Stephen Fonseca

South Africa

Stephen's career in death investigation started in 1998 as a Coroner in the British Columbia Coroners Service, in Canada. For 8 years he investigated routine sudden and unexpected death enquiries and presided over inquests. From 2006, Stephen managed the Identification and Disaster Response Unit (IDRU). The primary responsibility was to implement a multi-disciplinary systematic approach to the resolution of missing persons cases through the identification of human remains after mass fatality events, in complex investigations, and cold cases. He participated in federal and provincial technical committees and working groups to improve missing persons and unidentified bodies programs. The Identification Information Management Model created by the IDRU won a Regional Premier Award in 2009/2010. Stephen received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Stephen joined the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2013 as a Forensic Coordinator to provide forensic guidance on the search for Lebanese Civil War missing persons and to identify the dead. In 2015 Stephen assumed the role of Regional Forensic Manager in Africa. He is now the Manager of the African Centre for Medicolegal Systems (ACMS), created in 2022. His focus is to empower state authorities (civilian and military) and civil societies to enhance justice and medicolegal systems and systematize medicolegal processes. He remains a member of the ICRC's Forensic Unit Global Management Team.