

International  
Independent  
Impartial

International Forensic  
Centre of Excellence

**inforce**  
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## **Missing Persons Investigation**

- **Desktop Planning (MP11)**
- **Site Assessments (MP12)**
- **Site Excavation and Recovery (MP13)**
- **Mortuary Operation and Victim Identification (MP14)**
- **Capacity Building and Training (CA11)**
- **Advisory and Consultancy Services (GE16)**

[www.inforce.org.uk](http://www.inforce.org.uk)

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A legacy of conflict is that it can leave many people missing and many survivors without certain knowledge of their loved ones' fate and whereabouts. Closure is essential for survivors to move on with their lives and for successful reconciliation processes within the region. The recovery and identification of the dead is paramount to a more peaceful future.

Inforce experts have extensive experience in humanitarian missions and can assist governments, international organisations and NGOs. The following brochures explain how Inforce can assist in each of the key operational phases:

- Mission Planning (MP11)
- Site Assessments (MP12)
- Site Excavation and Recovery (MP13)
- Mortuary Operation and Victim Identification (MP14)

More in-depth material is also available on demand.

As part of the process of recovering and identifying the Missing, it is possible to build a local forensic capacity with the skills and understanding necessary to continue such work into the future. Inforce is committed to empowering post-conflict communities by training and mentoring local scientists in the range of skills involved.

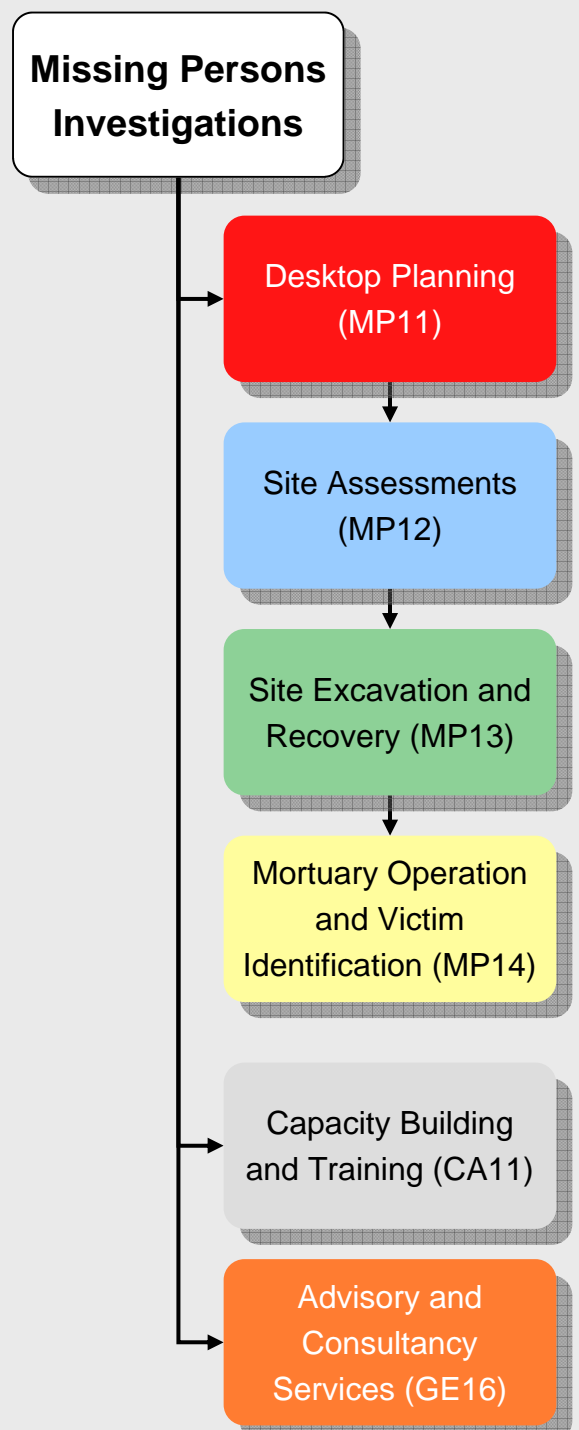
Capacity building in humanitarian recovery and identification is achieved via a program of academic study, practical workshops and exercises using large scale simulations of mass graves and other burial sites. This includes field operations and setting up and working within emergency mortuary facilities. For details see:

- Capacity Building: Missing Persons Investigation (CA11)

In some circumstances, national or international governments or NGOs may need advice rather than actual operational support. Inforce can offer such advice on any issue related to missing persons investigations. Further information is outlined in:

- Advisory and Consultancy Services (GE16)

**Please do not hesitate to contact us**



## DATA GATHERING

Before any forensic operations can begin, a thorough and detailed desktop investigation is required. The investment of sufficient time in this pre-operational phase will maximise the efficiency of, and benefit gained for, the later stages of the investigation.

Data from a variety of sources should be gathered by investigators and scientists with experience in interviewing and in handling large amounts of complex information.



Inforce scientists work with local investigating teams to collate the eye witness statements and documentary material that will provide the required information.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The collated data requires detailed analysis by a team of experts. The range of expertise required will depend upon the nature of the event under investigation and the data itself.

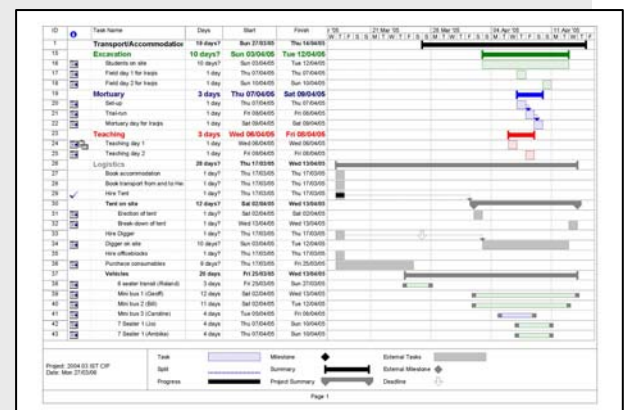
Inforce co-ordinates the data analysis working with local agencies and provides scientific experts as appropriate. Eye witness statements are analysed by experienced investigators, whilst numerical data is evaluated by statisticians. Scientific data is analysed by experts in the appropriate fields. For example; maps may be evaluated by a geographer and geologist or population specific data by a cultural and biological anthropologist.



## OPERATIONS PLANNING

Successful co-ordination and planning of such complex operations begins with the analysis of appropriate data. Each stage of the investigation can then be planned to achieve maximum benefit within the framework of an agreed operational plan including:

- Investigation sequence
- Logistics
- Team size and composition



Investment in detailed planning at an early stage maximises efficiency whilst keeping expenditure within budget. Inforce has extensive experience and expertise in planning such operations and will work with investigating authorities to deliver the most effective investigation within available resources.

## AREA LOCATION

Forensic or humanitarian investigations of mass fatalities often begin with information on a general area as it can be rare for the exact location of burial sites to be known. Such areas can be vast and it is imperative that limits of interest are clearly defined before investigation of any sites can begin. Inforce will use a number of scientific and other methods to define such an area of interest, e.g.:

- Satellite imagery
- Air imagery
- Eye witness/survivor statements



Once the general area of interest has been defined, the task of locating specific sites can begin.

## SITE LOCATION

A general area of interest often contain numerous sites (anomalies) that may potentially be of forensic significance. Each one will need to be investigated and defined by application of several different methods:

- Botanical surface assessment
- Prioritising zones within the area of interest
- Geographical, geological and geophysical assessments
- Eye witness/survivor statements



Definition of the various types of sites is essential for planning an efficient and effective excavation phase. This will ensure that sites are investigated in a logical sequence taking account of practical, legal and security factors.

## SITE CONFIRMATION

During every investigation, the team will come across anomalies that appear grave-like. There can be many reasons for this, and it emphasizes the need for every anomaly to be confirmed or discounted as a grave. Without this, the excavation phase cannot be reliably planned.

The most commonly used method for demonstrating that a site is a mass grave, is test trenching. By excavating a small trench or pit, the archaeologist can confirm the presence of multiple human remains. At this stage material is either collected for later analysis or recorded and buried again until the main excavation phase commences.



## MATERIAL RECOVERY

When excavating a grave site, teams will always encounter a variety of material. All material uncovered is used to reconstruct the sequence of events that has taken place.

Some material comes in the form of physical objects, such as documents or jewellery. Other information is based on observations such as tyre-tracks or mechanical digger bucket marks in the walls and floor of a grave. It is critical that all material is documented in great detail through photography, description, planning and survey. Careful recovery, storage, and transportation of material to appropriate facilities is essential.



## BODY EXHUMATION

Recovery of bodies from a grave is an important task combining forensic expertise with a compassionate approach, affording dignity to the deceased and their families.

Bereaved communities have the right to deal with the remains of their loved ones according to their customs and religious traditions. Where possible, each individual should be identified and re-united with their families to help the surviving relatives begin the process of closure.

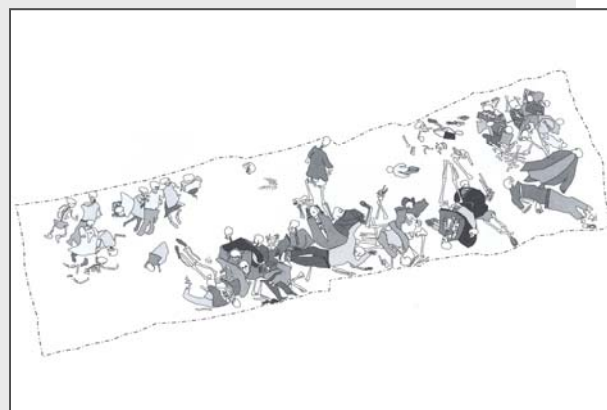


Only the highest standards of practice amongst experts in the field will enable the identification team to gather as much information about each individual as possible.

## SITE ANALYSIS

Excavations of mass graves and the recording of the surrounding landscape may produce hundreds or even thousands of items of material that helps in the reconstruction of the sequence of events.

This vast amount of data is carefully analysed to yield maximum information and secure accurate identifications. Inforce teams have considerable experience in such analysis and presenting it in a detailed, coherent form. These reports are essential for the thorough analysis of the human remains within the mortuary and for the overall project.



Without such analysis, it can be difficult for relevant authorities, families and general public to understand the detail and nature of the incident.

## MORTUARY OPERATION

In the mortuary or laboratory, the material that was collected in the field can be processed, analysed and stored. The specialists involved will depend on the nature and amount of the material and the numbers and conditions of the individuals recovered.

Inforce can establish a temporary mortuary near a grave site if necessary, or a permanent mortuary can be established for long term operations. Information gathered from the exhumation and derived from the post-mortem analysis is used to:

- estimate the minimum number of individuals recovered from a site
- determine the biological profile of each individual
- identify individuals
- if appropriate, assess the cause and manner of death



## POST-MORTEM ANALYSIS

Human remains may be recovered in varying stages of decomposition or skeletonisation, requiring different methods of analysis and storage.

The main aim of a post-mortem examination is to identify the individuals. Criteria such as age, sex, and height together with unique identifying characteristics (tattoos, previous injuries, dental work etc.) and details of clothing and personal effects are recorded. This is done through a series of systematic analyses using radiography, pathology, odontology and anthropology.

If appropriate, a further aim is to determine the cause and manner of death so that a death certificate can be issued to assist with issues such as closure, insurance and inheritance.



## IDENTIFICATION

The means by which an individual can be identified is limited by the information that can be obtained about them from their families and communities and how much can be learned from their remains.

A comparison of dental radiographs to an individual's teeth, or a comparison of DNA from a living relative to that of the deceased can result in a positive identification. When only general information exists, such as age, sex, height etc or what they were last wearing, it may only be possible to tentatively identify the deceased.

Cooperation between investigators, ante-mortem data collectors and mortuary staff is vital for a successful identification process.



## TRAINING

Inforce can provide theoretical, classroom and practical training in all areas of the process of missing persons investigation:

**Mission Planning:** including logistics, health and safety, data sourcing and management.

**Field Operations:** training in the process of search and location, site analysis and the recovery and analysis of all material.

**Mortuary and Identification Operations:** Planning and commissioning temporary mortuaries for the examination of mass fatalities, control and analysis of human remains and other materials, the identification of the dead.

**Investigative and Legal:** techniques of evidence identification and collection, interviewing, and the law pertaining to the missing.



## SIMULATIONS

Inforce has a successful track record of using simulations for capacity building. These are a convenient and safe way to train personnel in the processes of mass grave assessment, recovery, analysis and reporting. They are a training tool, with no associated legal, social or moral issues. Trainees' performance can be assessed. Any mistakes made do not effect identification or court cases, and they are cost effective alternative to training on real graves. Simulations can be designed for any requirement or experience level. They can be undertaken in any suitable environment and can be controlled for safety, speed, complexity and size.



Inforce can run simulations for a variety of needs including field operations, mortuary and identification operations and expert witness skills.

## MENTORING

Inforce can co-ordinate, monitor and mentor scientific teams and processes to ensure that new skills are applied appropriately whilst assuring quality. This can be provided as part of our training programme or as a separate service. Mentoring ensures an efficient practical application of newly acquired skills on real missions, permitting a continuation of education and development of expertise.

Mentoring can be arranged on a long or short term basis providing continuing support for teams as they develop and grow in confidence and effectiveness.



Team members may further develop knowledge and skills by undertaking qualifications in forensic science, training and management at UK universities thus creating the capacity to form a local specialist forensic capability.

## ASSESSMENT

Inforce offers advisory and consultancy services to guide clients in the areas of:

- Human rights violations
- Missing persons investigations
- Victim identification
- Related forensic science
- Training

Assessing the needs, capabilities and requirements of a client is the first step. Disasters, finding and identifying the missing, investigating crimes or human rights violations often require rapid solutions or can become imperative following policy and regime change.

Inforce can advise and assess the impact of an event or potential investigation in areas such as policy, inter-organisational coordination, international law, media liaison, resources, finance, and management.



## PLANNING

Following assessment of capabilities and determination of requirements, Inforce can advise on the measures necessary to achieve successful investigative outcomes.

Operations involving site investigation and body recovery, victim and perpetrator data collection and identification are complex processes necessitating a detailed operational and logistics plan. Inforce offers advice throughout all stages of the planning processes which can include the following areas:

Desk top analysis; health and safety; risk assessment; security; terms of reference; logistics; transport and engineering; technical support; communications; finance; organisational structure; medical support; personnel; investigation management; scene management; facility management; liaison and coordination.



## OPERATIONS

Following the detailed planning process, Inforce can advise on operational matters for both field and mortuary operations.

Operations of this type may vary in scale and intensive in terms of resources, staffing, finance and time.

Inforce have extensive experience in complex operations which may include: Deployment, remote imaging; survey; search; location; site confirmation; recovery of evidence and remains; ante mortem and post mortem data collection; crime scene analysis; chain of custody; logistics; transport; mortuary commissioning and analysis of evidence and remains; liaison with scientific facilities; sampling; family and community liaison; death certification; repatriation of remains; interviewing; reporting and presentation.



## INFORCE'S HISTORY

Almost 203 million citizens were unlawfully killed by governments in the twentieth century; a number that is, unfortunately, likely to be matched in the first century of the new millennium.

The Inforce Foundation was founded in 2001, born out of the collective experience of a group of forensic specialists active in the investigation of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide since the mid 1990s.

Between us, Inforce personnel have worked with a multiplicity of national and international organisations (government and NGOs) initiating and undertaking such work.

Inforce has operated in a variety of countries, such as Iraq, Cyprus, or DR Congo locating and investigating crime scenes, identifying the deceased and educating and training local forensic teams to carry on this vital role.

## WHO ARE WE?

The Inforce Foundation is a movement of scientists, lawyers and others committed to upholding human rights and creating a future for all that is free from fear, oppression and murder. We are fortunate in having an impressive and diverse range of supporters, patrons and advisors.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a centre of expertise for the location, recovery and identification of victims of atrocities on a world wide basis.

To enable legitimate legal authorities to proceed with the prosecution of alleged perpetrators.

To satisfy the humanitarian need of families and communities to bury their dead.

To provide education; for practitioners and as a means of empowering survivor groups.



Inforce Foundation  
Melbury House  
1-3 Oxford Road  
Dorset  
BH8 8ES  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)1202 961342  
Fax: +44 (0)1202 961339  
E-mail: [info@inforce.org.uk](mailto:info@inforce.org.uk)  
[www.inforce.org.uk](http://www.inforce.org.uk)