

<p style="text-align: center;">THE WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON FORENSIC INVESTIGATIONS OF THE MISSING</p>

Adopted by the WMA General Assembly, Helsinki 2003

Preamble

1. Over the last two decades forensic investigations into the aftermath of wars, civil disturbances and oppressive political regimes have developed as a major contributor to international justice and to an understanding of the truth of what happened. These investigations are often sponsored by NGOs or by IGOs. Although established with enormous goodwill, and calling upon the expertise of committed individuals, there is sometimes a lack of clarity about their role, remit and ethical basis.
2. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) "The Missing" initiative involving experts from around the world has set out the scientific, ethical and legal principles that should apply to such forensic investigations. National Medical Associations have a role in encouraging compliance with the highest possible ethical and scientific standards.
3. In many countries NMAs will have no role in certifying the qualifications and experience of Forensic Medical Practitioners. However, they can draw the attention of such practitioners to the advice being produced by the ICRC, Amnesty International, Interpol and the United Nations and recommend or require compliance with those standards.
with those standards.

Recommendations

4. The WMA calls upon all NMAs to try to ensure that when its members take part in any forensic investigation, especially outside their own country, the investigation is established with a clear mandate according to the highest possible ethical, scientific and legal standards.
5. The WMA calls upon NMAs to develop expertise in the principles collated by the different authorities on forensic investigations including those outlined in the recommendations from the ICRC "The Missing" project, and to help their members ensure that these principles are applied to International Forensic Investigations.
6. The WMA calls upon NMAs to work to ensure that physicians are aware of the standards that should apply to such investigations and to refuse to take part in those that are ethically or otherwise unacceptable.
7. The WMA calls upon NMAs to ensure that their members only participate in investigations that are properly recorded and documented and for which they are afforded legal and other appropriate safeguards by the investigating authority.

8. The WMA calls upon NMAs to work to ensure that information gained from the investigation should be shared with the families of the missing as well as the relevant tribunals in the pursuit of truth and justice.

17.9.2003

RESCINDED