



F15 Interpol's Role in Promoting Reliability, Validity, and Standardization of Disaster Victim Identification Procedures Worldwide

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At the completion of this presentation the attendee will understand the role of Interpol in: 1) globally enhancing and facilitating crossborder criminal police co-operation to solve serious transnational crime; and 2) promoting and implementing the policies and standards of disaster victim identification to its 179 member countries.

Interpol's mission is to promote international police cooperation, i.e., to help officers from different police forces, countries, languages, and cultures to cooperate with one another and work together to solve international crime.

Interpol, with its headquarters in Lyon, France, works around the clock in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic). It receives, stores, analyses and circulates intelligence with its 179 member countries. Interpol plays a key role in information exchange by:

- Encouraging member countries to use the Automated Search Facility (AFS), which allows 24-hour remote interrogation of the information collected from around the globe and stored in its central databases;
- Issuing international 'wanted' notices for fugitives or other notices for missing persons or unidentified bodies;
- Distributing international bulletins, publications and circulars such as weekly intelligence messages on drugs and regular updates on new specimen or fraudulent banknotes in circulation;
- Convening international conferences and symposia which bring police chiefs and experts together to develop and exchange practices for better cooperation; and
- Offering forensic services (fingerprints, DNA, disaster victim identification, counterfeit currency and travel documents).

This presentation is mainly focused on the forensic services offered, especially the services related to disaster victim identification (DVI). The author served as an intern in Interpol's Headquarters and carried out a research project concerning Interpol's role in implementing DVI policies and standards to its member countries and consequently, ensuring the reliability and validity of DVI procedures worldwide. This research project consisted of a review of Interpol DVI related services as well as a questionnaire prepared for the 179 Interpol's member countries. The specific goals of this ongoing research project are:

1. To collect information on DVI activities in Interpol member countries;
2. To inform the member countries of the INTERPOL DVI related services, such as standard INTERPOL DVI form and guide, etc.;
3. To specify member countries awareness, usage and satisfaction to the INTERPOL DVI related services;
4. To analyze the reliability and validity of the DVI procedures among the member countries worldwide.

The questionnaire has been completed and disseminated to the member countries and responses are expected in fall 2002. Then these responses will be analyzed to determine the profile of DVI services across Interpol member countries. The resulting analysis will allow member countries to better collaborate using standardized Interpol forms, methods, and databases.

Interpol plays a unique role in assisting its member countries to effectively cooperate in DVI matters using reliable, valid and standardized techniques. Collaboration using standard methods will greatly assist in disasters involving multinational victims. Such disasters, particularly terrorism-related, are now occurring almost daily. Thus the current research is particularly timely as the need for global cooperation among police and forensic experts has never been more acute.

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Interpol's Standards, International Collaboration, Disaster Victim Identification