

FORENSIC INVESTIGATIONS OF CAFCA IN GUATEMALA

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This poster will introduce the reader to the current state of forensic anthropological investigations carried out by CAFCA in Guatemala.

The Central-American Republic of Guatemala suffered for 36 year an internal armed conflict which ended in 1996. Since more than 10 years, forensic work groups - non-governmental organization as the Guatemalan Foundation for Forensic Anthropology (FAFG), the Exhumation Team of the Guatemalan Archbishop's Office for Human Rights (ODHAG) and the Center of Forensic Analysis and Applied Sciences (CAFCA) - are recovering clandestine graves of that era. Parts of them were documented by the UN-Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), which reported over 200.000 perished o disappeared people, in their majority Maya-Indígenas. The surviving relatives have the right to know the truth about what happened.

Because forensic anthropologists in Guatemala are working as independent experts for the public prosecutor's office, they are drawn in cases where state institutions are reportedly involved in crimes under investigation. Under this circumstances, forensic investigation is vital to truth and justice.

CAFCA itself is dedicated to the application of forensic anthropological sciences to the investigation of human right violations. That fore CAFCA is carrying out process of exhumations throughout the country, reflecting a systematic approach of extensive preliminary work (interviews and workshops to obtain historical information and ante-mortem data), archaeological work (inspection, excavation), laboratory analysis (skeletal individualization) and case documentations.