



A34 The Forensic Science Laboratory in Kosovo

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be introduced to the facilities and operation of the forensic laboratory in Kosovo.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by describing the current capabilities of the Kosovo forensic science laboratory as well as future initiatives.

Kosovo is located in Southeast Europe with a population of 2.2 million people. A forensic science laboratory in Kosovo has never been organized at the level of most modern forensic science laboratories. This was made possible after the war of 1999 with the help and support from the United States. The United States Government/ICITAP provided 9.5 million dollars to support this project. Ideas and supporting materials for the construction of the forensic laboratory in Kosovo by the United States have greatly benefitted law enforcement in Kosovo. This poster presentation is an elaboration of areas of expertise that the laboratory offers as well as the current status and need for expansion. In particular, future areas of expertise are needed in order to achieve accreditation under ISO 17025 international standards.

The laboratory is 1000 square meters and employs 38 experts. Forensic laboratories in Kosovo are crucial to criminal justice system. Forensic scientists in Kosovo laboratories provide valuable information that aids in the investigation and prosecution of crime through the scientific examination of physical evidence. Their efforts carried out to the highest standards of scientific objectivity, integrity, and quality, give voice to the silent witnesses of physical evidence and contribute to the cause of justice. The addition of a LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) has improved the laboratory's ability to track the internal flow of evidence and case analysis. This system is used to track cases, analytical results, and evidence as it is processed through the laboratory. The LIMS system assists with the assignment of cases, case flow, and backlog control. LIMS can also generate and maintain case reports and allow for statistical analysis of the types of cases, number of cases, turnaround times, and other management data.

The Kosovo forensic laboratory also has an intensive quality assurance program which covers the following areas: staff qualifications, training, proficiency testing, administrative policies, technical procedures, security and evidence integrity, chemical reagent quality control, equipment maintenance and performance verification, documentation of laboratory analysis, and the review of casework, reports, and testimony.

The forensic laboratory in Kosovo is a full service laboratory offering a wide variety of services. Included is the analysis of controlled substances, toxicology, latent prints comparisons, firearms and tool mark identification, trace evidence examination, DNA analysis, and questioned document examination.

Technological equipment of all sectors and photos from the Automated Biometric Identification and Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems will be presented in order to stimulate a discussion and encourage the exchange of information. The forensic laboratory in Kosovo has significant needs that must be met in order for forensic services to continue to improve and meet the demands of ISO 17025. The forensic laboratory scientific staff is encouraged to participate in seminars and scientific conferences in the United States and in Europe in order to adopt techniques and newer methods in various forensic disciplines. Each sector in the forensic laboratory already has staff who are Associate Members in organizations such as European Network of Forensic Science Institutes and the International Association of Identification, and has members who participate in working groups within these organizations.

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