Conference:

“Truth Seeking and the Role of Forensic Science”

October 12th – 14th, 2010

Intercontinental Hotel
Kabul, Afghanistan
About Physicians for Human Rights

PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) was founded in 1986 on the idea that health professionals, with their specialized skills, ethical duties, and credible voices, are uniquely positioned to investigate the health consequences of human rights violations and work to stop them. We are headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with an office in Washington, DC. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian organization funded through private foundations and by individual donors. Membership is open to all, not only health professionals. PHR shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize as a founding member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

PHR mobilizes health professionals to advance health, dignity, and justice and promotes the right to health for all. Harnessing the specialized skills, rigor, and passion of doctors, nurses, public health specialists, and scientists, PHR investigates human rights abuses and works to stop them. Our research takes us to conflict zones, to AIDS-ravaged Africa, to US prisons and juvenile detention centers—and our advocacy brings us to the offices of national and international policymakers. The courts, decision makers and the media have come to rely on our credibility and expertise.

The International Forensic Program at Physicians for Human Rights is dedicated to providing independent forensic expertise to document and collect evidence of human rights violations and of violations of international humanitarian law. Since the 1980s, IFP/PHR has mobilized forensic scientists and other experts worldwide to respond to inquiries by governments, organizations, families, and individuals. PHR's International Forensic Program offers a variety of services which include forensic investigations, evaluations, monitoring, or review of work done by other parties, and specialized training. IFP forensic expertise and services can be requested by institutions, organizations, and individuals. PHR adheres to a policy of strict impartiality and is concerned with the consequences of human rights abuses.
As part of project “Securing Afghanistan’s Past”, Physicians for Human Rights in coordination with civil society in Afghanistan, seeks to carry out two annual conferences on ‘Truth Seeking and the Role of Forensic Science’. The conferences are designed to establish a dialogue between the victims of conflict and authorities in Afghanistan to share information and ideas to begin developing a legal and policy framework to protect and preserve mass grave sites, scientific evidence of past abuses, and begin a truth seeking process.

Topics will include introductions into proper forensic exhumation methods, the role and limits of forensic DNA analysis, the scientific identification of human remains, and the psycho-social needs of families.

Participants are anticipated to come from the different provinces in Afghanistan with a participation of approximately 100 persons representing civil society, governmental and other local and regional authorities.

The findings and recommendations of the workshops will be published in Dari and English and will be disseminated to relevant actors including the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the Ministry of Culture and Information (MCI), and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), Afghan civil society, and international development partners.
Day 1 – Presentations

Morning Session - Moderator: Jawed Mohammadi (AHRDO)

8:00 – 9:00 Registration and Tea
9:00 – 9:15 Prayer & Introduction
9:15 – 9:45 State of Forensics in Afghanistan \( (S.\text{Schmitt} - \text{PHR}) \)
9:45 – 10:15 DNA and Human Identifications in Afghanistan \( (A.\text{Sozer} - \text{PHR}) \)
10:15 – 10:30 Break
10:30 – 11:00 Forensic Anthropology, Exhumations, Human Identifications and Truth Seeking – Case Study \( (G.\text{Fowler} - \text{PHR}) \)
11:00 – 11:30 Truth Seeking + International Justice \( (\text{Howard Varney} - \text{ICTJ}) \)
11:30 – 12:00 Afghanistan – A Comparative View on Truth Seeking \( (\text{Ajmal Pashtoonyar}^*) \)
12:00 – 1:30 Lunch + Prayer

*Mr. Pashtoonyar will speaking in personal capacity and his views do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade or the Canadian Government.

Afternoon Session – Moderator: Jawed Mohammedi (AHRDO):

1:30 – 2:00 Forensics & Mass Graves – Present Reality and Challenges in Afghanistan \( (Kawa Sahab/Zabi Mazoori/Ashraf Bakhtiari – Members of PHR Forensic Training) \)
2:00 – 2:30 Truth Seeking in Afghanistan \( (\text{Dr. Samar} - \text{AIHRC}) \)
2:30 – 3:00 Who are Victims and What is Justice \( (\text{Aziz Rafiee} - \text{ACSF}) \)
3:00 – 3:15 Break
3:15 – 3:45 Problems Investigating Mass Graves in Afghanistan \( (\text{General Yarmand, Mol}) \)
3:45 – 4:15 Victims and Psycho-social Needs \( (\text{Valerie Meredith} - \text{ICRC}) \)

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Day 2 – Morning Session - Expert Panel Discussions

**Expert Panel A – Legal Experts (Moderator: Khodadad Bisharat – AHRDO)**
8:30 – 10:15
**Question for the panel:** *Current legal, cultural and religious foundations and realities: Where is the truth seeking process currently in Afghanistan and what can be done to improve it?*

Panel Experts:
- Supreme Court - **Judge Barakzai**
- Attorney General Office - **General Ranjbar**
- AIHRC – **Qadir Rahimi**
- International Law Expert - **Howard Varney (ICTJ)**
- Afghanistan Civil Society Representative – **Yunus Akhtar (Ertebad)**
- UNAMA Human Rights Unit – **Morena Mori**

10:30 – 12:15
**Question for the panel:** *Where is the current state of forensics in Afghanistan and how can it be improved to meet truth seeking needs?*

Panel Experts:
- PHR/IFP – DNA/Genetics Expert - **A. Sozer**
- PHR International Forensic Program Director - **S. Schmitt**
- Deputy Director – Shefa Curative Mental Hospital - **Dr. Mussadiq**
- Director - Forensic Science Department - **Dr. Zurmati**
- AIHRC – Transitional Justice Assistant, Mazar – **Kawa Sahab**
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Day 2 – Afternoon Session – Working Groups

The participants will be divided into working groups to discuss the topics below. Each working group will be moderated by designated facilitators (e.g. representatives of Civil Society Organizations in Afghanistan) with the objective to make preliminary recommendations. Each topic will be accompanied by specific questions to be addressed.

1. Truth Seeking Process in Afghanistan and Documentation Efforts
   (Moderator: Kawa Sahab – AHIRC)
2. Transitional Justice; Barriers and Challenges in Afghanistan
   (Moderator: Zubair – UNAMA)
3. Forensic Science / Training and Human ID Resources
   (Moderator: Dr. Mahboobi – MLD)
4. Victim Empowerment
   (Moderator: Liaj Jawad – FSJ)
5. Missing Persons Strategy
   (Moderator: Asif Ahsan – OSI)
6. Reconciliation
   (Moderator: Abdul Qasam – MoI)
7. Government Responsibilities
   (Moderator: Ashraf Bakhtyari – AIHRC)
8. Grave Site Protection / Cultural and Religious Aspects of Mass Graves and the Right to Truth
   (Moderator: Mohammad Zaman – AHRDO)
9. Memorials
   (Moderator: Esan Qanneh - Ertebat)
10. International Community and Afghan justice
    (Moderator: Frank Thomas – GPPT)
11. Women and Transitional Justice
    Moderator: Weeda Ahmad – SAAJS)
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Day 3 – Work Group Recommendations

Presentation of working group results + Wrap up

CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions and/or suggestions regarding this draft program, please contact at Physicians for Human Rights:

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SPEAKERS

Stefan Schmitt
Director of the International Forensic Program since 2006, Schmitt is a German citizen, raised in Afghanistan in the 1970’s where his father taught at the University of Kabul. Schmitt received his undergraduate degree in Archaeology in Guatemala, Central America, where in 1992, he set the foundation for an independent forensic anthropology team, addressing the need for repatriation of the dead in the country’s 30 year war. The team published the first truth telling account on Guatemala’s conflict in 1995.

Since 1996, Schmitt has been living in Florida, where he worked as a Crime Scene Analyst with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement until taking the position at PHR. Schmitt has a MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Florida State University.

Amanda Sozer
Amanda Sozer is Senior DNA Consultant of PHR’s International Forensic Program. Dr. Sozer received her undergraduate degree from Rutgers University and her Ph.D. in 1989 from the University of Tennessee-Oak Ridge Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, with a specialization in genetics and an emphasis in biotechnology.

Dr. Sozer has worked at several DNA identification laboratories over the years, managing all aspects of laboratory operations. Dr. Sozer participated in the identification of the World Trade Center victims, as well as the Hurricane Katrina DNA identification efforts.

Gillian Fowler
Gillian Fowler received her Masters Degree in Forensic Archaeological Science from University of Central London. In 2004, she started working with the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (FAFG) as a Forensic Anthropologist and then as Laboratory Supervisor and Identification Coordinator. Fowler is an experienced instructor, having coordinated training and forensic analysis and identification of human skeletal remains.

Most recently, as a member of PHR’s International Forensic Program Fowler trained a group of Afghan professionals in human skeletal analysis. She is currently a lecturer in Forensic Anthropology and Crime Scene Investigation at Lincoln University in the

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Howard Varney
Howard Varney is a practicing advocate at the Johannesburg Bar in South Africa and is retained by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) as a senior consultant. His legal practice includes human rights, constitutional and administrative law cases.

Mr. Varney worked with the South African Truth & Reconciliation Commission as a consultant on a range of matters. Varney was the chief investigator for the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission between 2003 and 2004. He assisted the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor with the compilation of its final report. As a consultant for the ICTJ, Varney has assisted with the development of transitional justice initiatives in several countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Balkans. He continues to represent victims of past conflicts in the courts of South Africa to vindicate their rights.

Ajmal Pashtoonyar
Ajmal Pashtoonyar is a Justice Sector Officer at the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Ajmal has previously worked with the Department of Justice in Ottawa and the United Nations in Geneva and Nairobi.

In 2009 Ajmal was awarded Gordon Global Fellowship and is currently conducting a comparative research of transitional justice processes undertaken in Bosnia Herzegovina, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

Ajmal has also volunteered with numerous human rights and social justice organizations, including the Canadian Red Cross and OXFAM Canada. He was also a pro bono legal researcher for Senator LGen. Romeo Dallaire (Ret’d) at the Senate of Canada.

Ajmal holds degrees in Political Science and Law from Memorial University and University of Ottawa respectively. Mr. Pashtoonyar will be speaking in personal capacity and his views do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade or the Canadian Government.

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Zabi Mazoori
Zabi Mazoori is the Afghanistan Project Assistant for PHR’s International Forensic Program. From 2008 to 2010, Mazoori worked at the AIHRC as a translator in their Transitional Justice Unit.

Mazoori completed the International Forensic Program’s five week “Paraprofessional Mass Grave Site Team and Basic Human Osteology Training Course” conducted by PHR in May and June 2010 at the Afghan National Police Academy. Mazoori is an accredited Dari/English translator in Australia, having received a diploma on Translation and Interpreting from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He served as president of an Afghan community association in Australia, where he was employed as a social and youth worker for Afghan and refugee communities.

Sima Samar
Dr. Sima Samar is the founder and chairperson board member of Shuhada Organization established in 1989, which runs health, education, and income generation projects for women and girls in Afghanistan and those living as refugees in Pakistan. She currently holds the chair of the Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

From December 22, 2001 until June 22, 2002, Dr. Samar served as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Women’s Affairs for the Interim Administration of Afghanistan, one of only two women cabinet ministers in the transition government. In June 2002, Dr. Samar was elected as the vice-chair of the Loya Jirga Assembly.

A leading authority on health care for Afghan women, Dr. Samar graduated from Kabul University Medical College in 1982. Dr. Simar has received numerous awards for her human and women’s rights work throughout her career.

Aziz Rafiee
Aziz Rafiee is the Managing Director of the Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF- www.acsf.af). He graduated from the Faculty of Engineering of Kabul University and has been an active member of the Afghan Civil Society working for human rights in the past 15 years. Mr. Rafiee has been the founding member of more than 25 civil society organizations contributing to the democratic development processes of Afghanistan.
Mr. Rafiee is the convening member of the Tokyo NGO Conference (December 2001), the Emergency Loya Jirga (early 2002) and the Constitution Loya Jirga (2004). Mr. Rafiee was elected to represent the Afghan Civil Society in the Berlin (2004) and London (2006) conferences. In 2008, he represented the Afghan Civil Society at the Paris donor conference.

Mr. Rafiee has led the processes of civic education for the both Presidential and Parliamentary Elections with an outreach of 6.2 and 11 million people respectively. Mr. Rafiee currently leads the Afghan Civil Society Forum with its 137 members and 315 partners. In addition to being a board member of three women’s organizations, he is also chairperson of the Afghanistan Engineering Association.

Morena Mori
Dr. Morena Mori has been the Transitional Justice Focal Point at the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan Human Rights Unit since 2008. She has been working closely with PHR’s International Forensic Program in Afghanistan since then.

Before joining UNAMA, Dr. Mori taught Transitional Justice, Human Rights and Conflict Management at the University of Pisa in Italy. She has an extensive experience in human rights and transitional justice. Dr. Mori has worked in Guatemala, Colombia, Haiti, Lebanon, and Sierra Leone. In Guatemala, she was a member of the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission. Dr. Mori holds a Masters Degree in Peace Studies and a Ph.D. in International Human Rights Law from the University of Pisa in Italy.

Mirza Mohammad Yarmand
Lieutenant General Yarmand is General Director of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at the Ministry of Interior. He has 28 years of experience working in the CID. Yarmand has a degree in Criminology and has three years of experience in Police Education.

Lt. General Yarmand has attended over 30 national and international conferences.

Valerie Meredith
Valerie Meredith is in charge of Tracing and Restoring Family Links programs for the ICRC in Afghanistan, and she is the organization’s focal person for ICRC activities linked to Human Remains in the country. She has been working for the ICRC since
2006, in contexts such as Darfur, Colombia, Ivory Coast, and in Afghanistan since 2009.

Ms. Meredith holds a BSC.Econ (Hons) in International Politics and International History from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and an MA in Ideology and Discourse Analysis from Essex University. She has published an article entitled "Victim identity and respect for human dignity: a terminological analysis", in the International Review of the Red Cross (Vol: 91, Num: 874, June 2009). Ms Meredith was born in 1980 in Switzerland.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACSF – Afghan Civil Society Forum  
AHRDO – Afghan Human Rights Democracy Organization  
AIHRC – Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission  
FSJ – Foundation of Solidarity for Justice  
GPPT – German Police Project Team  
ICTJ – International Center for Transitional Justice  
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross  
MoI – Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan  
MLD – Medical Legal Department of Afghanistan  
OSI - Open Society Institute  
PHR – Physicians for Human Rights  
SAAJS – Social Association of Afghan Justice Seekers  
TJCG – Transitional Justice Coordination Group  
UNAMA – United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan