Forensic data and the challenge of migration -
Observations from the ICRC

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Route of Migrants

Europe → Mediterranean /Overland → Country of Origin
Types of Forensic Data

- Antemortem Data
- Biological Reference Samples
- Postmortem Data
(Good) Data Management...

...is the (proper)
- collection
- organization
- validation (quality assurance and control)
- archival, and
- analysis (interpretation)

of data,

in order to ensure that the data
- is reliable, accurate and of high quality, and
- is used to its fullest potential.
Data Management Concerns in the Forensic Process

- acquiring as much data of forensic value as possible
  - AM and PM data
  - witness statements (e.g. following boat sinking)
  - other information

- maximizing identification efforts
  - increasing likelihood of positive identification
  - decreasing possibility of misidentification

- personal and investigative data protection and confidentiality
  - chain of custody
  - restricted access
  - legal framework for protection and use of data
Clarifying the Fate of the Missing Migrants

Missing Person → Identification → Unidentified Remains
Data Management Objectives

To include systematic data
- collection
- organization
- validation, including quality assurance and control,
- archiving
- analysis, and
- interpretation

To ensure the data are
- reliable
- accurate
- of high quality, and
- used to its fullest potential
Main concerns related to protection, integrity and confidentiality of personal and investigative data?
Management of data.

- Compile
- Centralize
- Organize
- Processes
- Analyze
- Transfer...
Data vs. Quality Data
Sources of Forensic Data (Challenges)

Oral Sources
- Family members
  - AMD
- Witnesses
- Friends
- Activists
- Dentists
- Doctors
- Perpetrators
Conclusions from ICRC 2\textsuperscript{nd} Conference on the management and identification of unidentified decedents, with an emphasis on dead migrants, October 2015
‘No centralized database containing information on all non-identified dead decedents, including migrants, found both at national and European levels. Existing databases contain partial information and are not accessible by all concerned institutions and stakeholders, least by the victims themselves’.
‘Inadequate or not sufficient collection of information from unidentified bodies, including those possibly migrants’.

‘Lack of ante-mortem data and reference samples to compare with the findings from dead bodies for their identification, mainly due to issues families face such as lack of information, lack of assistance, fear of authorities; as well as lack of technical skills of those collecting AMD’.

Lack of data, quality and quantity of data collection and data collectors
‘Lack of formal mechanisms between and concerning institutions in countries of origin and destination of migrants for transmitting and receiving information (e.g. Ante Mortem Data and DNA reference samples) purely for humanitarian purposes which may help identify the dead and provide answers to bereaved families. Data protection issues may guide, but should not impede, such mechanisms’.

Need for coordination both nationally and regionally for sharing of data (mechanisms)
Key Challenges
- Limited data
- Lack of qualified persons to collect accurate and quality assured data
- Standard practices to be fully implemented
- Difficulties of access, chain of custody, oversight, data ownership, data protection etc.
- Expectations of families and transfer of data across boarders
- Scale of the task
Management of data

- Centralisation of information
- Comparison and cross matching of information

Establishment of mechanisms local - regional level (EU level)

- Database of unidentified bodies
- Different levels of access to information
- Limited resources
Recommendations
6. **Promote** the centralization and proper management of information available, through the development of searchable open databases at national and European levels, purely for humanitarian purposes.

6.1. Encourage the **development** of national open databases and with different access levels and in line with data protection legislation and ensuring the protection of personal integrity.

6.2. **Develop** an open European database platform and with different access levels and in line with data protection legislation and ensuring the protection of personal integrity.
At National and Regional Level

- Promote centralization of data.
- Ensure harmonization and standardization of forms and protocols for the collection of AM and PM data, and identification processes.
- For centralized collection and proper management of the information, the creation or adaptation of a national/regional database to gather all the AM / PM data to be later compatible with a regional database should be explored. Searchable open DB, different access levels, etc....