

Documenting torture

Newsletter on the use of forensic evidence in the fight against torture

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A fruitful collaboration

An interview with Professor Hans Petter Hougen on why the University of Copenhagen got involved in the project and what he sees as the benefits that will come from it.

Scott McAusland, Advocacy and Communications Officer

Professor Hans Petter Hougen is the Chief Forensic Pathologist at the University of Copenhagen – project partner to the IRCT.

“The history behind our involvement in the project was that Önder Özkalipci [IRCT Medical Director and one of the co-authors of the UN Istanbul Protocol on the effective documentation of torture] contacted me shortly after he arrived in post at the IRCT to discuss what we could do together in the human rights field.

Such a collaboration made perfect sense, as I’ve been interested in human rights for many years and, in particular, at how forensic documentation can help.

I saw a real opportunity to give such important work a solid scientific base and to involve more academics in this crucial area.”

Raising the profile of forensic documentation

“The project with the IRCT is certainly helping to raise the profile of the forensic element of human rights work within the university and beyond.

Of course, here at this department we don’t only do research and training, we have a long history of practical

work in the field. In this department in recent years we have examined over 250 torture victims, although obviously we have examined fewer people in the last eight or so years due to the simple fact that fewer refugees who have suffered torture are able to claim asylum in Denmark these days. Thus to me, and to many in this department, torture is not just something we think of in theoretical terms, it has been our reality.”

Sharing expertise

“One of the most positive elements of this project, to me, is that it is not just about the actual forensic examinations, but about training of others, thus ensuring knowledge spreads, and following and supporting cases through the court system.

In combating torture it is crucial that forensic doctors become more active and testify in court cases – the training provided through this project helps get such people involved in such a way.

I was recently in Indonesia training local doctors in the region and was extremely encouraged by the fact that based on the training a group of doctors there set up a South East Asian Network to further disseminate the knowledge there.

And of course, there has been a tremendous training programme in Turkey that has seen literally thousands



Professor Hans Petter Hougen

of lawyers and doctors trained in the forensic documentation of torture.”

Hopes for the future

“My hope for this project is that we establish a best practice for forensic documentation, improving the standards of forensic work in human rights cases. This is not to say that local forensic doctors around the world are not good. Far from it. It is just that they have not been provided with the training needed in torture documentation.

Ultimately, it is my hope that through better forensic documentation we can counter impunity and improve the human rights situation around the world.”

News from local partners

Georgia

The director of Empathy, Ms Jishkariani, participated in a conference hosted by the Ministry of Justice focusing on the new Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia. Ms Jishkariani made several statements on the need for prompt and effective investigation of torture cases and the need to ensure mandatory forensic examinations in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol of all allegations of torture. The conclusions of the discussion reflected the agreement of the Ministry of Justice on these points and it was further noted that the projected 2010 revision of the Anti-Torture Plan would include the elaboration and publication of guidelines on effective investigation of torture cases. In addition, the MoJ training center has agreed to collaborate with Empathy on the inclusions of the Istanbul Protocol in its training programmes.

Empathy has recently selected a torture case to be examined and brought

to court. The case relates to a young man allegedly beaten by police while in detention and subsequently threatened with extrajudicial execution if he reported the incident. Empathy is currently finalising the forensic documentation of the case, which will then be reviewed by two representatives of the international group of forensic specialists.

The Philippines

Local partners, MAG and BALAY, are currently working to finalise an advocacy strategy for the coming two-year period and on identifying a torture case for examination and legal proceedings. A shortlist of three potential cases has been established and case examination is expected in August. On a related issue, MAG is currently engaged in a project aimed at training 90 Municipal Health Officers in three torture hotspots in the country. These trainings, which are funded by the Asia Foundation, will focus on capac-

ity development in documentation of torture and related human rights violations and on the legal requirements for medico-legal reports to be admissible in court. The training is seeking to remedy key weaknesses in torture documentation by Municipal Health Officers identified by MAG in their ongoing work. This particularly relates to the lack of standard examinations and the weakness of conclusions found in many medico-legal reports.

The IRCT is supporting these activities by sending a member of the international group of forensic specialists, Professor Sebnem Financi, to provide training on preparation of medico-legal reports. Considering the very low number of forensic doctors in the Philippines, the training aims to ensure that a basic level of forensic health expertise is present in the places where it is most needed.



Balay Rehabilitation Centre's activities on the UN Intl. Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June

Lebanon

In the course of May and June the local partner in Lebanon, Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, organized four national roundtables on the Use of Forensic Evidence in the Prevention of Torture. The events attracted 28 participants including forensic doctors, judges and lawyers and representatives from the Lebanese security forces, relevant organizations and media.

Each roundtable generated a number of recommendations on how to fight torture and impunity, and promote the

recognition of medical evidence of torture. The fourth roundtable dealt with outputs from the first three and included participants from the previous events as well as two representatives from the IRCT and the IRCT international group of forensic experts; Head of Programmes Peter Hellmers and Dr. Önder Özkalıpci.

The roundtables were successful in engaging participants, raising awareness and attracting media attention. A concrete outcome was the planning of a new series of meetings and one

final roundtable to take place over the next three months. This is expected to result in the formation of a Steering Committee tasked with the creation of a monitoring system to document and follow up on legal cases of torture. With regard to the selection of a strategic case of torture, Restart Center staff has carried out initial assessments of a number of cases with potential to be brought before a court. A major obstacle in the final selection of a case is the lack of sufficient protection measures in Lebanon and the fear of reprisals on the part of the torture survivors.

Ecuador: An open letter to the President

Local partner PRIVA contacted the IRCT on 9 July to inform us that Dr. Germán Antonio Ramírez Herrera, a forensic expert and former participant in IRCTs earlier training programme on the use of the Istanbul Protocol, had been tragically killed. The international group of forensic experts reacted with the open the letter below. PRIVAs own statmeent can be found on the next page.

Open letter to the President of Ecuador

Your Excellency Rafael Correa Delgado,
President of the Republic of Ecuador

We, on behalf of the international group of forensic specialists, established by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) in partnership with the University of Copenhagen, condemn the recent killing of forensic expert Dr. Germán Antonio Ramírez Herrera in Ecuador in the strongest possible terms.

Dr. Ramírez participated in a national network of independent experts established by the IRCT member in Ecuador, PRIVA (The Foundation for Integral Rehabilitation of Violence Victims). He documented cases of torture, executions and criminal activity at the prison in Quevedo where he worked. On behalf of Dr. Ramírez, PRIVA presented a report on the prison to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions on the day of the killing last week.

As a result of this work, Dr. Ramírez received numerous threats against his life – an unacceptable situation for an independent expert to find himself in as a result of his or her work.

We are thus calling for an urgent, thorough and impartial investigation in accordance with international standards to identify and hold accountable those responsible for his murder.

We also raise our concern for Dr. Ramírez's family, PRIVA staff and experts in the PRIVA network and call on the authorities of Ecuador to do everything in their power to ensure their safety.

Yours faithfully,

Djordje Alempijevic
Associate Professor, Institute of Forensic Medicine, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Jonathan Beynon,
Independent Forensic Consultant, Geneva, Switzerland

Maximo Alberto Piedrahita Duque
Forensic Pathologist, former head of national forensic services in Colombia

Adriaan van Es
Coordinator, International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organisations, The Netherlands

Ravindra Fernando
Senior Professor of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sebnem Korur Fincanci
Professor of Forensic Medicine, University of Istanbul, Turkey
Member of IRCT Council

Steen Holger Hansen
Deputy Chief Forensic Pathologist, Dept of Forensic Medicine, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Lilla Hárđi
Psychiatrist, Head of section on torture issues at WPA, Director of Cordelia Foundation, Hungary

Hans Petter Hougen
Professor, Chief Forensic Pathologist, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Vincent Iacopino
Senior Medical Advisor, Physicians for Human Rights, Adjunct Professor of Medicine, University of Minnesota, USA

Said Louahia
Forensic professor, former head of Forensic Institute of Casablanca, Morocco
Former President of Mediterranean Academy of Forensic Sciences

Maria-Dolores Morcillo Mendez
Forensic Medical Doctor, National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, Colombia.

Maria Cristina de Mendonça
Directora do Serviço de Patologia Forense- Coimbra /Portugal

Jens Modvig
Senior Physician and Programme Manager, RCT, Denmark, Former Secretary General of IRCT

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Professor of Forensic Medicine and Fo-
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rensic Medicine of Portugal

Statement by PRIVA

Forensic doctor who documented cases of extrajudicial executions and torture
in the prison of Quevedo murdered July 6 2010 under unclear circumstances

The Foundation for the Integral Rehabilita-
tion of Victims of Violence, PRIVA, is a non-
governmental non-profit organization recog-
nized by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Their objectives are the prevention and
eradication of torture; holistic care (medical,
psychological and social) of victims of tor-
ture and their families; the investigation of
torture and the dissemination of knowledge
gained through their work.



Dr. Germán Antonio Ramírez Herrera

In order to accomplish their objectives, PRIVA carries out various activities within the National Prison System, the Justice System and with persons from civil society. Among several other activities in the field of prevention, in 2007 they worked on the implementation of the Istanbul Protocol through the dissemination of this instrument and the training of 52 independent experts on this topic (27 lawyers and 25 health professionals – forensic doctors, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists) from Professional Associations, Human Rights Organisations, Institutes of Criminology, Free Legal Offices, Universities, etc. With these experts, PRIVA has formed a network of defenders documenting cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in order to prevent future occurrences of torture.

Dr. Germán Antonio Ramírez Herrera, a forensic doctor working in the Prison of Quevedo in the Los Ríos province, was an independent expert trained by PRIVA in the course of a project for the Prevention of Torture through Documentation and Implementation of the Istanbul Protocol, carried out with the support of the National Human Rights Plan, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) in Denmark and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with financial support from the European Commission.

As part of the independent expert network Dr. Germán Ramírez documented the injuries suffered by 35 inmates during a raid by the National Police in the Prison of Quevedo. In 2009 he also documented cases of torture and executions of inmates inside this prison. As a result of these investigations, he received several threats against his life and wellbeing.

These cases were presented to national bodies such as the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidency of the Republic as well as to the United Nations Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions. On 6 July 2010, the day when PRIVA put forward these cases to the United Nations Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Dr. Germán Antonio Ramírez Herrera was assassinated under circumstances yet to be clarified. These events have alarmed the network of defenders promoted by PRIVA, since other cases of torture that have taken place in other prisons in Ecuador are currently being investigated, and legal and constitutional actions have been initiated in order to promote prevention. This puts the life and wellbeing of the defenders who have taken on this task at great risk.

Since it is a fundamental duty of each person to fight for the effective preservation of human rights, we request that you take all the available measures to prevent and safeguard the life of other independent experts and consultants who are carrying out this work within the network created by PRIVA.

CASES IN FOCUS

28-year old Khaled Said ‘killed’ by Egyptian police

There is every indication that, on 6 June 2010, 28-year old Khaled Said was brutally killed at the hands of policemen in the city of Alexandria, Egypt. Egyptian police however deny any role in Said's death, claiming that he died from an overdose of drugs he swallowed before police approached him. But eyewitnesses, Egyptian NGOs and photographs of Said's face following his arrest tell a very different story.

According to the Nadim Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, an IRCT member centre based in Cairo, police arrested the young man at an internet café in the Egyptian port city, beating him up and dragging him into the street after having smashed his head against a marble table. Eyewitnesses say he died on the street in front of the café. Photographs circulating on the Internet, showing Said's face disfigured almost beyond recognition, underpin their accounts. Thousands of Egyptians protested in the streets and in public media, calling for Interior Minister Habib el-Adly to be held accountable for

Said's death. An Arabic Facebook page dedicated to Khaled Said received more than 200,000 fans in just two days. According to Mo-



ammed Abdel Aziz, a lawyer for the Nadim Centre, the protests constituted the loudest reaction against police brutality in over one hundred years.

The official autopsy report supports the claim that Said died from asphyxiation after swallowing

a plastic bag with narcotics. So does a second autopsy report conducted, post exhumation, by three Egyptian forensic doctors forming part of a tripartite commission established as a result of national and international pressure. Upon request from the Nadim Center and the lawyer of Said's family, two members of the IRCT international group of forensic specialists – Professors Jørgen Lange Thomsen and Duarte Nuno Vieira – will provide an expert opinion on the quality of the two official reports. The reports will be submitted at the first court session, scheduled for 27 July. Should more extensive photographic evidence be released or a new exhumation authorized, further intervention may involve the submission of a new report and/or examination and expert witness appearance before court.

The two policemen allegedly involved in the killing have been charged with illegally arresting and physically torturing Said, charges that carry a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison. Murder charges have not been filed.

CASES IN FOCUS

Zimbabwe Case before ACHPR

The IRCT received a request from REDRESS in the UK on behalf of a Zimbabwean Human Rights lawyer living in exile in South Africa who had filed a complaint to the African Commission for Human and People's Rights alleging torture experienced in 2003. A medical examination was conducted in Copenhagen by two physicians from the interna-

tional group of forensic specialists, and the Medico-legal report submitted in time for the ACHPR session in Banjul in May. Judgement on the case is awaited.

The complainant alleges that he was arbitrarily arrested in January 2003 while receiving instruction from an MDC MP, tortured and

made to sign incriminating documents. Some days after his arrest his lawyers managed to locate him and obtain a high court injunction ordering that he be brought to court. Here he was charged with contravening the Public Order Security Act and placed on bail. Fearing for his life, he fled to Tanzania and later to South Africa where he

presently resides. The Government of Zimbabwe maintains that no evidence has been provided to prove

the allegations. Prior to his arrest, in May 2002, he had reported to the NGO plenary session at the 31st

Ordinary Session of the ACHPR on the human rights situation in Zimbabwe.

CASES IN FOCUS

Partial victory in British courts for Afghan torture case

In June this year, the UK courts granted a partial victory to a lawsuit by peace activist Maya Evans aimed at preventing torture in the context of detainee transfer from UK forces to the Afghan authorities.

While the court concluded that transfers to Afghanistan's external and domestic intelligence agency The National Directorate of Security in Kandahar and NDS Lashkar Gah can proceed is added that existing safeguards must be strengthened in a number of ways. It also concluded that transfers to NDS Kabul would be a breach of the policy set out by the British Foreign Minister regarding the transfer of detainees to the Afghan authorities and therefore unlawful.

A member of the IRCT international group of forensic specialists – Dr Önder Özkalipci – had supported the case by reviewing the existing medical reports and providing an expert opinion on the standards of documentation and investigation of torture allegations. In its considerations the court made reference the witness statement provided

by Dr Özkalipci, Medical Director of the IRCT and co-author of the United Nations' Istanbul Protocol¹ on the effective documentation of torture. The judgment echoes Dr. Özkalipci's assertion that the in-

mean that torture did not happen". The court consequently considered that "the only safe way to proceed in the particular circumstances is on the assumption that the allegations are true."



Maya Evans, Photo: PA

interview and inspection system has been inadequate and that medical examination of the transferred detainees were of insufficient quality. While the court found that the occurrence of torture could not be positively confirmed owing to the low quality of the medical reports, it also could not be ruled out. Özkalipci stressed that "it is important to remember that the absence of detectable signs does not necessarily

Regrettably, the Court fell short of demanding that investigations be performed by impartial, independent and multi-disciplinary teams including trained health professionals, and that supplementary training should be provided to UK and Afghan medical and non-medical professionals in the proper documentation of torture.

Digital photography as evidence

The following is a condensed excerpt from 'Digital Photography: Understanding Admissibility Standards.' The complete version of the article will appear in a future issue of the *Torture Journal*. For a comprehensive understanding of photographic documentation of evidence of torture, the article should be read in conjunction with *Photographic Documentation: A Practical Guide for non Professional Forensic Photography*.¹

Photographic documentation of torture has the potential to provide crucial evidentiary support for allegations of torture in legal proceedings. As photographic protocols are increasingly reliant on digital technology, it is important that digital images are captured and maintained in a manner which satisfies the evidentiary standards of relevant judicial bodies. Regional and international enforcement mechanisms addressing torture related cases they have traditionally avoided the procedural formalism characteristic of national approaches to evidence.¹ Instead, international and regional bodies have generally adopted a flexible approach to evidence, granting significant discretion to admit any evidence tending to aid in the determination of the truth.² National courts are therefore the focus of this brief article as they present the greater challenge for digital evidence.

Courts have struggled to fashion appropriate rules governing the admissibility of changing digital technology. The reactions have alternated between a desire to

incorporate novel and beneficial technologies and a cautious scepticism regarding the integrity of digital evidence. Many jurisdictions have responded with form-specific rules governing the admission of electronic or digital evidence, while numerous courts continue to interpret emerging digital technology within the framework of existing evidentiary standards, merely altering the analysis where appropriate.³ Regardless of the procedural framework, the dominant concerns when discussing digital evidence are related to authentication.⁴ Essentially, for evidence to be admissible it must first be shown to be what the proponent of the evidence claims.⁵ Authentication for electronic and photographic evidence is typically approached through variants of two predominant theories: the "pictorial testimony theory" and the "silent-witness theory."⁶ Under the pictorial testimony theory any witness with personal knowledge of the images in the photographs may testify to the foundational facts of its accuracy.⁷ Credible and convincing witness testimony establishing that the photograph was taken on the date

recorded will be sufficient. The silent-witness theory in contrast permits self authentication of a photo upon proof of the reliability of the process which produced the photograph.⁸ In this case, it would be necessary to establish that the process by which the image was recorded is reliable and likely accurately reflects the time the photo was taken. Various technologies including a "digital signature" incorporated into the data film, submission of metadata, audit logs, and data verifying software may be of assistance in authenticating the recorded time/date stamp under this theory.

If an organization contemplates litigation when developing procedures for the medical documentation of torture, thought should be given to the considerations outlined above in determining authenticity, and standard operating procedures should be established for equipment usage, image capture, storage and retrieval, and record-keeping practices.⁹

1. Önder Özkalıpci, MD & Muriel Volpellier, MD, *Photographic Documentation: A Practical Guide for non Professional Forensic Photography*, *Torture: Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture*, 20.1 (2010): 45-52

2. See generally Michael Peel & Vincent Iacopino, *The Medical Documentation of Torture* (Greenwich Medical Media Ltd., 2002).

3. *Id.* At 20-21

4. See Fredesvinda Insa, *The Admissibility of Electronic Evidence in Court (A.E.E.C.): Fighting against High-Tech Crime—Results of a European Study*, *Journal of Digital Forensic Practice*, 1.4 (2006): 285-289, see E.g. Canada Uniform Electronic Evidence Act, Commonwealth of Dominica, *Electronic Evidence Act* (2005).

5. Michele C.S. Lange & Kristin M. Nimsger, *Electronic Evidence and Discovery: What Every Lawyer Should Know Now* (2.ed. American Bar Association)

6. The National Center for Forensic Science, *Digital Evidence in the Courtroom: A Guide for Preparing Digital Evidence for Courtroom Presentation* (2003).

7. *Blond's Evidence* (Blond et al. 1994)

8. Brian Barakat & Bronwyn Miller, *Features: Authentication of Digital Photographs Under the "Pictorial Testimony" Theory: A Response to Critics*, 78 FLA. BAR J. 38 (2004)

9. See e.g. *The Receipt of Evidence by Queensland Courts: Electronic Records*, Issues Paper WP No 52 Queensland Law Reform Commission, August 1998. (Finding that with evidence produced by devices or systems, however, the courts appear to have required that the trial judge be satisfied—presumably, on the balance of probabilities—as to the accuracy of the technique and of the particular application of it.

wBest Practices for Maintaining the Integrity of Digital Images and Digital Video, available at http://www.theiai.org/guidelines/swgit/guidelines/section_13_v1-0.pdf, see also SWGDE/SWGIT Recommended Guidelines for Developing Standard Operating Procedures Version: 1.0 (November 15, 2004), available at http://www.theiai.org/guidelines/swgit/swgde/swgde_swgit_sop_document_v1-0.pdf

Recent conferences

Investigation and Prevention of Torture and Death in Custody – promoting medical documentation of torture at international conference in Linköping, Sweden

On 3 – 7 May The European Science Foundation organised a conference on the investigation and prevention of torture and death in custody in Europe and beyond, with the aim of bringing together scientific leaders from human rights law, criminology, sociology, ethics and legal medicine with CPT experts, ECHR judges and NGOs and to attract more young researchers in order to further research in this domain.

The documentation of torture as a preventive tool was debated and highlighted throughout the conference. Discussions revealed varying approaches among participants on issues such as the emphasis on the need for specialist forensic expertise versus the value of non-specialist documentation, and the importance of confidentiality and maintenance of the doctor/detainee relationship versus documentation “for the greater good” in the face of possible risk for individual detainees.

The limited number of conference participants, around 55 in total, allowed for a high level of interaction, discussion and planning of future joint activities. The six members of the IRCT international group of forensic specialists who were present: Prof. Derrick Pounder, Prof. Duarte Nuno Vieira, Dr. Morris Tidball-Binz, Dr. Hernan Reyes, Dr. Djordje Alempijevic and Dr. Önder Özkalicpi, also attended. Potential future initiatives to promote forensic documentation of torture include a workshop with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (organised by ICRC), a one day workshop on torture within the context of the 19th Triennial Meeting of the International Association of Forensic Sciences in September 2011, and the development of a certified course on health and human rights and/or documentation of torture.

As a result of the conference, a platform was established to facilitate the finalisation of ongoing efforts to develop Minimum Guidelines for Investigation of Death in Custody, an initiative taken by the ICRC (Dr. Morris Tidball-Binz) and carried on by the University of Geneva.

Increased awareness about forensic documentation of torture in Egypt

In Egypt the challenges to fight the practice of torture and the state of impunity remain paramount and include the government’s recent extension of the State of Emergency that has been in place now for three decades. The State of Emergency grants the Egyptian authorities almost unlimited powers to quell any form of public protest and provides for indefinite detentions without charge. The ‘killing’ of Khaled Said is but one sad example of the apparent disrespect for fundamental human rights prevalent in the administration (see Cases in Focus).

Despite this situation, small steps in the right direction are, fortunately, being made. In April, two

conferences on Forensic Medicine were organized, one by the Department of Forensic Toxicology of Cairo University and the other by the Ministry of Justice. Whereas the former was an Egyptian conference for forensic academics, the latter was an international conference with the aim of bringing Egyptian national forensic practice closer to international standards.

The IRCT has, since 2006, been involved in the promotion of medical documentation of torture in Egypt, working since 2009 in partnership with the National Council for Human Rights. Activities have included training of health and legal professionals, advocacy initiatives and the development of a syllabus for under- and postgraduate medical students on the prevention and documentation of

torture. During the conference organized by Cairo University, it was announced that the Departments of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology at both Cairo and Ben Suif universities had integrated the undergraduate syllabus into the forensic medicine curricula. On another positive note, it was proclaimed that the Egyptian government had begun discussions on how to make the necessary changes in national legislation so as to comply with the international definition of torture.

Associate Professor Rusudan Beriashvili, Head of Forensic Medical Service in Georgia and member of the IRCT international group of forensic special-

ists, participated as an international speaker in both conferences. Dr. Beriashvili has acted as international trainer in Egypt on several occasions and has supported the development of the above-mentioned syllabus. Prof. Duarte Nuno Vieira, also a member of the IRCT international group, and Associate Professor Clifford Perera, previously involved in promotion of forensic documentation of torture in Sri Lanka, were invited as international speakers by the organizers of the conference at the Ministry of Justice.

The role and challenges of a forensic expert

In connection with the European Science Foundation in Sweden (see opposite) Susanne Kjær, Project Manager at the IRCT, interviewed Prof. Duarte Nuno Vieira, one of the members of the IRCT Forensic Expert Group, to learn about the role and challenges faced by forensic experts in the investigation and documentation of torture.

The Forensic Expert Group was established by the IRCT in partnership with the Department of Forensic Medicine, University of Copenhagen. The group will serve as a reference point, providing advice on select individual cases and participating in targeted missions to examine torture survivors and assist with bringing cases to court. The experts will also help to advocate for the increased use of medical evidence and continue to build a body of knowledge on the subject of forensic documentation of torture.



Watch the video interview online at
www.irct.org/news-and-media/multimedia/video/the-role-and-challenges-of-a-forensic-expert.aspx

Current case portfolio

In the second quarter of 2010, the IRCT requested all member centres and other interested parties, through bilateral contact, our website and Facebook page, to contact us with details of legal cases that could potentially benefit from support and

international assistance with medical reporting. By the end of June 2010, we had received qualified requests to assist with forensic medical examinations for a total of 25 cases. An analysis of the portfolio revealed the following:

Type of intervention	Number
Medical expert statements	5
Financial support for examination	1
Medical examinations	15
Cases where intervention is yet to be determined	4
Court of jurisdiction/mechanism	
Domestic courts	15
European Court of Human Rights	2
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights	1
Inter-American Court of Human Rights	2
To be determined	5
Cases with particular target groups	
Cases concerning women	4
Cases concerning asylum seekers	1
Cases concerning juveniles	1
By geographical location	
Europe (incl. Eastern Europe and Central Asia)	12
North America	1
Latin America and Caribbean	5
Sub-Saharan Africa	2
Middle East and North Africa	5
Cases in project Target Countries	3

Interventions have currently been confirmed in 14 out of the 25 cases. Four of these interventions have been concluded (incl. Evans v. Secretary of State for Defense and Zimbabwe/ACHPR – please see Cases in Focus). We expect a number of examination missions to take place within the coming months.

Upcoming events

Date(s)	Event	Details
14 - 19 September 2010	30th Anniversary Conference of the Right Livelihood Award, Bonn, Germany	The Right Livelihood Award honours and supports those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing the world today. In many countries, the Award is often referred to as the “Alternative Nobel Prize”. At the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Award, a five day conference entitled “Changing Course – Reclaiming Our Future” is organized with participation by laureates, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. The IRCT will participate in the event and hold a workshop on “Impunity and Torture” together with Livelihood Award laureate and founder and former ambassador of IRCT, Dr. Inge Genefke.

In addition to the above, IRCT, in cooperation with the organizing committees, is arranging for a full day of activities devoted to torture issue at each of the following events. We encourage all readers to contribute with their studies on torture. Further information will be available shortly.

INPALMS 2010

10th Indo-Pacific Congress on Legal Medicine & Forensic Science

Where: Noida-India

When: October 25th - 30th, 2010

For more information: www.amity.edu/inpalms/

The one-day Symposium on “Torture and Forensic Evidence” will take place on 27th October 2010.

19th IAFS Triennial Meeting

The 19th Triennial Meeting of the International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS).

Where: Funchal, Portugal on the island of Madeira

When: on 2011, September 12th - 17th,

Other scientific events will be taking place at the same time, namely the 9th Triennial Meeting of the World Police Medical Officers (WPMO) and the 5th Meeting of the Mediterranean Academy of Forensic Sciences (MAFS).

For more information: www.iafs2011.mj.pt

The date of the one day symposium on torture during IAFS 2011 will be decided soon

We will also discuss the lessons learned from FEAT project during the IAFS 2011 Madeira conference.

Recommended reading

Publisher/Author(s)	Title	Details
Furtmayr, Holger and Frewer, Andreas	Documentation of torture and the Istanbul Protocol: applied medical ethics	Medicine, health care and philosophy ; doi:10.1007/s11019-010-9248-1, 2010. - [8 p.].
The Healthright International Human Rights Clinic	An analytical approach to clinical forensic evaluations of asylum seekers	Journal of forensic and legal medicine ; vol. 17, no. 1, 2010. - p. 41-45 : ill..
Human Rights Watch (HRW)	Abusing patients : health providers complicity in torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment	World report 2010, New York : Human Rights Watch : HRW, 2010. - p. 49-59.
IRCT	The detection of phosphorus in the tissue of bomb victims in Gaza	Torture : journal on rehabilitation of torture victims and prevention of torture ; vol. 20, no. 1, 2010. - p. 1-3 : ill
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All the above articles are available through the Documentation Centre and Library databases <http://www.reindex.org/RCT/rss/Portal.php>



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