



Photo 1:
REUTERS / Suhaib Salem - stock.adobe.com

MISSING & DISAPPEARED PERSONS

- ❑ Worldwide hundreds of thousands are missing from
 - Wars
 - Human rights abuses
 - Organized violence, including human trafficking and slavery
 - Disasters
 - Migration



WHO ARE THE MISSING?

- The majority of missing persons are men.
- They are mainly civilians.
- They are poor.
- They represent minorities.
- They are also Migrants.





WHO ARE THE SURVIVORS?

- Primarily women and children
- Women are often disappeared – but these cases are underreported
- *Examples:* Syria, Iraq (Da'esh), Mexico (Femicide, Juarez), Nigeria (Boko Haram), Canada (First Nation)



GLOBAL NUMBERS ARE RISING (1)

- ❑ Over 20,000 are missing since 2013.
- ❑ Including in the West: Missing Migrants & Discrimination
- ❑ Today Europe has the highest number of dead & missing migrants in the world

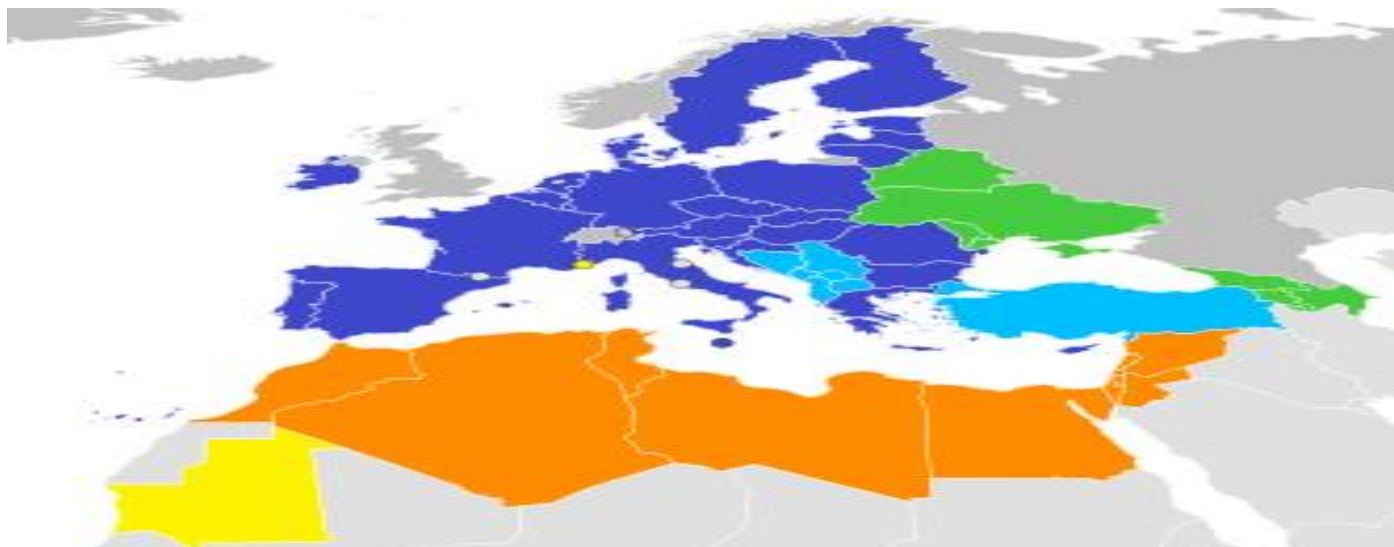


"The Door of Europe" Monument to migrants on the Italian island of Lampedusa.

GLOBAL NUMBERS ARE RISING (2)

Conflicts in the European Neighbourhood

- Syria
- Libya
- Ukraine
- Nagorno-Karabakh



GLOBAL NUMBERS ARE RISING (3)

North America

- **Migration:** Missing migrants, migrant children separated from relatives
- **Discrimination:** Higher rate of unresolved cases of indigenous persons and minority groups
- **Global warming:** Wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes





WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING THE MISSING & SECURING RIGHTS?

- ❑ **States have the primary responsibility for their citizens**
 - International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED)
 - ICMP Paris Principles
 - ICMP Agreement on Status and Functions (ICMP Treaty)
 - Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Article 3 – Right to life, Article 12 – Right to privacy)
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Article 6 – Right to life, Article 7 – Prohibition against torture, Article 17 – Right to privacy).

ADDRESSING THE MISSING: UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES



- **States have the responsibility** to resolve the fate of missing persons. Fundamental human rights are invoked when a person goes missing. Meaningful investigations ensure individuals protection under the law. Crimes are at the source of persons going missing and must be fully investigated
- **Effective responses require cooperation** between states and with international institutions. Investigations must be capable of establishing the facts.
- **Right to the truth:** Establishing cause and manner of death is fundamental in upholding the right to the truth. Addressing the issue of missing and disappeared persons must uphold and advance the rule of law



ADDRESSING THE MISSING: BUILDING STATE CAPACITIES

- Ensure the political will
- Strengthen the Rule of Law, Human Rights Approach
- Establish Purpose-Specific Legislation
- Centralized Missing Persons Mechanism and Central Records
- Assure proper investigations that harness state of the art technologies
- Foster an active public engagement

WHAT TO DO IN WAR AND PEACE

War

- Protection
- Sharing information
- Restoring family links
- Dignity of the dead



Peace

- Capacity building
- Investigations (finding the missing)
- Rule of Law
- Securing Human Rights



ABOUT ICMP

- **ICMP** is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization based in The Hague.
- **ICMP** is the international organization mandated to secure the cooperation of governments and to assist them in their efforts to locate missing persons from conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, migration and other involuntary causes.





HOW ICMP IS ORGANIZED

Board of Commissioners

- Adopts regulations on appointment of Commissioners, their terms, the terms of appointment of the Director-General and other staff.
- Adopts the program of work including the Commission's requirements for completing such work (Program and Budget) for submission to the Conference of States Parties and its Financial Committee.
- Invites the Conference of State Parties.

Director-General

- Retains external advisers, as well as advisory mechanisms including representatives of international and other organizations.
- Invites the Conference of States Parties.
- Invites a State Party to host the Conference.
- Provides a Secretariat for the Conference.
- Invites a member of the Financial Committee to host the meeting of the Committee.

Conference of States Parties

- Considers the Commission's reports on activity.
- Proposes policy directives for the program of work.
- Discusses financial support for activities proposed in the Program and Budget.
- Recommends to States Parties measures to advance the aims of the Commission.

Financial Committee

- Represents States Parties that support the Commission financially.
- Considers the Commission's report on activity for the elapsed year and coming year.
- Adopts recommendations on financial management.
- Approves the Commission's Financial Regulations and reporting format.



ABOUT ICMP – PROGRAMS



Institutional & Legislative development



Civil Society Initiatives



Data Systems & Coordination



Science and Technology including forensic experts & standing, high throughput capacity to conduct DNA testing



Wim Kok Center for Excellence and Learning (CEL)

ABOUT ICMP - WHERE WE WORK

Thematic Programs

- Missing Migrants and Refugees
- Disaster Victim Identification
- Assistance to Justice





ABOUT ICMP - WHERE WE WORK

- ICMP has worked in over 40 countries
- Current **country/regional programs** include:
 - Armenia
 - Brazil
 - Chile
 - Colombia
 - Denmark (DVI standby)
 - El Salvador
 - Iraq
 - Libya
 - Mexico
 - Netherlands (MH-17)
 - Syria/MENA
 - Ukraine
 - Vietnam
 - Western Balkans (including Albania Communist Era)



COOPERATION MECHANISMS

Cooperation on the international level

- Global Forum on Missing Persons (Global Report)
- Inter-Agency Committee on Missing Persons
- Panel of Experts

Cooperation on the regional level

- Joint Process (Mediterranean countries)
- Missing Persons Group (Western Balkan countries)
- Intergovernmental Roundtable (MENA)
- Regional Coordination Body of Families of the Missing (Families of the missing, Western Balkans)
- Policy Coordination Group (Syrian CSOs)

CASE STUDY: WESTERN BALKANS

- More than 40,000 persons were missing at the end of the conflict in the Western Balkans.
- ICMP facilitated the development of institutional and legislative capacities, including regional Missing Persons Group and Regional Group of Families of Missing.
- ICMP pioneered state-of-the-art DNA and advanced database informatics to locate/ identify missing persons. Unprecedented results: 70% of the missing have been accounted for.





THE WAY FORWARD

- **State responsibility:** Enforce state responsibility to investigate all missing persons cases, regardless of background and to secure the human rights of all survivors to justice, truth and reparations. Strengthen justice mechanisms.
- **Awareness:** Increase awareness, particularly among survivor groups, of their human rights.
- **Capacities:** Enhance standing capacities that promote intergovernmental cooperation and international standards of investigation. Ensure harmonization of work on domestic and international levels

MISSING AND DISAPPEARED PERSONS





THANK YOU.

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