMP conducted a joint inventory of equipment and reagents needed to improve the workflow in the missing persons DNA laboratory. ICMP also launched a working group for the development of specialized data solutions on missing persons for all relevant Nuevo Leon entities.

Mexico's National Commissioner on Missing Persons, Karla Quintana, and the Executive Secretary of the Ayotzinapa Special Commission, Félix Santana Ángeles, provisionally identified areas of collaboration and future ICMP assistance to the federal authorities during a visit to ICMP Headquarters in October 2019.

Profile: Gustavo Adolfo Guerrero Gutiérrez, Prosecutor General of Nuevo Leon

In 2018, Gustavo Adolfo Guerrero Gutiérrez was elected the first Prosecutor General in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo Leon. He leads a new independent office responsible for investigating and initiating criminal prosecutions. Such independent offices were created across Mexico's federal and state jurisdictions following reforms introduced by a 2014 amendment to the country's Constitution. Before the reforms, prosecutors' offices were not independent and did not tackle impunity effectively.

Mr Guerrero Gutiérrez has launched a plan to make Nuevo Leon's delivery of justice modern and efficient. He has made it possible to file criminal complaints online and introduced other reforms that increase access to justice – moves for which he has been lauded. While serving as president of Nuevo Leon's Supreme Court, Mr Guerrero Gutierrez established a virtual tribunal, an award-winning format that reduced the time needed for court deliberations and resulted in significant financial and environmental savings.

In April 2019, Mr Guerrero Gutierrez spent a week at ICMP Headquarters in The Hague along with representatives from the NGO Citizens in Support of Human Rights to discuss a strategy to account for the more than 3,000 persons who are missing in Nuevo Leon. The strategy includes assistance from ICMP to enhance capacities for identification of missing persons, financed by a four-year USAID grant.

“We are launching a new phase in Nuevo Leon whereby we recognize the State's responsibility to conduct effective investigations that result in finding missing persons and in ensuring justice for victims,” Mr Guerrero Gutierrez said during his visit. “We are willing to develop new ways of working because we recognize that we need to ensure the sustainability of our efforts for a complex problem while providing certainty and results to the families.”



Gustavo Adolfo Guerrero Gutiérrez

5.3. Middle East and North Africa

5.3.1. Iraq

Support to the Iraqi authorities, 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 1 million. ICMP has been engaged in Iraq since 2005 and established offices in the country in 2008 to support a sustainable and effective process to account for missing persons. ICMP's Iraq program aims 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;
- 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 strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations in their work with families of the missing and in building bridges with government authorities.

In 2019, ICMP saw a reinvigoration of its partnership with the Iraqi National Team and achieved important milestones in supporting a sustainable missing persons strategy. To improve domestic legislation and strengthen the capacity of Iraqi institutions to secure the rights of families of the missing, ICMP conducted an analysis of the current legal framework of Iraq in relation to missing persons. ICMP also made recommendations on

legislation compensating “victims of military operations, military mistakes, and terrorist operations,” as well as draft legislation on enforced disappearance.

In addition, ICMP worked closely with the National Team to help it improve its capacity to conduct missing persons investigations. This included planning joint deployments to excavate previously safeguarded sites of forensic interest related to missing Yazidis in Kocho village, near Sinjar. ICMP provided logistical and financial support and deployed forensic archaeology specialists who monitored the work and mentored National Team members.

To increase the active participation of families and CSOs in the process of locating and identifying their relatives, ICMP facilitated excavation site visits to Kocho for families of the missing and civil society representatives. ICMP also engaged with Yazidi families in the town of Baadre east of Kocho, where a large number of Yazidi took refuge during the events of 2014 – it was the first international organization to do so. ICMP reached out to a large number of representatives of the Yazidi community during the year. Together with the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence, ICMP reached out to Yazidi families in Duhok, and in a crucial step to develop DNA-based identification, ICMP and the National Team conducted the first joint genetic data and reference sample collection campaign in Qadiya IDP camp in Duhok Governorate.

ICMP will continue to work with the Iraqi authorities to advance domestic legislation and technical capacity



Under the auspices of ICMP's Wim Kok Center for Excellence and Learning, training was provided to staff from the National Team and CSOs. This included:

- Training in forensic archaeology and anthropology to enhance the National Team's technical skills to locate and identify missing persons and conduct post-mortem examinations;
- Training in the collection of missing persons data and reference samples for DNA analysis; and
- Training at ICMP's DNA laboratory at Headquarters to enable two Iraqi DNA scientists to develop their knowledge and technical skills in the handling of DNA samples for DNA-based identification.

Iraq experienced a period of social and political turbulence beginning in the last quarter of 2019, something that could pose a challenge to the momentum that ICMP and the National Team have been able to create. Nevertheless, ICMP continued to maintain regular contact with the Iraqi authorities at all levels, especially with respect to developing strategic and operational plans. Similarly, ICMP continued to solicit the support of the diplomatic community in order to maintain focus on the missing persons process.

Profile: Sultan Barakat



Sultan Barakat

When Da'esh attacked Sinjar in Iraq in August 2014, Sultan Barakat was just 14 years old. His family lived in a farm house between the main road to Qahtanyia and Mount Sinjar. "My family, my relatives gathered together to flee to the mountains," Sultan remembers, "but by early morning waves of families had arrived at our house; they needed water and something to eat in order to continue to the mountains." Even in a time of danger, the family could not turn away guests.

"While we were bringing water and food for other families, Da'esh arrived at our house. First, they locked all the women and small children in one room. For boys my age, they checked under the arms, and as I had no hair they took me among the women." After being locked in a sheep shelter with the women and children, Sultan looked through a small window and saw Da'esh fighters open fire on his father, his brothers, his relatives and the family's guests. The fighters then came for the women. They took the young women and left the others for later.

Sultan and his mother and grandmother managed to escape. "My mother ran to my father; she held his hand as he took his last breath," he says. One of his brothers

was killed; his other brother and his two sisters were taken alive. Sultan and his mother left before sunset and reached the mountains. His grandmother spent the night with the dead body of her son. Then she covered him with a blanket and walked to Mount Sinjar, the only refuge for tens of thousands of Yezidis.

ICMP assists authorities in Northern Iraq in their efforts to account for those who went missing as a result of the Da'esh attack. This includes support to the Iraqi National Team during exhumations at mass graves in the village of Kocho in Sinjar in the summer of 2019, and assistance during Data and Reference Sample Collection in the Qadiya Camp in Duhok at the end of the year. A large number of people living in the camp belong to the Yezidi community from the Sinjar area.

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, and works 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. In the long term, it aims to support the development of a systematic and effective missing persons program that has the capacity to resolve a large number of cases, enabling families to access their rights to the truth, to justice and to reparation. Such efforts are fundamental to upholding the rule of law and should therefore play a major role in any post-conflict settlement. 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 2019, multiple online campaigns aimed to raise families' awareness of their rights and to explain how missing persons can be reported using ICMP's Online Inquiry Center (OIC). In the course of the year, the Syria/MENA team received 918 online reports via the OIC.

The Syria/MENA program conducted 53 outreach seminars during the year, working closely with civil society organizations. A total of 1,039 family members attended, 70 percent of whom were female. The seminars raised awareness among families and gave them an opportunity to inquire about and report their loved ones, using safe and secure means.

A small grants program at the end of the year drew 16 proposals from CSOs, 10 of which were accepted after review. One of them, Nophotozone, used the grant to hold outreach sessions to enhance understanding of legal issues among families of the missing, in particular women. The outreach sessions motivated participants to report their missing relatives. The number of participants increased with each session, as those who took part told others about the usefulness of the events. In a sign of new-found confidence, the families taking part expressed interest in meeting stakeholders to share their stories and advocate their rights. Nophotozone also collected testimonies from families of the missing and used these to produce a short film.

In addition, ICMP signed three Data Partnership Agreements and two Implementation Agreements 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.

At the end of 2019, the Syria/MENA Program conducted three seminars to further engage female-headed CSOs and female-headed households. The seminars provided culturally safe spaces for women where they discussed sensitive issues freely and comfortably. In these safe spaces, ICMP, with the support of trusted female-headed representatives, facilitated an exchange of knowledge and experience on issues related to missing persons and the specific challenges and concerns of female-headed households.

A partner mapping was developed in Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq to provide a comprehensive overview of organizations engaged in the issue of missing persons as a result of the conflict in Syria. This will help identify organizations that have the capacity to facilitate access to Syrian families, enabling potential future partnerships.

In May 2019, ICMP launched The Syria Policy Process: Accounting for the Missing Is an Investment in Peace, to foster consultation that will allow Syrian civil society organizations and associations of families of the missing to devise common strategies. The policy process comprises roundtable discussions and consultations that ICMP is holding with families of detained and missing persons. An ICMP conference planned for May 2020 will present views gathered in the process. In May 2019 at ICMP launched the Syria Policy Process at its Headquarters in The Hague. The participants agreed on a set of policy topics that would be discussed through focused roundtables. The topics include detention, the need for an impartial, secure central data system on missing persons, an assessment of existing mechanisms to locate and identify missing persons from the Syria conflict, and future steps needed to ensure that all persons are accounted for.

The first roundtable, held on 31 October and 1 November 2019 in Istanbul, focused on the mechanics and effective deployment of an impartial, central data system as part of a longer-term process of missing persons investigations. Such a system is key to any effort to account for missing persons as it enables the collection, storage and analysis of large amounts of data. A system also would guarantee an impartial approach – something that is particularly important in the complex Syrian situation.

Profile: Noura Ghazi

Noura Ghazi is a lawyer and human rights activist who lives in Beirut. She has worked to defend prisoners of conscience and political prisoners since 2004. Her husband, Bassel Khartabil, was detained in March 2012, just two weeks before their wedding day. Noura and Bassel went ahead with the wedding – in prison. Separated by a physical barrier, they exchanged vows, and Noura’s father placed the ring on her finger. After this, Bassel disappeared in the prison system. His execution was confirmed in August 2017.

Since 2012, Noura has used her professional expertise to provide legal and advocacy guidance to families of detainees. “The first step to change is: to want change and to believe in yourself,” Noura says. She is the co-founder of Free Bassel Campaign and Families for Freedom, and Co-founder and Director of Nophotozone.



Noura Ghazi

VI. MEDIA COVERAGE

The work of ICMP received extensive media coverage in 2019. 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 issue approached ICMP.

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

- Albania: Albanian Daily News, Gazeta Panorama, BalkanWeb.com
- Argentina: Focus Gaming News
- Australia: The Conversation, Yahoo!7 Finance, Mirage News
- Bangladesh: The Daily Star, Dhaka Tribune
- Belgium: De Morgen
- 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, SRNA
- Brazil: A Tarde, A Tribuna, BOL Notícias – Uol, Brasil de Fato, Carta Capital, Correio Braziliense, Correio24horas, G1 - Globo.com, Exame - Abril.com, Estadão, ISTOÉ, Jornal GGN, Metrôpoles, O Globo, Portal Do
- Holanda, R7.com-Notícias, UOL Notícias, Veja.com
- Brunei: Borneo Bulletin Online
- Canada: Digital Journal, APTN News, News- MSN CA
- China: Xinhua News (Eng.), China.org.cn
- Colombia: El Universal
- Croatia: HINA, 24 sata, Vecernji List, N1, Dnevnik.hr, Total Croatia News
- Cuba: Latinx Today
- Denmark: Globalnytt.dk
- Finland: MSN (FI)
- France: France 24 (EN), AFP, RFI English
- Gambia: Foroyaa Newspaper
- Ghana: Pulse [GH], My Joy Online
- Greece: Ekathimerini.com, Economistas, Euro2day, Nooz.gr, NewsNowgr.com

- India: Yahoo! India News, DailyHunt English, Firstpost.com, News18.com, The Quint
- Indonesia: Investasi Online Terintegrasi, Indopremier
- Iran: Iran Daily
- Iraq: Kurdistan News, The Baghdad Post-Iraq news
- Ireland: MSN Ireland
- Israel: Jerusalem Post
- Jordan: The Jordan Times, The Middle East North Africa Financial Network
- Kuwait: Arab Times, Kuwait News Agency
- Lebanon: Nahar Net
- Luxembourg: RTL Today
- Malaysia: Free Malaysia Today, Malay Mail
- Malta: TimesOfMalta.com
- Mexico: Milenio.com
- Montenegro: Vijesti, Dan Online
- Myanmar: Mizzima News
- Nepal: OnlineKhabar – English Edition
- The Netherlands: AD.nl, Diplomat Magazine, EenVandaag, Het Parool, Kamerstukken - Rijksoverheid.nl, Trouw
- New Zealand: The New Zealand Herald, Yahoo! New Zealand – News
- Nigeria: The Punch Nigeria, Pulse.ng, News Africa Now
- Norway: Verdidebatt, Vårt Land
- Pakistan: UrduPoint Network, Business Recorder, Daily Times
- Philippines: Yahoo! News Philippines, The Manila Times Online, Inquirer.net
- Portugal: ZAP- Aeiou
- Qatar: Al Jazeera English, Gulf Times, The Peninsula Qatar
- Romania: Picante Today – Prnewswire
- Russia: Newstube.ru
- Saudi Arabia: Arab News
- Senegal: SeneNews.com
- Serbia: B92, BalkanInsight.com, Danas.rs, Vesti.rs, Tanjug, N1info – Serbia, BBC News na srpskom
- Singapore: Yahoo News Singapore, Channel News Asia
- Slovakia: Správy- Pravda.sk
- South Africa: Bizcommunity.com,
- Spain: World News En Español, EFE Agency – English
- Sri Lanka: The Island, LMD: Sri Lanka Business Magazine

- Sweden: Svenska Dagbladet
- Thailand: The Nation, Bangkok Post
- Turkey: Medical Health News
- Uganda: Ugandans At Heart
- UAE: The National, ArabianBusiness.com, Gulf Today
- UK: Business Insider Uk, Herald Scotland, MSN News UK, NewStatesman, The Northern Echo
- United States: Medium, Business Insider, The Hill, Time Magazine, Yahoo! News, Human Rights Watch, ReliefWeb, Hoy Los Angeles, OZY
- Venezuela: Latin American Herald Tribune
- Vietnam: Hanoitimes
- 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), resulting in an increasing number of followers, visitors, and interactions on social networks. At the end of 2019, ICMP had more than 6,000 followers on its English-language and Arabic-language Facebook pages and around 3,000 on its Kurdish-language Facebook page and almost 800 on its Spanish-language Facebook page. On 30 August, to mark the International Day of the Disappeared, ICMP shared videos from Colombia, the Western Balkans, Syria/MENA and Iraq featuring testimony from survivors.

Social Media	Number of followers at the end of 2018	Number of followers at the end of 2019
Facebook	4642	6042 (+30 %)
Twitter	3605	4588 (+27 %)
LinkedIn	2319	4052 (+75 %)

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. FUNDING

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 programs), and private donations. From its inception in 1996 through 2019, more than 90 percent of ICMP's funding was provided by government sources, with the United States, the European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom being the biggest contributors.

ICMP works continuously to identify sources of funding for its programs and activities. In 2019, it continued to focus on fundraising and the expansion of its donor base. In addition to maintaining the engagement of current donors, ICMP, with support and assistance from its Board of Commissioners, made substantial efforts to raise funds for structural/core costs that will allow it to support its country programs and thematic programs. In this regard, support has been provided by the Swedish International Development Agency and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Still, core funding remains a challenge and the organization will continue its efforts to secure this category of funding.

In Iraq in 2019, ICMP successfully completed work financed by grants from the government of Canada, and secured a substantial grant from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Iraq program is also supported by the European Union Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (EU FPI), and the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. ICMP continues to seek funding for its Iraq program and has received positive indications from the government of Germany.

ICMP's Syria/MENA program continues to be supported by EU FPI, while an additional grant has also been secured from the government of the United Kingdom. Positive indications of potential funding have been received from the government of Germany and the EU Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR).

ICMP's Colombia program is funded by EU FPI, and the Western Balkans program maintains grants funding from the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), the governments of the United Kingdom and Sweden, and USAID. In 2019, ICMP secured additional funding from the EU for regional operations in the Western Balkans and a small program in Albania.

In 2019, the Government of Switzerland continued to fund ICMP's Missing Migrants Program.

During 2020, ICMP will work on maintaining and expanding its donor base to raise funds for structural/core costs and programs including Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) efforts, and the Wim Kok Center for Excellence and Learning (CEL), and it will continue to collaborate with universities, private industry and others to incorporate new technologies.

VIII. LOOKING AHEAD

Covid-19

In early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented global challenge. ICMP quickly adapted in order to be able to continue fulfilling its mandate and meeting program objectives while taking necessary – and legally required – precautions to prevent further spread of the pandemic. Working mostly from home, staff found creative solutions to continue carrying out ICMP’s important work. This involved holding online meetings and conference calls in order to maintain contact with all stakeholders, including authorities, civil society organizations and families of the missing. The work to account for the missing is an investment in peace and stability that is needed at all times. This need does not diminish and is in fact accentuated during global events such as a pandemic.

Indeed, the Covid-19 disaster has resulted in a new and mounting missing persons problem, with some countries faced with unidentified bodies of people who succumbed to the disease. ICMP therefore proposes that biological samples for DNA profiling for human identification purposes are taken and analyzed for all unidentified or unclaimed Covid-19 victims, and that the location of bodies, for example in graves, be accurately documented.

Colombia

ICMP will continue to support the Search Unit and the institutions working to account for missing persons in the country, as well as with civil society organizations. Working with the Search Unit, ICMP will complete a survey of existing provisions for the preservation and custody of unidentified human remains in cemeteries, universities, state laboratories, and repositories. ICMP will also continue its learning and development program through the Wim Kok Center of Excellence and Learning on topics that will help the Search Unit create a sustainable missing persons process. At the operational level, ICMP will support data collection efforts by CSOs through its Data Partnership Agreements and will



work with the Search Unit to transfer data to its system. ICMP will continue to support CSOs with small grants and publish the results of its mapping of CSOs engaged in the missing persons process. A roundtable process that will bring together Colombian CSOs and Colombian institutions will explore ways of advancing cooperation in many areas, including data collection.

In 2020, ICMP will work in partnership with Colombian CSOs and the Search Unit to collect missing persons data, with a focus on remote locations and families who have traditionally lacked access to State institutions. ICMP's focus will reflect the aspirations of the Peace Agreement, be gender-justice oriented and will integrate specialist approaches to include the participation of minorities and special groups.

Mexico

During 2020, ICMP will help Nuevo Leon to create a dedicated missing persons workflow in the DNA lab in Monterrey. It will support the Prosecutor's Office through intensive mentoring, training and capacity transfer to enhance the technical and scientific strategy for dealing with complex cases, and it will collaborate in developing a data processing system that optimizes existing procedures by switching to digital documentation.

ICMP and the civil society organization Citizens in Support of Human Rights (CADHAC) have partnered to support Nuevo Leon in a manner that is consistent with the General Law on Missing Persons and the procedures and guidelines of the National Search Commission. Through their experience in Nuevo Leon, ICMP and CADHAC will seek to assemble a case study of best practice that can be adopted by the Federal government and by other States in Mexico. ICMP's priority is to transfer experience and resources to help the Government launch a sustainable and effective missing persons process.

Iraq

ICMP's strategy for Iraq builds on the consensus reached at the high-level planning meeting held in The Hague at the beginning of 2019 to develop a sustainable, comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach to accounting for missing persons in Iraq. ICMP will continue to work with the Iraqi authorities to advance domestic legislation and technical capacity in order to sustain an effective missing persons strategy. Moreover, ICMP will continue to promote a constructive dialogue between families of the missing and the National Team, with an emphasis on the inclusive and active participation of families in accounting for the fate of their loved ones. ICMP will work to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to represent and support families of the missing and to advocate for their rights. To help authorities begin the process of creating a National Center on Missing Persons, ICMP will facilitate a major policy meeting in the country towards the end of 2020 and assist efforts to implement legislation on the International Convention on the Protection of Persons from Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances.

ICMP will work to strengthen the capacity of Iraqi institutions and government ministries to conduct investigations into mass and clandestine graves in accordance with international norms and standards. It will assist in developing a coordinated strategy based on transparent evidence-based criteria, and it will help Iraqi authorities to improve data collection and data management, which are central to the development of

a coherent and comprehensive missing persons process. Expertise and technical advice will be provided to support institutional and legislative development, in line with Iraqi priorities and in close coordination with international partners.

Syria/MENA

The program of policy meetings on issues relevant to missing persons will continue. ICMP will work to include as many stakeholders as possible across the national, sectarian and political divide. Future policy discussions will focus on what can be done now in Syria, with a focus on NE Syria, and on building a future missing persons process for Syria. If circumstances allow, ICMP partners will begin collecting data in Jordan during 2020 and train Syrian First Responders in Northeast Syria.

ICMP will continue the development of a secure, centralized, impartial database that will be hosted on ICMP's Identification Data Management System (iDMS). The database, which will be used to locate and identify missing persons from Syria, is intended to form the basis for a future Syrian Central Record of Missing Persons.

ICMP will continue to build the capacity of civil society organizations, families of the missing, first responders, and Data Partnership Agreement partners to safeguard forensic evidence processes for improved future accountability mechanisms.

Through outreach and training, ICMP will seek to empower families by highlighting the importance of their participation in the process and enabling them to take part. The OIC and iDMS have been translated into Arabic and the fields adapted to meet the needs of Syrian families, making it possible to collect, analyze, protect and share data on missing persons

ICMP will also support Syrian CSOs and family associations through its Small Grants Program, which offers technical and financial support to implement advocacy and visibility activities, capacity building programs and organizational development of family organizations. It will create opportunities to consolidate links among Syrian families and families from other countries, and it will provide direct and indirect technical assistance to CSOs and family associations through facilitated seminars, focusing on organizational development, financial management, sustainability, advocacy and visibility.

As the missing from Syria are predominantly men, ICMP will engage in a range of activities to support women. ICMP will help families, especially those led by women, create a common platform regardless of sectarian or national affiliation or the role of the missing person in the conflict, and it will work with relevant Syrian CSOs, legal experts and those with knowledge of the Syrian public administration to analyze the legal and constitutional framework and to develop proposals for an appropriate institutional and legal framework to account for missing persons in post-conflict Syria.

Western Balkans

In line with the Framework Plan signed by the countries of the Western Balkans in November 2018, ICMP will continue to work with relevant institutions 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 with the public. Progress on this project, which is being supported by the UK, will be reviewed at the seventh annual summit within the Berlin Process set for October 2020.

Countries in the region will have continuous access to ICMP's cutting edge DNA-led testing and matching, and ICMP will continue to help civil society organizations and



The focus of ICMP's work will be to facilitate the cooperation of states in the region, and encourage the engagement of families

family associations with training, education, and capacity building, and through its small-grants program.

The focus of ICMP's work will be to facilitate the cooperation of states in the region, and encourage the engagement of families, while providing technical assistance to ensure that missing persons are identified accurately. ICMP will facilitate multilateral and bilateral meetings of the MPG members to ensure the successful implementation of the joint Framework Plan. It will facilitate the work of the MPG's Operational Group for the Database of persons missing from the former Yugoslavia and the Operational Group to Resolve No Name or Unidentified Cases, and seek to ensure continued access to DNA testing and matching, as well as developing domestic capacities in terms of DNA testing of post-mortem biological samples. ICMP will also facilitate cross-border operations to recover mortal remains, and lead a policy dialogue with national authorities in the region and families of the missing on national ownership and sustainability of the missing persons process. It will conduct meetings with national authorities and families of the missing to establish a policy perspective for strengthening national ownership and sustainability of the missing persons process, and conduct info-sharing meetings with families of the missing and state partners. Finally, ICMP will continue to implement a grants program to ensure that associations of families of missing persons continue to remain actively engaged in the process and have the resources to do so.

Albania

In Albania, ICMP will seek to increase the participation of civil society groups and missing persons family members, especially women, in transitional and reconciliatory justice processes. ICMP's Albania program will focus on increasing awareness among families of the missing, helping them to access their rights and engage in effective public advocacy, while also working to increase the capacity of domestic institutions to process requests from families of the missing. ICMP will support civil society memorialization efforts at detention facilities and prisons where persons were incarcerated for political reasons during the Communist era, and where many died. In most cases, the human remains of these victims have not been found. The engagement of families of the missing in memorialization will be facilitated by ICMP's small-grants program.

Missing Migrants

Through the Joint Process, ICMP will support Mediterranean countries to create international cooperation channels and mechanisms, including focal points, thereby enabling families to report missing relatives and to provide personal data including DNA references. It will also facilitate the creation of more equal and effective provisions in the forensic field through capacity sharing and in-sourcing where necessary. With the support of humanitarian and other organizations, ICMP will help authorities reach out to families in countries of origin. It will also help Mediterranean countries to find a joint solution for data processing, including, for instance, the establishment of a central database concerning persons reported missing persons along migratory routes.

ICMP will advance cooperation among countries of transit, origin and destination as well as other relevant actors to address the issue of missing migrants and refugees. ICMP will form partnerships and collaborate with regional and domestic organizations that can provide expertise to improve the efforts of third countries in accounting for missing migrants and refugees. It will support active engagement of CSOs and families in the process of accounting for the missing and the application of technical forensic capacities to identification efforts. It will promote effective collaborative solutions for data sharing



across jurisdictions and enhanced global understanding of the need to sustainably address the problem of persons going missing as a result of migration. Where needed, ICMP will provide technical assistance for identification-related work. In addition, ICMP will maintain discussion on data sharing modalities at the inter-agency level in order to develop an agreed inter-agency solution.

Global Forum on Missing Persons

ICMP plans to launch a virtual Global Forum on Missing Persons in 2020. The Forum will bring together families of the missing, government authorities, forensic and technical experts, DNA specialists, law enforcement, prosecutors and judges, international organizations, NGOs, CSOs, academics and others to review and discuss topics in line with the ICMP Paris Principles (see box on p 37).

The Global Forum is mandated under the Agreement on the Status and Functions of ICMP, which established ICMP as a treaty-based 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

It will also support the development of models of good governance and accountability and purpose-specific legislation to secure the rights of families of the missing to truth, justice, and reparations and non-repetition.

IX. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2019

	2019	2018
	USD	USD
Restricted donors' contributions	11,347,137	9,612,804
Unrestricted donors' contributions	931,062	828,860
Other income	1,535	162
Total income	12,279,734	10,441,826
Staff costs	(7,561,218)	(6,791,699)
Other operating expenses	(4,330,941)	(3,610,651)
Depreciation	(401,623)	(126,968)
Total operating costs	(12,293,782)	(10,529,318)
Finance income	520,762	362,625
Finance costs	(533,236)	(591,130)
Net finance (cost)	(12,474)	(228,505)
Deficit for the year	(26,522)	(315,997)
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive deficit for the year	(26,522)	(315,997)



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