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## **Investigation and Identification of the Missing following Armed Conflict and Disasters: Increasing Preparedness in the Asia-Pacific Region**

A joint Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM)/ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) / Australian Federal Police (AFP) initiative

### **Background**

In 2003, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) held an international conference of governmental and non-governmental experts with the aim of examining the ways of better assisting the families of those missing as a result of armed conflict or internal violence. Forensic science was seen as a key element in dealing with "The Missing".

While forensic science is an integral part of the disaster victim identification (DVI) process as advocated by INTERPOL, experience with the identification process following recent disasters in the Asia-Pacific region has demonstrated that standards of identification of deceased individuals are not uniform across the region. Furthermore, approaches to dealing with large scale disasters are varied, with little learning apparently being gained from previous experience.

In 2004, a session on forensic aspects of the Missing in post-conflict and post-disaster scenarios was held in the Philippines at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Indo-Pacific Association of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (INPALMS) meeting. This was followed up by a full day session with a total of 14 countries represented at the INPALMS meeting in Sri Lanka in 2007. The outcomes of these meetings highlighted a number of issues related to investigation and identification that still need addressing.

### **Aims**

- To bring together forensic practitioners from the Asia-Pacific region to improve regional communication, coordination and cooperation for investigations and identification of the Missing in armed conflicts and disasters;
- To provide a practical session on DVI training.

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October 2008

**Venue:** VIFM, Southbank, Victoria.

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## **Participants**

1-3 representatives of relevant Medico-Legal Institutions (and/or police) from across the Asia-Pacific region including:

1. Indonesia
2. Thailand
3. Sri Lanka
4. Philippines
5. Fiji
6. East Timor
7. PNG
8. Nepal
9. Solomon Islands
10. Vietnam
11. Cambodia
12. Afghanistan
13. Laos
14. Myanmar
15. Vanuatu

1. Singapore
2. New Zealand
3. Kuwait

## **Language**

The workshop will be delivered in English.

## **Opportunities**

The workshop will be held to coincide with the ANZFSS 2008 (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> October 2008). Participants will also have the opportunity to attend the regional meeting of International Association of Forensic Toxicologists.

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## Program

### Day 1

08:00-09:00	Registration
09:00-09:30:	Welcome and introduction (aims, expectations etc)
09:30-09:45	10 minutes for each Head to present a summary of the state of affairs in their country: current DVI arrangements, funding, government support, available resources etc
09:45-09:55	Country 2
09:55-10:05	Country 3
10:05-10:15	Country 4
10:15-10:25	Country 5
10:30-11:00	<i>Morning Tea</i>
11:00-11.10	Country 6
11.10-11:20	Country 7
11:20:11.30	Country 8
11:30:-11:40	Country 9
11:40-11:50	Country 10
11:50-12:00	Country 11
12:00-12:10	Country 12
12:10-12:20	Country 13
12:20-12:30	Country 14
12:30-12:40	Country15
12:40-13:40	<i>Lunch / Pray</i>
13:40-14:40	Approaches to investigation and identification: disasters vs. human rights violations
14:40-17:30	Phase 1 Scene Investigation Management, Practical session 1 (Australian Federal Police/VicPOL)
17:30	Close

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## Day 2

08.00-09.00	Phase 2: Scenario presentation and discussion for practical session 2: Mortuary Management (VIFM)
09.00-12.00	Practical session 2: Mortuary
12.00-13.00	Lunch / Pray
13.00-15.00	Practical session 2... <i>cont.</i> ; Phase 3: Collection of ante-mortem data
15.00-15.30	<i>Afternoon Tea</i>
15.30-16.30	Phase 4: Reconciliation
16.30-17.30	Presentation to the board
	Close
	Dinner

## Day 3

09.00-09:30	Phase 5: Debrief
09:30-16.30	Group discussion:

Points for discussion include:

- DVI standards in the region
- Development of regional communication about DVI
- Cross-regional training
- Sensitising governments to the issues related to the Missing
- Continued reliance on DNA
- Management of human remains in large scale disasters

Further information and registration for this meeting is available from;

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