



II Workshop on Search Mechanisms for Missing Migrants

Concept Note
August 25th and 26th, 2022
San Salvador, El Salvador

BACKGROUND

The search, location and identification of missing migrants is a challenge faced by many countries in the Americas, and one which the Member Countries of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) have identified as a priority. Coordination among States and with other non-state actors is essential to reach the common goal of ensuring that victims have access to truth and justice.

In a similar vein, international human rights mechanisms are also trying to set standards, with a differentiated approach, for the handling of cases of disappearances occurring in contexts of human mobility. The United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) has recently announced an upcoming [General comment on enforced disappearances in the context of migration](#).

In May 2022 the CRM adopted [Recommendations on regional coordination and information exchange mechanisms in the search for missing persons in the context of migration](#) (“the Recommendations”) and proposed a workshop to guide States in its implementation. This comes as a follow up to a series of workshops that took place in previous years:

- 2018. Workshop on “Guidelines for the coordination and exchange of information for the search of missing persons in the context of migration”, held in San Jose, Costa Rica.
- 2019. Workshop on “Best practices of consular missions and ministries of foreign affairs in the search for missing migrants”, held in Guatemala.
- 2021. Online workshop “Search Mechanisms for Missing Migrants”, Mexico City, Mexico.

RATIONALE

The II Workshop on Search Mechanisms for Missing Migrants follows the Declaration of Vice-Ministers from the XXVI Vice-Ministerial Meeting of the RCM held in Mexico City on December 2nd and 3rd, 2021, which agreed:

“5. Update the calendar of the RCM according to the recommendations of the RCGM reviewed during the closed meeting between Vice-Ministers and in accordance with the Work Plan to be presented by El Salvador PPT 2022:

Working Group on Protection
(...)





- k. II Workshop on Search Mechanisms for Missing Migrants, with the Support of RNOCM, IOM and ICRC.

OBJECTIVES

• General Objective

Share the content of the "Recommendations on Regional Search Mechanisms for the Coordination and Exchange of Information for the Search of Missing Persons in the Context of Migration" and set the ground for the development of collaboration agreements between countries and other actors for the flow and exchange of information for the search and identification of missing migrants, the investigation of crimes committed against them, and the care, support, and rehabilitation of victims.

• Specific Objectives

- To facilitate reflections among representatives of RCM Member Countries and other partners on the challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Recommendations.
- To raise awareness of existing national and regional mechanisms for coordinating the search, investigation, and forensic identification of possible migrants.
- To identify the type of information that should be shared directly by counterpart institutions and non-state actors in order to carry out the search process for missing migrants, both alive and deceased.
- To identify and learn about the types of Information Management Systems used by States for the registration, organization, filing and use of information.
- To establish a roadmap for the implementation of the Recommendations and to identify focal points.
- To define routes for the systematic flow and exchange of information for the search for missing migrants and the search for deceased persons until they are identified.
- To propose concrete actions to contact family members and to adequately respond to their needs for information and response.
- To identify regional forensic networks that might contribute to the implementation of the Recommendations.

2

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

At the end of the workshop, participants will have a roadmap for the implementation of the Recommendations, including next steps for the consideration and follow-up of the issue.





METHODOLOGY

- An opening panel, providing an overview of the issue and of the role of countries of origin, transit and destination, counting with the participation of the PPT, ICRC, RNCOM, UN and Missing Persons' Family Associations.
- Each thematic block will be facilitated by either by RNCOM or by the ICRC and will begin with a presentation of the corresponding content of the Recommendations.
- For each topic, representatives will present the experience of their countries, working methods or models of coordination and information exchange (at national, bilateral, or multilateral levels). Subsequently, the floor will be opened for contributions from other States and stakeholders to the issue.
- The discussions will focus on defining proposals for the implementation of the Recommendations and on identifying next steps towards this goal.
- During each thematic session the participants will reflect on necessary actions to meet the needs of families and to provide them with information on search, investigation, and identification actions.
- At the end of each thematic session, member States will have greater clarity on possible bilateral or multilateral agreements for information exchange and flow, the roadmap to carry them through and the establishment of focal points.

3

PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The participation of two representatives from each of the Member Countries is expected, among the following profiles, in order of priority:

- Representatives of institutions responsible for the search and identification of deceased persons (medic-legal system, police, prosecution, and forensic institutions),
- Representatives of national search commissions for missing persons,
- Representatives of prosecutors' offices in charge of investigations into the disappearance of migrants,
- Ombudspersons' offices that are members of existing forensic banks in the region,
- Representatives of consulates and Ministries of Foreign Affairs,
- Representatives of National Migration Institutes,
- Representatives of RNCOM, ICRC, OACNUDH and IOM.





AGENDA

Day 1: August 25 th , 2022		
Time	Topic	Speakers and Participants
8:45	Welcome Remarks	Cindy Mariella Portal , <i>Diaspora and Human Mobility Vice Minister, Pro Tempore Presidency of the RCM</i> RCM Executive Secretariat
9:00 – 10:00	The disappearance of migrants in RCM Member States: Challenges and Perspectives	<i>PPT El Salvador, name pending</i> Carmen Rosa Villa Quintana , <i>Chairperson of the UN Committee Against on Enforced Disappearances (pending confirmation)</i> Fabienne Cabaret , <i>RNCOM COFAMIDE (pending confirmation)</i> Anaïs Faure Atger , <i>ICRC</i> <i>Moderator: Executive Secretariat, RCM</i>
10:00 – 10:30	Challenges for the Search of Missing Migrants	Marisol Méndez Cruz , <i>RNCOM (FJEDD)</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Official Group Photo	
11:00 – 12:30	Information Management: Collection, storage, use, protection, standardization of information for the search and identification of missing migrants	Introduction: Guillermo Vásquez Escobar , <i>ICRC Regional Advisor on Forensic Information Management for Mexico, and Central America</i> 15 minutes Q&A: 10 minutes >> Standardization of Information on Missing Persons, MFA Guatemala. 10 minutes >> Forensic information of deceased persons, Medical Examiner for Pima County. 10 minutes >> Border Project, Mercedes Doretti (<i>pending confirmation</i>). 10 minutes Dialogue: 25 minutes Conclusions and Agreements: Alejandra Jimenez y Lourdes Penados 10 minutes
12:30 - 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 - 15:40	Missing person reports, databases and coordination for the search (living and deceased persons)	Introduction: Dina Alejandra Jimenez , <i>ICRC Regional Forensic Manager for the Americas</i> , 10 minutes





		<p>Q&A: 10 minutes</p> <p>>> Office for the Protection of the Honduran Migrant (to be defined), Honduras. 15 minutes</p> <p>>> Data Management Duties. Unrestricted access to all relevant databases and official records. Anonymous reporting system, Javier Yankelevich, Mexico National Missing Persons Search Commission. 15 minutes</p> <p>>> Working agreements between US authorities and Tamaulipas and Coahuila, Mexico, Prosecutors' Office. 15 minutes</p> <p>Dialogue: 25 minutes</p> <p>Conclusions and Agreements: 10 minutes</p>
15:40 - 16:00	BREAK	
16:00 a 17:30	Hypothetical case on the search for migrants	<i>Facilitated by RNCOM y ICRC</i>

Day 2: August 26th 2022

Time	Topic	Speakers
9:00 - 9:30	Previous Day Recap	PPT El Salvador and Panama
9:30 - 11:10	Forensic identification and Notice to Families	<p>Introduction: Dina Alejandra Jimenez, ICRC <i>Regional Forensic Manager for the Americas, 10 minutes</i></p> <p>Q&A: 10 minutes</p> <p>>> Notice to families in the frame of the EAAF Border Project. 15 minutes</p> <p>>> Costa Rica. 15 minutes</p> <p>>> Camargo Case, MFA Guatemala. 15 minutes</p> <p>Dialogue 25 minutes</p> <p>Conclusions and Agreements. 10 minutes</p>
11:10 - 11:30	Break	
11:30 - 13:10	Existing coordination mechanisms and dialogue between States and institutions: Challenges and Opportunities	<p>Introduction: Lourdes Penados, ICRC <i>Forensic Regional Coordinator for North and Central America. 5 minutes</i></p> <p>Q&A: 10 minutes</p> <p>>> External Support Mechanism, Javier Durón, Head of the Migrants Unit, Attorney General's Office, Mexico. 15 minutes</p>



		>> Missing Migrants Search Coordination Roundtable, Javier Yankelevich, CNB. 15 minutes >> Exchange of genetic profiles between Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, INACIF, Guatemala. 15 minutes >> Forensic data bank Frontera Project, (to be defined) EAAF. 15 minutes Dialogue: 15 minutes Conclusions and Agreements: 10 minutes
13:10 - 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 - 15:45	Workshop on Exchange Mechanisms for Biometric Data (fingerprints) for the search and identification of missing and deceased migrants	<i>Dina Alejandra Jimenez, ICRC Regional Forensic Manager for the Americas,</i> 30 min. Working Groups 30 min. Plenary All participants Conclusions and Agreements: 15 minutes
15:45 a 17:30	Conclusions, Recap of agreements and next steps (Roadmap)	<i>El Salvador Presidency Pro-Témpore</i> <i>Dina Alejandra Jimenez, ICRC</i> <i>Marisol Mendez Cruz, RNCOM (FJEDD)</i>