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H74 The Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) and the Memory of the Missing

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The author will discuss the formation and work of the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) and the large-scale collection of antemortem information on missing persons in Peru as part of the Memory of the Missing project.

With this paper, the forensic community will learn about the activities of the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) and their campaign for the collection of ante-mortem information of missing persons.

Created in February 2001, the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF), a non-governmental organization, advocates the search for missing persons in Peru through scientific methods of forensic anthropology and archaeology. Recent estimates by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru suggest that during the 1980s and 90s, the worst period of political violence, some 60,000 people were killed and of those, some 9,000 went missing.

It is EPAF's view that investigations aimed at determining the whereabouts of missing persons should be carried out by independent teams not involved with the State system. This is particularly true in the Peruvian case, where the state institutions were involved directly or indirectly in the disappearance of people.

Between 2001 and 2002, EPAF undertook five workshops at the national level to provide prosecutors, lawyers, human rights activists and archaeology students with the basic information regarding the use of forensic science in investigating human rights violations. In addition, EPAF and the Ombudsman's Office of Peru published a manual on effective forensic investigations of graves containing human remains. During this period, EPAF was also appointed as an expert group by the Public Prosecutor's Office and human rights organizations. They became involved in cases such as the storming in 1997 of the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima and other cases against Vladimiro Montesinos and the Fujimori regime (1990-2000). While working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) of the Peruvian Government, EPAF conducted the first exhumation of missing persons in the Province of Ayacucho dating from 1983. In 2002, after a ninemonth collaboration with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) and following certain conditions that compromised its independence, EPAF returned to work as an independent organization.

The search for missing persons is not a forensic activity limited to the recovery and examination of human remains. It is rather a set of activities contributing to finding the remains of a missing person and restoring his/her identity. Paramount to the latter is the availability of antemortem data used to perform an individual identification. Considering the number of missing persons in Peru and the lack of antemortem records, EPAF has launched the Memory of the Missing, a project designed to gather antemortem information for missing persons as well as the details their disappearance. The combination these data provides information on the biological profile of the victim (age, sex, race, stature, handedness, individuating characteristics, dental chart) as well as information on the possible place where the body was disposed. Additional details include information about perpetrators and their *modus operandi* (Army, paramilitary groups, rebel organizations). All information is maintained in a specialized database that allows for complex searches to be performed.

The implementation of the project and the collection of antemortem data empower grassroots organizations and family associations. EPAF is providing technical support, supervising quality control and providing training by means of workshops throughout the provinces worst hit by the violence of the 1980s and 90s. EPAF is successfully building a network of local and regional family associations that participate in this process. The urgency of this project is demonstrated by the fact that a large number of relatives of those who went missing in the early 80s are dying of old age, disease or sorrow. Therefore, if this crucial information is not collected immediately it may be lost forever, further diminishing the chances to identify the remains of missing persons.

With this paper, the forensic community will learn about the activities of the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) and their campaign for the collection of antemortem information of missing persons. *Equipo Peruano de Antropología Forense (EPAF)*, Gral. Canterac # 583E, Jesus Maria, Lima-Peru.

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