

International Forum for Mass Grave Victim Identification

13th March 2013

The Royal College of Pathologists, London, UK

The 2013 Inaugural International Forum will comprise of expert talks and plenty of networking opportunities

This event has **CPD accreditation** and is part of the *Forensic Forums 2013 series* – www.forensicforums2013.com

Meeting chair

Roland Wessling

Director of Operations, Inforce Foundation

www.inforce.org.uk/roland-wessling

Research Fellow in Forensic Archaeology & Anthropology, Cranfield University, UK

www.cranfield.ac.uk/cds/staff/wesslingroland.html

- 9:00 – 9:45 **Registration**
- 9:45 – 10:00 **Introduction by the Chair:** Roland Wessling, Cranfield University, UK
- 10:00 – 10:30 **The Diplomacy of Mass Grave Investigations - Operating in Post Conflict Zones**
Roland Wessling, Cranfield University, UK
Mass fatalities, such as genocide, mass murder or other crimes against humanity, always leave a countries or regions in a state of post-conflict devastation and often lead to the existence of mass graves. When a certain level of normality has been established and the crucial three criteria a) security, b) political will and c) funding, is in place, the mass fatality can be investigated. Alongside the criminal investigation, forensic teams can support the legal cases by excavating graves, which also assists the humanitarian effort of repatriating the victims. These forensic investigations are often carried out by international or at least foreign teams. And they have to operate in a country or region, in which most of the reasons for the previous conflict are still present. The absence of war does not mean piece!
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Human identification: the judicial and humanitarian pathways**
Roxana Ferllini, Coordinator Forensic Archaeological Science programme Institute of Archaeology, University College London
The investigation of human rights abuses is multi-faceted, with a principal objective remaining, among other goals, positive identifications of the victims. Approaches which are selected during the said process may vary, depending upon the nature of the enquiry in question; that is, some being formally arranged in preparation for judicial proceedings, whilst others, due to historical and political contexts, remaining within the context of a more direct humanitarian approach without legal ramifications.
- 11:00 – 11:30 **Speakers' photo then mid-morning break/networking and trade show**
Please try to visit all the exhibition stands during your day at this event. Not only do our sponsors enable Euroscicon to keep the registration fees competitive, but they are also here specifically to talk to you
- 11:30 – 12:00 **The dead are always here: mass grave victims as social actors**
Caroline Bennett, School of Anthropology and Conservation, University of Kent
Mass graves are often assumed to be negative spaces and the bodies they contain to be victims in need of individual identification and repatriation or reconciliation of one form or another. However, local concepts of the graves the bodies they contain vary dramatically even within the same country. Drawing on fieldwork from Iraq and Cambodia, this talk will explore local perceptions of mass graves and the bodies they contain, and ultimately ask the question: where does identity lie and who is investigation really for?
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Reassociation and Identification of commingles remains from secondary mass graves in Bosnia-Herzegovia**
Kerry-Ann Milic, Anglia Ruskin University, UK.
- 12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch/networking and trade show**
This is also a good time to fill out your feedback forms and any questionnaires
- 13:30 – 15:00 **Question and Answer Session**
Delegates will be asked to submit questions to a panel of experts. Questions can be submitted before the event or on the day
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Afternoon Tea/Coffee, networking and trade show**

15:30 – 16:00 **Iraqi genocide DNA program activated by 'SON OF BABYLON' film pressure**

Isabelle Stead, Human film /Iraq's missing campaign

The film 'Son of Babylon' raised international awareness of the 1 million + people who remain missing and unidentified in Iraq following 40 years of conflict. Film Producer and Iraq's Missing Campaign founder Isabelle Stead will discuss how the film and its associated campaign was the catalyst for a full governmental review of Iraq's mass graves and paved the way for The Ministry of Human Rights in Iraq and The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) to begin a 3 year DNA-lead identification pilot scheme of Iraq's missing people.

16:00 – 16:30 **Systems for Mass Grave Identification: understanding, addressing and resolving complex issues**

Mr Ian Hanson, International Commission on Missing Persons, Sarajevo

The complexity of identifying the missing relies on several key elements with interrelated objectives which need to operate in tandem to provide success outcomes: Investigations need political agreement and planning support and financing. Planning requires knowledge and understanding of processes and implications of work. The investigation process requires a legislative framework in which to operate. Legal processes require evidence of events to undertake prosecutions. Physical evidence is required to provide data for identifications. Families wish for their loved ones remains, justice and the opportunity to be fully engaged in determining the fate of the missing. Investigations have been hampered by not addressing some of these elements. ICMP provides support for effective identification systems while addressing social and political issues related to missing persons in the wake of conflict or natural disaster.

16:30 – 17:00 **Chairman's summing up**

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About the chair

Roland Wessling first read physics for two years at Hamburg University, followed by archaeology, law and soil sciences for another two years. He came to the UK in 1996 to read BSc Archaeological Sciences at Sheffield, and finally MSc Forensic Archaeology at Bournemouth. Since then he has worked as a consultant for the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (UN ICTY), as well as on domestic criminal cases in Germany and the UK. He has been deployed on forensic operations in Cyprus and Iraq for the Inforce Foundation and was one of the Senior Archaeologists of the excavation of 250 Soldiers from WWI in Fromelles, France, in 2009. Roland is one of the authors and an editor of the Cox, et al., 2007, *The Scientific Investigation of Mass Graves: Towards Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures*, New York: CUP. He is currently employed by Cranfield University as a part-time Research Fellow in Forensic Archaeology & Anthropology, teaching on the Forensic MSc Programme.

About the Speakers

Caroline Bennett's research examines the lived spaces of mass graves, exploring the everyday interactions and relationships related to these places, including perceptions of excavation, and the intersection of international, national, and local discourses on the subject. In doing so she questions many assumptions existing about mass graves and their victims, including the assumed need for investigation and formal reconciliation. Prior to beginning her PhD Caroline worked as a forensic anthropologist in the US, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq on criminal and mass grave investigations.

Kerry-Ann Milic, previously held the position of Senior Forensic Anthropologist/Deputy Mortuary Manager with the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) in Bosnia-Herzegovina where she spent five years assisting in the identification of victims from secondary mass graves following the Srebrenica genocide (1995).

Kerry-Ann is on the council for the British Association for Human Identification (BAHID), is Chair of the Student Development Committee of the British Association of Forensic Anthropologists (BAFA) and is a first responder for Kenyon Worldwide Disaster Management and UKDVI. Currently working towards a PhD concentrating on population specific standards and multifactorial age estimation in the Bosnian male population.

Roxana Ferllini, lectures in Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, UK. She has participated as a forensic anthropologist within police criminal investigations in the UK and Costa Rica; mass disaster interventions in Costa Rica, El Salvador, UK and Spain. Additionally, she has been involved in international human rights investigations in Rwanda, the Balkans, the Armenian genocide, and the investigation of missing casualties resulting from the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent Franco regime in Spain. Her publications include journal articles and books, including the edited volume "Forensic Archaeology and Human Rights Violations".

Ian Hanson is Deputy Director of Forensic Sciences for Archaeology and Anthropology at ICMP. He has over 16,000 hours of professional experience globally in the field, including 15 years of practice on mass graves. An archaeologist since 1994, he manages excavations, undertaking training and capacity building, and running MSc courses as senior lecturer at Bournemouth University. He directs and develops processes and integration of disciplines to provide support for legal and identification investigation. He is a Member of the Institute for Archaeologists and the Forensic Archaeology Expert Panel. He is a member of The American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) and an Expert for the National Crime Agency.

Isabelle Stead, is the Co-founder of the multi-award winning Human Film, a UK/Dutch feature film production company with an internationally-acclaimed back catalogue of features and shorts across the Middle East. Following 5 years of working in Los Angeles in both independent films and the studio system, Isabelle, a Sundance fellow, returned to the UK to complete a Masters degree in Film Production and started work on several international co-productions that would become Human Film's first few feature films; Ahlaam, which represented Iraq for both Oscar and Golden Globe consideration in 2007, Iraq: War, Love, God and Madness and Son of Babylon, screening at the Sundance IFF and The 60th Berlin International Film Festival picking up The Amnesty Film Award & The Peace Prize, along representing Iraq for Oscar Consideration 2011. As a cornerstone of the marketing of Son of Babylon, Isabelle established The IRAQ'S MISSING CAMPAIGN, an international landmark global campaign that is actively encouraging governments and the world's media to support the unearthing and identification of the victims of Saddam's Mass Graves, a cause central to the story of Son of Babylon.

Keywords: Forensic Anthropology, Anatomy, Identification, Identity, Emergent Identification Technologies, DNA, collection, storage, transportation, computed tomography, identification, conflict, diplomacy, post-conflict, logistics, reconciliation, dental, mortuary, pathology, Post Mortem, autopsy, anti-mortem, repatriation, DNA Profiling, Lineage markers, Ethics, AF447, Commingled remains, DNA, security, Mass fatalities, genocide, mass murder, crimes against humanity, post-conflict devastation, mass graves, security, political, mass, criminal investigation, forensic teams, excavating graves, repatriating, mass graves, anthropology, Cambodia, Iraq, Positive identification, presumptive identification, judicial proceedings, humanitarian interventions, Srebrenica, commingled, reassociation, Iraq, Film, Genocide

Event Web site: www.regonline.co.uk/grave2013

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- ❑ You will be issued with a FULL delegate list within 14 days of the event, which will include the email addresses of the delegates (we are sorry that there is this delay in emailing the list, but we need to make sure that it takes into account any late arrivals). You will not be included in this list if you have opted out and you can do this by logging into your registration details. This list will not be sold or ever give out to third parties. Only people attending or sponsoring the event have access to the list
- ❑ There may be an independent meeting report published within a few months of this event. If this is published we will send you an email to let you know the reference details
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IDENTIFICATION OF MARTYRS OF IRAN-IRAQ WAR (1980-88): SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE OR RELIGIOUS DEVOTION

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The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), referred to by Iranians as “the Sacred Defense and Imposed War” (*Defa’e Moqadas va Jang-e Tahmili*), began with Iraq’s September 22, 1980, attack on Iran, and ended eight years later, on August 20, 1988, leaving at least 300,000 dead and more than 500,000 injured out of a total population that, by the war’s end, numbered approximately 60 million. Today, Iranian military institutions claim that more than 50,000 bodies of Iranian volunteer soldiers (*razmandeh*) remain in the former battlefields of Iran and Iraq. Yet despite 2,920 days of war, this devastating human disaster has been ignored by the West.

The bodies of soldiers left behind or buried on the fronts remained untouched until 1989, one year after the official end of the war, when the former head of the Cooperation Section of the *Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution*, Colonel S. M. Mirbagherzadeh, proposed a project to the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khameneyi, in regards to finding the bodies of the Iranian martyrs who were left behind on the former warfronts of both countries. Based on his proposal, the Committee for Finding the Missing Soldiers was created in the Assembly of the Armed Forces.

At the beginning of their work, members of CFMS who were originally officers of AGIR and veterans of the Iran-Iraq War had a great amount of work to do in collecting the rest of the bodies and remains that they could find on the earth’s surface. In their first attempts, during 1990–91, initial surveys were made of the former warfronts of the northwest, near Panjveyn, where the Fourth *Valfajr* operation (Dawn 4) took place. In this exploration alone they found the bodies of 300 martyrs. In March 1992, for the first time in its history, Iran held a public funeral ceremony for these 300 unknown martyrs (*javid ol-asar*) in Tehran.

In this paper I will present for the first time the methodology and technics of CFMS brigade for finding the dead bodies and remains of fallen soldiers in Iran.

Keywords: Iran-Iraq War, dead bodies, human remains