



E55 Forensic Science as an Indispensable Tool in the International Cooperation in Fighting Terrorism

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After attending this presentation, attendees will appreciate the role of forensic science as a key element in fighting terrorism and producing meaningful intelligence for that purpose.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by enhancing its awareness of its role in combating terrorism.

Twenty-first-century global terrorism may be described using several important indicators (in bold): (1) **globalization** is the term used to describe changes in the world, especially related to the economy, occurring during the last few decades. Despite its benefits, globalization, unless properly handled, might generate a dangerous anti-security process supporting terrorism development; (2) **modern communication** and the internet allow terrorism to operate without formal organizations and physical bases. These two indicators — globalization and modern communication — may end up in putting power in the hands of small organizations, or even individuals, that not too long ago was reserved only to nations. One important post-9/11 observation is that global terrorism lost all obstacles for **mega-terror activities** and may strike using all available power and means without any constraints; (3) another indicator is that most **terrorism-related intelligence targets** today are individuals, not entities; and, (4) the **war against terrorism is completely asymmetric**. Terrorism is considered successful even if 90% of its activities fail. On the other hand, states fail even if 90% of their anti-terrorism activities succeed.

The years 2000-2004 are remembered as a most intensive terror period in Israel. The Israel National Police dealt with, among other terror events, more than 150 suicide bombers who killed more than 580 people and wounded thousands. This is where the impact of forensic science in fighting terrorism can be fully understood. Three important roles are defined for forensic units in such circumstances: (1) identify as quickly as possible the attacker in order to prevent consecutive terror events; (2) scientifically identify the victims; and, (3) produce valuable intelligence to help fight and prevent additional attacks.

Forensic intelligence is a relatively new concept. It deals with the acquisition and analysis of information extracted from crime scenes, using diversified forensic tools, processing and transforming it into useful intelligence, then using this information to identify criminals and/or prevent additional crimes. During the last decades of international terrorism, terror scenes or events are considered by most relevant agencies as severe crime scenes, and forensic means are gaining more and more importance in their investigation.

This presentation will deal with the two main stages of forensically treating terror events in order to generate valuable intelligence: (1) the forensic investigation of the terror scene itself — how different is it from a “regular” crime scene?; and, (2) the build up of (biometric and other) databases, their usefulness in fighting terrorism, and the importance of international data contribution and sharing in order to maximize their effectiveness in fighting and preventing global terrorism.

Examples taken from terror incidents which occurred in Israel and other countries will be discussed in light of the above information.

Forensic Intelligence, Terrorism, International Cooperation