



## Jurisprudence Section - 2016

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### F44 Battlefield Forensics: A Precursor to Counterterrorism, Peace, and Security

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding about the link between scientific investigation and international legal entities in countering terrorism and maintaining peace and security.

In order to combat terrorism and to acquire peace and security, this presentation will impact the forensic science community by expanding the field of battlefield forensics from incident scene management to the incorporation of a mechanism for better coordination of domestic and international legal entities in the collection of evidence and the observation of violations of international humanitarian law. This presentation will provide additional research to this rapidly developing field in the specific areas of laws of war and the use of force, thus aiding the international justice system.

Battlefield forensics is a material collection process designed specifically for the troops in the field who are fighting terrorism on the front lines. Students are trained on basic skills for known and latent print lifting, DNA collection, special photography techniques, and proper documentation practices — and to do all of this quickly and efficiently.<sup>1</sup>

The Joint Expeditionary Forensic Facilities (JEFF) laboratories are constantly adjusting to a dynamic operational environment that ranges from providing actionable intelligence to the military commanders on the ground to the anticipated future of training and mentoring. These JEFF laboratories operate in difficult and austere environments, process samples recovered from material or associated individuals, and support a diverse cadre of military and site exploitation teams that include: special operations task forces; weapons intelligence teams; and exploitation laboratories focused on the analysis of improvised explosive devices.<sup>2</sup> The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) distinguishes chemicals which can either be used as weapons themselves or used in the manufacture of weapons.<sup>3</sup>

The law relating to the armed conflict lays out, *inter alia*, the study of renouncing the war-time use of explosive projectiles, prohibiting launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons, the usage of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, and usage of deleterious gases or causations of asphyxiation.<sup>4,5</sup>

The International Court of Justice finds that the principles as to the use of force incorporated in the United Nations Charter correspond, essentially, to those found in customary international law. They therefore accept a treaty-law obligation to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force.<sup>6</sup>

#### Reference(s):

1. [https://www.dvidshub.net/news/111095/battlefield-forensics-military-training-crime-scene-investigation#.VbsH\\_fmqqko](https://www.dvidshub.net/news/111095/battlefield-forensics-military-training-crime-scene-investigation#.VbsH_fmqqko) (as updated on 07/31/2015).
2. <http://www.promega.com/~media/files/resources/conference%20proceedings/ishi%2021/oral%20presentations/mason.pdf> (as updated on 07/31/2015).
3. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, Article II.
4. 1868 St Petersburg Declaration.
5. Hague Convention.
6. *The Republic of Nicaragua v. The United States of America* (1986) ICJ 14.

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#### Battlefield Forensics, Counterterrorism, Peace and Security