

MEXICO

In 2005, EAAF members traveled to Ciudad Juárez to exhume, analyze, and attempt to identify the remains of over 60 female individuals associated with the investigation of murdered and disappeared women in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua, state of Chihuahua, Mexico.

BACKGROUND

Since early 1993, 400 to 500 young women disappeared and were found dead in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, a city on the U.S. border across the Rio Grande River from El Paso, Texas, and in Chihuahua city, the capital of the state of Chihuahua. In many cases, their bodies reportedly showed signs of sexual abuse and mutilation.¹ Amnesty International reported that, as of February 2006, the total number of women murdered is close to 400.²

Many of the largely young and poor victims worked in assembly plants and disappeared after leaving work.³ Other victims were students and workers in informal commerce, victims of domestic violence, or women involved in prostitution rings or drug trafficking. After having been missing for days, weeks, or months, their bodies would be usually discovered in vacant lots. According to investigators, many of the murders in Ciudad Juárez reportedly remain unsolved; though police have made some high profile arrests. In several cases, the grounds for the arrests have been contested.⁴

In 1998, a report by the governmental *Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (National Commission for Human Rights, CNDH) in Mexico concluded that city and state officials were guilty of neglect and dereliction of duty.⁵ Since then, the Mexican government has worked with regional and



Relatives of victims commemorating the anniversary of the finding of eight female victims at a cotton field in the outskirts of Ciudad Juárez. Their shirts read, "mothers searching for justice." Photo by EAAF.

international institutions to instate reforms to prevent further violence, including increased public security, furthering of women's legal rights, and public education campaigns.⁶ However, according to both



Guadalupe Morfín, head of the federal Special Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women in Ciudad Juárez, and former Special Federal Prosecutor María López Urbina of the *Procuraduría General de la República* (Office of the Attorney General of the Republic) there continue to be severe deficiencies in the system. On June 3, 2004, both Morfín and López

Urbina presented reports confirming that the authorities have been active in “harassing families and their advocates, as well as torturing and fabricating evidence against scapegoats.” López Urbina emphasized that “there was notorious inactivity and negligence...that led to the loss of evidence and the inadequate protection of crime scenes.”⁷



(Above) Municipal cemetery in Ciudad Juárez where EAAF found several female remains. **(Right)** Memorials erected by relatives at the cotton field where eight female victims were found. Outskirts of Ciudad Juárez. *Photos by EAAF.*

Local NGOs and human rights groups stress that these crimes occur within a broad context of insecurity that significantly increases the vulnerability of poor women in Ciudad Juárez. In their 2005 report on Mexico, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stated that there is “ongoing impunity of those responsible, threats directed towards those calling for justice for women, [and] growing frustration on the account of the authorities’ lack of due diligence in investigating and prosecuting crimes in the appropriate manner.”⁸ A United States Congress resolution of May 2006 urged Mexican officials to end the impunity and conduct thorough and fair investigations.

Serious problems related to the forensic investigations of these killings have been brought to public attention by national and international governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations. Several reports have recommended the intervention of independent forensic experts. In September 2004, Amnesty International stated that Mexico’s legislation “should ensure the forensic services, which presently come under the control of the Public Prosecutor’s Office, are an autonomous agency with clear

operational independence.”⁹ The Mexican government eventually appointed a new State Prosecutor.

EAAF Participation

In December 2003, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a U.S. non-governmental human rights organization, contacted EAAF on behalf of the non-governmental Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights about the possibility of providing technical assistance on the Juárez cases. *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* (Justice for Our Daughters), an NGO from Chihuahua state that represents the families of victims, and the federal Special Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women in Ciudad Juárez later joined the project, requesting EAAF’s assistance with the investigation of these cases.

One major area of assistance was the identification of unidentified remains and the re-examination of cases in which families expressed serious concerns about the identity of the remains they had received. According to NGO reports and official documents, about 10 to 30 percent of the killings—of the



approximately 400 reported—fell into this category. Another area of intervention was the evaluation of the cause of death.

In order to understand how to assist in these cases, EAAF first wanted to assess the dimension of the problem of unidentified women both in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua city, including: how many cases needed to be analyzed, what had been done in terms of forensic procedures and analysis, and the current accessibility and whereabouts of the remains.

In June 2004, two EAAF members, Patricia Bernardi and Mercedes Doretti, and Dr. María Cristina de Mendonça, a forensic pathologist from Portugal consulting for EAAF, traveled to Juárez on an assessment trip, together with representatives of the two aforementioned Mexican NGOs. The Special Commissioner Guadalupe Morfín reached an agreement with the former State Prosecutor of the state of Chihuahua allowing EAAF members to read twenty case files of unidentified women and three case files from families who expressed doubts about the identity of the remains they had received.

Though the files could not be copied or photographed, the three forensic specialists were able

to draw conclusions about patterns in past investigations based on careful reading and observation of the photographs in the files. EAAF also met with local NGOs working on the disappearances and murders, as well as with families of victims and members of local forensic services. The goals of the mission were to assess if forensic work could make a contribution to the cases, and to establish the minimum number of unidentified women in Ciudad Juárez and the current location of their remains.

EAAF determined that the minimum number of unidentified remains in Ciudad Juárez corresponded to fifty-three female individuals. The team observed that there was significant uncertainty about the exact location of these remains, although officials and some official documentation indicated that half of them could be at the Medical Examiner's Office in Ciudad Juárez and the other half in mass graves at local municipal cemeteries.

Additionally, EAAF's assessment confirmed grave methodological and diagnostic problems in all phases of the forensic work, including recovery and analysis, on the unidentified remains, and technical and/or credibility problems on the results of the genetic analysis. The recovery of evidence at crime scenes lacked, in many instances, a basic inventory of findings and did not comply with basic chain of custody procedures. This, coupled with the fact that in many of the files the pages were not officially numbered, made the removal or incorporation of papers and evidence impossible to trace. The absence of a correctly estimated biological profile (estimation of sex, age at the time of death, height, and ancestry, among other features), traumatic profile (ante-, peri-, and post-mortem lesions), and of time of death of the recovered remains directly hindered the ability to identify them. Databases created using many official forensic biological profiles and data will inevitably produce wrong inclusions and exclusions when trying to make identifications.

Furthermore, the involvement of multiple—state, federal, and international—DNA laboratories producing contradictory DNA analysis results added another serious level of confusion and uncertainty

among families of victims about a method that in most situations offers a high degree of accuracy. Finally, EAAF observed serious diagnostic problems affecting certainty of the cause and manner of death. EAAF also noted the need to centralize all information about these cases, and to analyze all cases both individually and collectively in order to find patterns and maximize identification efforts.¹⁰

Methodology

In July 2005, through a contract signed with the newly appointed State Prosecutor of Chihuahua, Patricia González, EAAF gained access to the unidentified female remains that were stored in the Forensic Services (SEMEFO) of Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua. EAAF was also authorized to exhume the remains of unidentified females buried in mass graves in two municipal cemeteries in Ciudad Juárez. Additionally, families that had doubts about the identity of the remains they received could request the re-examination of their cases. Working with a multi-disciplinary team of Mexican and international experts, EAAF aimed to identify and, if possible, to provide information about cause of death. By contract, EAAF also has access to all the relevant homicide judicial files related to female disappearances, in their entirety. Access to these files is essential for learning about all previous forensic work conducted on each case, such as conditions of recovery, among other reasons.

EAAF works through a coordinated, centralized office, analyzing each case by itself and, at the same time, analyzing all cases together, in order to observe patterns that may move the investigation of responsibility forward and to increase the likelihood of positive identification of the unidentified remains. EAAF's central office in Ciudad Juárez is located at the *Fiscalía Mixta para la Atención de Homicidios de Mujeres* (Office of the Attorney General for the Investigation of Female Homicides), from where it coordinates the investigation, works with different agencies, holds meetings with relatives of the victims, and centralizes the search for unidentified bodies located in the municipal cemeteries.

EAAF's approach includes:

Recovery of female remains and non-biological evidence (clothing, personal effects, etc.) associated with the remains at local cemeteries and at the medical examiners' offices of Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua.

Comparison inventory. Using the criminal and forensic reports conducted at time of recovery, EAAF compares what was originally found with what is currently available in order to verify if any evidence is missing.

Identification analysis. Anthropological and odontological examination of each set of remains. Collection of samples for genetic analysis.

Cause of death. Analysis of peri-mortem trauma (produced immediately before or after death) that can provide information about cause of death.

Review and audit of all forensic reports conducted to date on each case. This review often provides clues about identification problems, such as contradictory identification results.

Review of records from local cemeteries, morgues, funeral houses, local hospitals, and registry office among other institutions.

Collection of blood and saliva samples from relatives of victims for DNA analysis. The genetic profile of each set of remains is compared to the genetic profiles of all relatives of victims collected to date. Authorized by Mexican officials, EAAF collects and transports its samples to the U.S. laboratory processing them. In most cases handled by EAAF, samples from DNA analysis had been extracted from the remains and analyzed by Mexican or international genetic laboratories in the past. EAAF is only using these previous DNA reports to compare results. Also, EAAF is not using any previous samples taken at different times by state and federal officials from relatives of victims or their remains. This enables the team to control the chain of custody of the samples and to minimize contamination problems.



Dr. Clyde Snow and EAAF member Sofía Egaña analyzing remains and documents in Ciudad Juárez. Photo by EAAF.

Identification reports. Production of a multidisciplinary report for every identification that includes: 1) background of each case and forensic auditing of recovery and past forensic reports; 2) the anthropological and odontological report; 3) the genetic report. By producing multidisciplinary reports, EAAF aims to overcome past mistakes on cases where different disciplines reach different results. For example, a genetic analysis identified a person that an anthropological assessment did not. EAAF only formulates an identification hypothesis when all the assessments from the different disciplines are consistent.

Cause of death reports. These include information about peri-mortem trauma and possible cause of death.

Case reports. Summary of findings of cases where several victims have been found at the same place or there are other factors that cluster them together.

Final report, including main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Database. An ante-mortem, post-mortem and genetic database will be provided to the Chihuahua State Prosecutor for future new identifications.

Note: These points do not reflect a chronological order and activities may be carried out simultaneously.

In collaboration with local human rights organizations, EAAF reaches out to families who have not yet come forward to gather information and informs them about the investigation. This process is trying and painful for families, who have been approached many times by different entities about the disappearance of their loved ones, without open communication about the limitations of each project, and often, without conveying the results to them. EAAF is also working with a local consultant to provide psychological support to families that request these services.

Five EAAF anthropologists have participated in this project at different times: Patricia Bernardi, Mercedes Doretti, Sofía Egaña, Silvana Turner, and consultant Mercedes Salado. In addition, EAAF invited three



EAAF consultant Dr. Steve Symes and team member Sofía Egaña (background) looking for bone trauma at the Medical Examiner's Office in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Photo by EAAF.

forensic pathologists: Dr. Luis Bosio from Argentina, Dr. María Dolores Morcillo Méndez from Colombia, and Dr. María Cristina de Mendonça from Portugal. Two U.S. forensic anthropologists, Dr. Clyde Snow and Dr. Steve Symes, also collaborated on different aspects of the work.

EAAF also invited Carlos Jacome, Edgar Gaetán, and José Herrera, three Mexican anthropologists and archaeologists, to assist with the project. In addition, Julia Monarrez, a Mexican sociologist, and two Mexican database analysts also participated. Support from NGO consultant Alma Gómez, from *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas*, and Ana Lorena Delgadillo, a Mexican lawyer working full time for this project was crucial for EAAF. Their work helped in the communication with families of victims and local NGOs, and ensured proper legal documentation of EAAF's work and that all related paperwork complied with national and local legal procedures.

EAAF is working very closely with *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* and *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (Our Daughters Back Home). Both organizations are comprised primarily of mothers of disappeared women and girls from the area, lawyers, and activists, working to publicize and support the adequate investigation of

these cases through legal petitions and community organizing, among other means. The collaboration with local NGO is essential to building trust with families that are disappointed with government officials' work. It also enables EAAF to learn the local perspective on matters related to victims' families, local public opinion, and other relevant issues.

To conduct the DNA analysis, EAAF signed a contract with the U.S.-based BODE Technology Group, one of the most experienced laboratories in the world in processing bone samples for identification. The genetic profile of each set of remains is compared with the genetic profiles of all relatives of victims collected to date. Only those samples collected by EAAF are utilized.

Phase I: June to October 2005

Phase I of EAAF's investigation included field work from June 18 to August 10, 2005, and ongoing legal and report writing work through mid-October. Three EAAF anthropologists traveled to Mexico during Phase I. EAAF contracted a Mexican archaeologist, a Mexican anthropologist, a Portuguese forensic pathologist, two Mexican lawyers, an NGO representative, a sociologist, and a database analyst to assist with the investigation in Mexico. Initially, EAAF was supposed to only work on Juárez cases. However, soon after EAAF arrived in Ciudad Juárez, *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* requested the team's participation in a recently discovered case in the city of Chihuahua. Immediately afterwards, the other families with disappeared daughters from the city of Chihuahua also requested the State Prosecutor and EAAF to include all Chihuahua cases in the project. EAAF agreed to extend its activities and calendar. The work involved the following main activities:

1) Laboratory analysis. EAAF analyzed 39 sets of female remains that were stored at the Medical Examiner's offices in Juárez and Chihuahua, including 29 sets in Juárez and 10 in Chihuahua. Even though the State Prosecutor had given EAAF access to all the files, local authorities in Ciudad Juárez initially permitted very limited access to forensic reports and full judicial files, making a complete evaluation of what had been

done previously extremely challenging. While EAAF initially planned to openly collaborate with local anthropologists recently hired by the Medical Examiner's offices, the number of irregularities found from the beginning, involving inconsistencies in the inventories, loss of remains and non-biological evidence, and improper chain of custody of evidence, led EAAF to work in a more isolated way. Despite these obstacles, EAAF's analysis included:

- a) *Compiling an inventory.* EAAF checked all forensic records to make sure all evidence reportedly recovered at the crime scene was still in storage, including all associated non-biological evidence. The team found that the majority of the associated evidence, such as clothing and personal effects, was missing and that there were no records about what had happened to it. This represented a major breach in procedure. In some cases, the remains showed that post-mortem samples had been taken, but there was no information about what was done with them. In a number of cases, EAAF found serious discrepancies, such as missing skulls or large sectors of the thorax. In another instance, EAAF received five female skulls with no judicial file, or records of any kind, attached.
- b) *Assessing the state of conservation of the remains.* EAAF found that several of the remains had been boiled at the Ciudad Juárez SEMEFO, often with detergents, bleach, and other chemicals, a standard procedure often used at morgues on fresh or decomposed bodies to eliminate soft tissue without damaging bones. However, high temperatures and some chemicals can be very bad for DNA preservation and extraction and could harm the likelihood of positively identifying these remains.
- c) *Conducting an independent anthropological analysis.* EAAF established the biological profile of the remains, and conducted an odontological analysis and other standard anthropological procedures on the remains. (The cause of death was examined in Phases II and III.)

2) Forensic audit. In each case, EAAF compared the results of its own laboratory analysis with all of the

information found in previous forensic reports and judicial files. During Phase I, EAAF realized the importance of conducting this time-consuming, cumbersome forensic audit. This method often led EAAF to discover why the remains had not been previously identified or had been misidentified. The reasons for the misdiagnosis often included: the lack of a multidisciplinary approach in the identification process, which sometimes resulted in contradictory reports by officials experts from different disciplines; administrative irregularities; lack of clarity in the forensic reporting that led officials to wrong identification conclusions; the use of methods that cannot be utilized *per se* as the primary tool for the identification of skeletal remains; problems with the handling, reporting, and actual processing of DNA samples; and the lack of coordination between state agencies, among others.

Conducting this forensic audit proved particularly helpful with families of victims who felt deceived by previous forensic analysis and judicial investigations, and wanted to know exactly why previous results were wrong and why they should trust the results this time. EAAF believes that providing the families of victims with a complete analysis of each case is essential to the right to truth. It also helps the relatives in the process of mourning and acceptance of the new results. By conducting a forensic audit it is also possible to examine irregularities and possible wrong doing by Mexican officials and report them accordingly. Finally, it allows EAAF to observe weaknesses in the forensic system and to propose recommendations.

During Phase I, the *Fiscalía Mixta* did not provide EAAF access to complete judicial files on disappearances and homicides in the Ciudad Juárez cases, despite a signed agreement between EAAF and the State Prosecutor allowing it and relentless requests from EAAF to the officials in charge. This situation improved in later phases, due to the direct intervention of the State Prosecutor and the impossibility of continuing to work without full access. On the other hand, the collaboration with the city of Chihuahua—particularly with the Missing Persons Unit of that city—regarding files involving disappearances and homicides was very satisfactory and EAAF worked with their full cooperation.

3) Collection of background information, the victims' ante-mortem data, and samples for DNA analysis from families of the victims.

EAAF collected most of the information through interviews with the victims' relatives. During Phase I, EAAF collected samples from 62 relatives of victims corresponding to 29 families: 21 families from Ciudad Juárez and 8 families from Chihuahua city; that is, 44 relatives from Ciudad Juárez and 18 from Chihuahua city (a rate of 1 to 3 samples per family).

4) Collection of samples for DNA analysis from the victims.

During Phase I, EAAF collected samples from the 29 complete and incomplete sets of remains stored at the Medical Examiner's office in Ciudad Juárez and the 10 sets of remains from Chihuahua city.

5) Delivery of samples for processing at BODE.

Because the families did not trust local authorities to handle the samples, with the legal authorization of Mexican officials and the assistance of the local U.S. consulate, EAAF delivered the samples to the BODE laboratory. Upon completion of the forensic work on August 10, 2006, EAAF hand-delivered samples from 39 sets of remains as well as samples from 62 relatives of victims to The Bode Technology Group.

6) Researching additional female remains at municipal cemeteries in Ciudad Juárez.

Based on partial lists provided by different organizations, EAAF also researched the location of the remains of 24 female victims that were reportedly buried in mass graves in two municipal cemeteries in Ciudad Juárez between 1993 and 1997. EAAF collected data from Ciudad Juárez morgue records, sanitation department records, death certificates from the registration office, records of two funeral homes that work with SEMEFO, and records of the San Rafael and La Colina municipal cemeteries. EAAF also interviewed officials from these offices. EAAF found records corresponding to 11 women supposedly buried in La Colina cemetery and 13 women buried in San Rafael cemetery.

In addition, EAAF worked on two other cases during Phase I. As explained earlier, the project initially did

not involve Chihuahua city, but families of victims asked EAAF to intervene in a case from Chihuahua city. In June 2005, the remains of a teenaged girl had been found and identified through DNA analysis performed at a state genetic laboratory. The victim's family did not fully trust the results due to major investigation irregularities, particularly during the discovery of the remains. They asked EAAF to re-examine the remains. EAAF conducted anthropological and odontological analyses and found that the ante-mortem information was consistent with the remains, reaching a tentative identification and recommending confirmation through DNA analysis. The family decided not to conduct a second genetic analysis and accepted the identification. The second case involved a recent seven-year-old female victim from Ciudad Juárez. Her mother had doubts about the identification. Based on the evidence EAAF was given and the team's analysis of the body, the team found consistencies with the girl's ante-mortem physical data and recommended confirming the identity by DNA analysis. The family decided to use a U.S.-based laboratory different from the one EAAF was using.

In sum, during Phase I, EAAF researched the whereabouts of the remains of 24 unidentified women from Ciudad Juárez and examined anthropologically and odontologically 41 complete and incomplete female or possibly female remains stored at the SEMEFO of the city of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez, totaling 65 cases.

EAAF concluded Phase I by having a joint press conference with the State Prosecutor of Chihuahua, Patricia González, on August 6, 2005, presenting the team's main challenges and findings.

The main donors for Phase I of the investigation included the Open Society Institute and the State Prosecutor's Office of Chihuahua.

Phase II October-December 2005

EAAF continued to follow the same work methodology outlined above in Phase II, with a team



Argentine forensic pathologist and EAAF consultant Dr. Luis Bosio working on femicide cases in Ciudad Juárez.
Photo by EAAF.

comprised of five EAAF anthropologists, three international forensic consultants, a Mexican lawyer, a representative of a Mexican NGO, a Mexican archaeologist, and a Mexican database analyst.

1. Exhumation. EAAF aimed to recover the remains of 24 women buried in mass graves at the municipal cemeteries of La Colina and San Rafael, both in Ciudad Juárez. EAAF was only able to recover the remains of 15 women from the original list of 24 females (the remains of 9 women were not recovered). EAAF found serious inconsistencies between both cemeteries' records and the actual location of the graves. Most of the graves were not marked and EAAF had to rely on the memory of cemetery grave diggers to find them. As a result, it took longer to find each grave and excavations were conducted in larger areas than originally planned. Moreover, EAAF could not find the graves where the remains of 5 of the women were buried. In the other four cases, EAAF did not recover the remains because, after further investigation, the team learned that the remains had been previously identified and the families were either informed and did not want to proceed with an exhumation or were not informed. In the latter cases, EAAF, with the help of Mexican officials, has been trying to locate these families.

In the cases of disputed identification, EAAF conducted two exhumations in the Jardines del Recuerdo cemetery, two exhumations in the San Rafael cemetery in Ciudad Juárez, and one exhumation in a private cemetery in the city of Chihuahua.

2. Record comparison. At the same time, EAAF continued its review of cemetery, morgue, and judicial files, among other records.

3. Collection of samples from victims' families. The team collected blood and saliva samples from 54 relatives of victims in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua. With the support of officials from the Missing Persons Unit of Chihuahua city, EAAF extended the search and collection of samples to the cities of Ojinaga and Parral in the state of Chihuahua, Torreón in the state of Coahuila, and Durango in the state of Durango.

Throughout Phase II, EAAF collected samples from 51 relatives corresponding to 25 new families and from 2 families tested during Phase I that needed further testing.

In sum, during Phases I and II, EAAF collected samples from 125 relatives and conducted preliminary investigation interviews with 54 families of victims.

4. Identifications. By December, EAAF had identified 11 remains to families with corresponding reports. By February, the team was able to confirm 13 positive identifications of remains, nine corresponding to remains from Ciudad Juárez and four corresponding to remains from Chihuahua City. These identifications were only possible through the highly complex multidisciplinary process that EAAF developed for this project.

5. Cause of death. In December 2005, EAAF contracted an Argentine forensic pathologist to examine the cause of death of a group of particularly conflictive cases. Luis Bosio spent two weeks in Ciudad Juárez and examined approximately 20 cases.

Phase II was financed by the State Prosecutor's Office of Chihuahua, the Swiss Embassy in Mexico, the Ford Foundation—Mexico Office, and the General Service Foundation. All DNA analysis conducted during Phase I and Phase II was financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

2006-2007 Update

During 2005, EAAF sent samples corresponding to 60 complete and incomplete female remains to BODE for genetic analysis. Most of the results of the processing of these samples were finalized by BODE during the first 8 months of 2006, resulting in a significant delay from the original schedule. To some extent, this delay was due to difficulties in extracting genetic material from some skeletons and the need to re-test the same skeleton numerous times.

The 60 set of remains were reduced to 55 female individuals when 5 sets of incomplete remains were re-associated genetically with another five sets of incomplete remains as corresponding to one and the same skeleton. Of these 55 female remains, 24 were positively identified using anthropological, odontological, and genetic analyses. Thus, EAAF has attained a significant number of identifications, above 40 percent. Of these 24 women, 5 correspond to cases filed in the city of Chihuahua, while the remaining 19 women correspond to cases filed in Ciudad Juárez.

EAAF also analyzed two other cases reaching tentative identifications by anthropological and odontological analyses, and requesting confirmation by DNA analysis. EAAF communicated the findings to these two families. One of them decided to accept a positive DNA analysis previously performed at the new genetic laboratory located at the Medical Examiner's Office at Chihuahua city; the second family decided to send the samples to a U.S. genetic laboratory of their choice.

There were three cases from Ciudad Juárez in which families had requested a re-examination of officially identified remains, that resulted in negatives or exclusion results. In other words, EAAF concluded

that the remains officially identified as corresponding to these three disappeared women, do not correspond to them. These findings left EAAF with three unidentified skeletons and three missing persons. A year later, one of these three teenagers was positively identified by EAAF with remains found in Ciudad Juárez; the two remaining teenagers were added again to the list of missing persons. Of the skeletons, two were positively identified as belonging to two completely different disappeared teenagers, while the third skeleton remains unidentified.

EAAF investigations continue in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua during 2006 and 2007. New female remains have been found and recovered at municipal cemeteries in Ciudad Juárez, at the former facilities of the Medical Examiner's Office, and at the Medical School of the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez. Since February 2006, at the request of the State Prosecutor, EAAF has provided official depositions with relevant documentation about case irregularities to the Office of Internal Affairs of the State Prosecutor's Office of Chihuahua. The new findings of remains mentioned earlier, the result of EAAF research, have led to an ongoing investigation by the Office of Internal Affairs of the State Prosecutor's Office of Chihuahua. As of this writing the investigation has resulted in the suspension of the chief medical examiner of the Ciudad Juárez morgue.

EAAF is currently analyzing the new cases. In October 2006, EAAF sent samples from 38 relatives of 14 victims and samples from 47 complete and incomplete remains to BODE for genetic analysis. Final processing of these new samples is expected by March 30, 2007. Some of these remains may be part of incomplete remains found and analyzed during 2005 and/or the newly found during 2006. New identifications are also expected.

Until the final re-association process is confirmed by DNA analysis, it is not possible to provide a final figure of female remains under investigation by EAAF. Nevertheless, adding the 55 cases from 2005 to the ones found over 2006, the minimum number of female individuals under analysis by EAAF is close to 80 individuals. The total number of samples from

relatives of disappeared women or who have requested a review of their cases that have been sent for DNA analysis is 170, corresponding to 68 victims.

With the technical assistance of EAAF consultants, U.S. forensic anthropologists Clyde Snow and Steve Symes, Colombian pathologist María Dolores Morcillo Méndez, and Argentine pathologist Luis Bosio, EAAF also determines cause of death, when possible.

One of the most challenging aspects of the investigation is that there are more remains than families of victims. This difference was exacerbated with the addition of remains found at the former Medical Examiner's facilities in 2006. Pending DNA analysis, it is hard to estimate how many of the new cases are part of incomplete remains that EAAF already has in custody, and how many are new cases.

EAAF originally worked from a list of disappeared women and girls provided by the *Fiscalía Mixta* for Ciudad Juárez. This list proved to be incomplete, and in many cases, did not contain current addresses and/or telephone numbers of victims' families. As a result, EAAF has had to search for additional families that may not have reported the disappearance of their daughters or wives, may have given up hope in the government investigation of a disappearance, or whose files may have been lost, resulting in their names no longer appearing on the official rosters. The team attempted to obtain more information often by going door to door in poor neighborhoods in Ciudad Juárez, inquiring about cases. Further complicating the investigation is that due to the border and the *maquilas*, the area is characterized by fluid and mobile populations.

With the support of local NGOs, the new State Prosecutor, and the Missing Persons Unit of the city of Chihuahua, as well as the new office for disappearances from Ciudad Juárez EAAF continued the expanded search for relatives of women that disappeared in Ciudad Juárez by contacting, visiting, and collecting samples from relatives in the cities of Torreón, Cuauhtémoc, Parral, Delicias, Ojinaga, and Durango.

Finally, in March 2006, EAAF presented the idea of launching a public media campaign in Mexican states with the most migration to the state of Chihuahua to the State Prosecutor. The campaign concept included launching a 1-800 number, posters, and media attention to reach out to additional families with missing daughters. The State Prosecutor approved the idea, and, in 2006, EAAF met four times with Dr. Alicia Elena Duarte, director of the *Fiscalía Nacional para la Mujer*, to design together the graphic material for the public campaign. However, the launch of the campaign, planned for September 2006, has been postponed as of the writing of this report.

Funding for 2006 comes from the Ford Foundation-Mexico Office, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Mexico, The John Merck Fund, The Open Society Institute, and the State Prosecutor's Office of Chihuahua.

ENDNOTES

1. Amnesty International, *Mexico: Annual Report 2005*, www.amnestyusa.org/countries/mexico/document.do?id=ar&yr=2005.
2. Amnesty International, *Mexico: Killings and abductions of women in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua—the struggle for justice goes on*, February 20, 2006, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/mexico/document.do?id=ENGAMR410122006>.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Mariano Garcia, Sean. "Scapegoats of Juarez: The Misuse of Justice in Prosecuting Women's Murders in Chihuahua, Mexico." *Latin America Working Group Education Fund*. September 2005. <http://www.lawg.org/docs/ScapegoatsofJuarez.pdf>.
5. CNDH Recommendation 44/98 was condemned by Chihuahuan political figures. See; National Commission on Human Rights. *Recomendación 044/1998*. December 1, 1998. <http://www.cndh.org.mx/recomen/1998/044.htm>
6. Ordinary murders fall under the jurisdiction of the State of Chihuahua. Crimes can be "attracted" to the federal Prosecutor's Office (that is, removed from the jurisdiction of the State of Chihuahua) only if they are linked to federal offenses such as drug trafficking, or as instances of organized crime. See, Amnesty International. "Developments as of September 2003." August 11, 2003. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr410262003>
7. Freeman, Laurie. *Summary of the Progress Reports on Juarez Special Commissioner and Special Prosecutor*. Washington: Washington Office on Latin America. June 3, 2004. http://www.wola.org/Mexico/hr/ciudad_juarez/juarez.htm/morfin_lopez_urbina_#549594.pdf
8. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *Report on Mexico produced by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and reply from the Government of Mexico*. Thirty-second session; 10-28 January 2005. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw32/CEDAW-C-2005-OP.8-MEXICO-E.pdf>.
9. Amnesty International. "Mexico: Memorandum to the Mexican Federal Congress on reforms to the Constitutional and criminal justice system." September 28, 2004. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr410322004>.
10. EAAF's assessment of serious forensic problems existing in the investigation of these cases is more detailed and longer than previous assessments; it is consistent with previous findings from local and international, governmental, intergovernmental agencies, and NGOs.