

Title: Bridging Disciplines in the Pursuit of Justice: Doctoral Research on Missing Persons in Post-Conflict Societies

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Abstract:

The phenomenon of missing persons in post-conflict societies remains one of the most persistent humanitarian and legal challenges of the contemporary era. This presentation draws upon ongoing doctoral research centered on the Western Balkans, with a specific focus on Kosovo, to examine the intersection of international law, human rights, and forensic science in addressing this critical issue.

Through a multidisciplinary lens, the research investigates how legal frameworks and forensic methodologies can be jointly mobilized to advance the fundamental right of families to know the fate of their missing relatives. The presentation identifies key legal ambiguities, political impediments, and institutional shortcomings that continue to obstruct progress in the resolution of missing person's cases. It further explores the pivotal role of forensic science in processes such as exhumation, identification, and the production of scientifically grounded documentation, while critically assessing instances of misidentification and the ethical responsibilities they invoke.

By situating these findings within a broader academic and policy context, the presentation underscores the potential of doctoral research to inform legal reform, strengthen institutional capacities, and enhance humanitarian practices. It highlights the transformative impact of bridging disciplinary boundaries to foster accountability, promote justice, and uphold the dignity of victims and their families in post-conflict settings.

Key words; Doctoral research, Forensics, Missing persons, International Humanitarian Law