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FINAL REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION OF EXPERTS
ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO
SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 780 (1992)

ANNEX X.A
MASS GRAVES - OVČARA
NEAR VUKOVAR, UNPA SECTOR EAST

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Part One

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As indicated in its first and second interim reports, the Commission had intended for some time to conduct an investigation of the Ovčara gravesite in United Nations Protected Area (UNPA) Sector East. This examination would involve the exhumation of the bodies contained in the mass gravesite, the collection of physical evidence at the gravesite, the transport of the bodies to a morgue facility, and the autopsy examination of the bodies to establish identification and the cause/manner of death. In time, other types of evidence would be collected, including testimonial evidence, so that criminal responsibility for the killings related to the bodies in the grave could be determined.

2. Although the Commission had hoped to conduct the Ovčara investigation expeditiously, it soon became apparent that, although it was possible to obtain the necessary forensic experts from Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and the necessary police and investigative resources from the Canadian War Crimes Investigation Team (WCIT) 1/ or elsewhere at reasonably short notice, it would be very difficult to obtain the services of a small military engineering support unit, which was essential for the conduct of an excavation investigation. It would also be very difficult to obtain usable assurances and approvals from the political authorities controlling the area. A reconnaissance trip to the Ovčara area in March 1993 had indicated that United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) did not have the military resources available to provide complete support for the investigation. Another lesson from the reconnaissance trip was that it was essential to have the approval of the relevant political authorities. Unfortunately, it was also clear that it was extremely difficult to determine the identity and location of the relevant political authorities in Belgrade, Knin and Vukovar. In addition, it was apparent that the political situation was in a state of flux; it was difficult to determine who really possessed power and the relative competence of authorities at different levels.

3. After some considerable efforts by the Commission staff and by the first Chairman, Mr. Kalshoven, the Commission was fortunate enough to obtain the services of a small composite Royal Netherlands Army Unit, which met the military support requirement superbly.

4. In an effort to obtain the necessary political assurances, the Commission made visits to Vukovar in March, July, October, and November; to Belgrade in March and April; and, to Knin in May, September, and October. In addition, the Commission exchanged numerous pieces of correspondence with various authorities in these locations. The approach taken by the Commission was that, as a matter of balance, the Commission would attempt to excavate a second mass grave site in UNPA Sector West, which was believed to contain Serb victims at essentially the same time as it conducted the Ovčara excavation. The Commission and the local authorities at various times also discussed issues including the location for post mortem examinations, the presence of observers during the investigation, and the concerns of the "RSK" administration about the use of UNPA Sector West by Croatian authorities as a location for radioactive waste disposal sites.

5. Following a meeting in Knin with Republic of the Serbian Krajina (RSK) administration on 5 September 1993, it was the view of the Commission that it had obtained the necessary approvals to conduct the Ovčara excavation. As a matter of balance, while the bodies at Ovčara were being exhumed and an autopsy examination was being conducted to establish identification and the

cause/manner of death, a preliminary site survey would be conducted at a presumed mass gravesite in the Pakračka Poljana/Marino Selo area in UNPA Sector West and a preliminary radiological survey would also be conducted in UNPA Sector West. On the basis of this understanding, the Commission decided to have PHR, the WCIT, and the Dutch UNPROFOR Support Detachment deployed to Zagreb in early October, and to deploy them to Sectors West and East during the week of 17 October. The various teams were then deployed to Zagreb.

6. On 14 and 15 October, the Commission met in Knin with the RSK administration to obtain additional written authorization to proceed with the Ovčara excavation and to address newly raised RSK concerns about the location of the morgue facility. The RSK administration insisted that post-mortem examinations could not be conducted in Croatia. Although the Commission had intended to have the post-mortem examinations conducted in Zagreb, the Commission agreed to endeavour to locate a place for these examinations which would be acceptable to the RSK administration. On receipt of this assurance, the RSK administration issued several documents authorizing the Commission to proceed with the investigation.

7. The teams from PHR, the WCIT, and the Dutch UNPROFOR Support Detachment deployed from Zagreb to UNPA Sector East on 19 October. On arrival in UNPA Sector East the evening of 19 October, the On-site Rapporteur was informed by UNPROFOR that a meeting with the RSK UNPA Sector East administration, in particular Colonel Milanović, was a condition precedent to commencement of the excavation. The Dutch UNPROFOR Support Detachment established accommodations for itself and the WCIT at Klisa airfield within the perimeter of the UNPROFOR Russian battalion. PHR was accommodated at the UNPA Sector East Headquarters in Erdut.

8. As it was not possible to meet with Colonel Milanović before 22 October, the various teams went to the Ovčara site on 20 and 21 October with the acquiescence of the Sector Commander to conduct a second site survey which would not involve any excavation. The site had been secured by UNPROFOR since it was originally identified in December 1992. During the site survey, the site was checked for unexploded ordinance by UNPROFOR, brush was cleared, the area was surveyed in detail with a range of equipment and a certain amount of physical evidence, including spent cartridge cases and some cloth, was recovered. Reports on this phase of the investigation were prepared by PHR and by the WCIT.

9. In total, the team spent less than 48 hours on-site. During this time, the principle activity was the electronic surveying of the site by experts in the PHR team. In addition, mine-clearing of part of the site was conducted by UNPROFOR troops. It should be noted that 64 items of potential evidentiary significance, shell casings, were seized from the site before this project was suspended. The bulk of these are shell casings. All the items seized by the WCIT were identified, tagged, and secured in accordance with the standing operating procedures.

10. On 22 October, the On-site Rapporteur met with Colonel Milanović in Erdut and was informed that, notwithstanding the various approvals received in Knin on 14 and 15 October, the RSK Parliament had taken a decision on 21 October requiring the Commission to postpone all activity at Ovčara until a political solution was found to the situation in the former Yugoslavia. Following the meeting, the On-site Rapporteur withdrew all personnel from the Ovčara site to their accommodations at Klisa and Erdut. It was his considered opinion that any attempt to continue the project after receipt of this decision would expose the project personnel or UNPROFOR personnel to an excessive degree of risk.

11. Although efforts were made to rehabilitate the Ovčara project in the ensuing weeks, none of these efforts were successful and no one affiliated with the Commission had returned to the site, which remains under UNPROFOR protection since 22 October.

12. Once it became apparent, by mid-day 24 October, that there would be no rapid change of position on the part of local administration, project personnel were shifted over a period of time from UNPA Sector East to UNPA Sector West and elsewhere for their more efficient use. The last person and the last piece of equipment was out of UNPA Sector East by 30 October. Sufficient material and personnel resources were, however, retained in Croatia until about 10 November so that the Ovčara excavation could be conducted if adequate political approval was obtained. After 10 November, the onset of cold weather made the project impracticable before the spring of 1994. Appropriate political approval was not obtained before 10 November.

13. On 17 November 1993, the On-site Rapporteur and the Secretary of the Commission met with Mr. Hadžić, President of the RSK in Erdut. Also at the meeting were Mr. Nikšić, Vice-Chairman of the Regional Council and Colonel Milanović, Deputy Minister of Defence of the RSK. Note number 1-234-93, dated 16 November, was presented to the On-site Rapporteur under the signature of Mr. Hadžić, stating the following decisions:

(a) The RSK administration agree to co-operate in and give their approval for the excavations on the site of Ovčara, in the municipality of Vukovar;

(b) The excavation activities can start in March or April the following year, when the weather conditions have improved;

(c) The RSK administration will appoint one member to observe the activities of the Commission; and

(d) The President of the Republic, Mr. Hadžić, approved the above-stated items and is willing to co-operate fully with the Commission.

14. Elections were held in the RSK in December 1993, but Mr. Hadžić did not run for re-election. It is reasonable to presume that another round of negotiations is necessary before the Ovčara excavation can be conducted.

15. As a result of the above investigations, the following reports were produced:

(a) a PHR report, Report of a Second Site Exploration of a Mass Grave Near Vukovar, Former Yugoslavia, which can be found in Annex X.A.2;

(b) a WCIT report, Report of Investigative Activity to the United Nations Commission of Experts-Ovčara, which follows.

16. The mass grave excavation project at Ovčara required, in Commission terms, substantial resources and was, at best, a qualified success. It is my view that the Ovčara project was successful to some extent because of the fact that the Commission was actually able to overcome considerable obstacles and deploy the necessary personnel and equipment to UNPA Sector East, even though it was unable to dig for political reasons. It is considered, however, that no attempt should be made to conduct the Ovčara excavation unless a very firm agreement is applied by the appropriate authorities.

17. The following lessons were learned from the Ovčara project:

(a) that local authorities can thwart projects which appear to have been authorized at a higher level. It is recommended that in addition to any written consent, it be a matter of UN policy that a representative of the appropriate Governmental authority be present at, though not on (for security and evidentiary reasons) the site, to facilitate relations with the local authorities;

(b) that it would be most efficient, should resources permit to locate mass grave investigative and exhumation resources "in country" for an extended period of time, that is for three to six months. This would permit flexibility in moving to different sites as soon as obtaining political approval and before any changes are made to the original approval; and

(c) that arrangements should be in place before evidence is collected, to allow it to be taken out for independent analysis to an institution in a country not a party to the conflict.

18. The support of UNPROFOR was essential to the success of all on-site investigations. It would be extremely difficult to conduct any on-site investigation without such support. The support of the Royal Netherlands Army (UNPROFOR Support Detachment) was essential in connection with the excavation projects and the radiological survey and extremely helpful in connection with all other projects. It is unlikely that a substantial excavation project could be carried out in future without the assistance of a unit similar in composition, equipment, and quality to the Royal Netherlands Army.

II. WCIT REPORT OF INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY AT OVČARA

19. In December 1992, the United Nations sponsored an on-site investigation of an alleged mass grave at Ovčara near Vukovar, UNPA Sector East, territory of the former Yugoslavia. PHR determined that there appeared to be a mass grave containing up to 200 bodies. The report relating to this activity is attached.

20. In October 1993, a medicolegal team consisting of PHR, WCIT, and the UNPROFOR Dutch military members were dispatched to investigate the site fully.

21. The team arrived on site at 12:35 p.m., on 20 October 1993. The site is located approximately six kilometres from the town of Vukovar, in a rural area. The site has been cordoned off with concertina wire, and was under the guard of RUSBAT UN troops, located in a guardhouse approximately 50 metres from the site. In attendance at the scene were Major Holland (Canadian Forces Legal Officer), Drs. Calabrese, Doretto, Fondebrider, Haglund, Hartley, McClurkan, Schmitt, and Scott and Mr. Stover of PHR. Also in attendance were members of the UNPROFOR Dutch Support Unit, as well as UN Commission of Experts member, Mr. Fenrick, and Lieutenant-Colonel Kempnaars, Dutch Military Lawyer, Assistant to the Commission.

22. Utilising an electronic surveying theodolite equipped with a SDR33 data collector (serial number F253137), Dr. Scott surveyed and mapped the perimeter of the suspected grave. This device allows the computerized recording of the topography, and can be used to map and graph items or artifacts located in the area.

23. Upon completion of the perimeter survey, the wire was removed and the scene entered. It was noted that the enclosed area was knee-high in grass and vegetation, making it difficult to locate surface artifacts. A number of

empty cartridge casings were located and marked by way of a pinflag. Twenty-seven empty casings and two items of cloth/clothing were located, mapped, seized and held as evidence. These items (Evidence items 2000-2027) have been forwarded to the forensic laboratories of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for analysis. Vegetation was removed from the interior of the scene. Photographs and video-tape of the investigation were taken by Dr. Doretta, and are held by the investigators. At the conclusion of each work day, the barbed wire was closed, and the site remained under guard of the RUSBAT troops.

24. On 21 October 1993, evidence items 2028 to 2064, inclusive, were seized from the scene. These items consisted almost exclusively of shell casings, and one live round of unidentified calibre.

25. At 10:12 a.m., 21 October 1993, a Belgian UNPROFOR mine team arrived and commenced checking the area for unexploded ordinance. While this was being done, investigative and forensic work was conducted only in the declared safe area.

26. At 8:50 a.m., on 22 October 1993, the scene was re-opened and work commenced. At 9:18 a.m., the minesweeping team arrived and commenced operations, including topographic mapping of the area and metal detection sweeps of the ground and trees.

27. At 10:15 a.m., on 22 October 1993, the Commission's Rapporteur for On-site Investigations, Mr. Fenrick, attended the scene and advised that permission to conduct the on-site investigation had been withdrawn by the local Serb administration. Therefore, because work was to cease, the scene was evacuated, and the team departed.

28. The ordinance and other items of real evidence collected at the scene are secured at UNPROFOR Headquarters in Zagreb, at the disposal of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague.

Part Two

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

29. In December 1992, a four-member forensic team, assembled by PHR, conducted a preliminary site exploration of a burial site approximately six kilometres south-east of the city of Vukovar, in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In its report 2/ to the United Nations Commission of Experts, the team concluded, inter alia, that the grave was "a mass grave, containing perhaps as many as 200 bodies". The team also concluded that the grave appeared to be consistent with witness testimony purporting that the site was "the place of execution and interment of the patients and medical staff of Vukovar Hospital on 20 November 1991". The team recommended that a second, larger forensic team should return to excavate the grave and remove the bodies for medicolegal examination.

30. In October 1993, a second PHR team returned to the former Yugoslavia to undertake the complete excavation of the mass grave. On 20 October, the forensic team travelled to the gravesite, located in an isolated, wooded area south-east of the farming village of Ovčara, near Vukovar (UNPA Sector East). Prior to their arrival at the site, the team had received written permission to conduct the excavation from the Governments of Croatia and the RSK. However, on 22 October, local Serb officials informed the team that the Regional Council of Vukovar had passed a resolution prohibiting further work at the site. The officials said that military forces had been ordered to

enforce the Council's resolution. That same day, the team left the site. Soon thereafter, the team joined another PHR forensic team working in UNPA Sector West.

31.As the local Serb administration forced the PHR team to leave the Ovčara site, no exhumations could be undertaken. However, the team was able to confirm that 7.62 by 39 millimetre cartridge cases were near the grave. In addition, the surface distribution of the cartridge cases confirmed the earlier finding that a mass execution had taken place at the gravesite.

32.The PHR team had intended to return to the Ovčara site in April 1994 to excavate and remove the bodies for medicolegal examination.

II. INTRODUCTION

33.From 20 to 22 October 1993, a ten-member international forensic team, assembled by PHR, conducted a exploration of a mass grave near the city of Vukovar, in the former Yugoslavia (see Appendix A). The investigation was carried out in collaboration with a Canadian team of lawyers and military policemen. A detachment from the Dutch military provided the PHR team with logistical and technical support.

34.The team had intended to excavate the mass grave, which is located in the farming village of Ovčara, near Vukovar (UNPA Sector East), over a period of weeks. However, on the third day of the investigation, the local Serb administration ordered the team to leave the site under threat of force. The team withdrew from the Sector and later joined another PHR forensic team working in UNPA Sector West.

35.As of December 1992, PHR has conducted medicolegal investigations of apparent war crimes in the territory of the former Yugoslavia on behalf of the Commission under a Cooperation Service Agreement concluded between PHR and the United Nations. The Commission is charged under UN Security Council Resolution 780 (1992) to collect and analyse evidence of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

36.PHR first investigated the Ovčara site in December 1992. During that investigation, two skeletonized individuals, bearing gunshot wounds to the head, were recovered from the surface and nearby the gravesite. A shallow test trench, or "sondage", dug across the gravesite revealed nine more bodies. In addition, a large concentration of spent 7.62 by 39 millimetre cartridge cases were found in the burr bushes, in a pattern west to north-west of the gravesite. Based on the preliminary site exploration, the PHR forensic team concluded:

- (a) a mass execution took place at the gravesite;
- (b) the grave is a mass grave, containing perhaps as many as 200 bodies;
- (c) the remote location of the grave suggests that the executioners sought to bury their victims secretly;
- (d) there is no indication that the grave has been disturbed since the time of execution and interment;
- (e) The grave appears to be consistent with witness testimony that the site is the place of execution and interment of the patients and medical staff

members, who disappeared during the evacuation of Vukovar Hospital on 20 November 1991. However, before that determination can be made with scientific certainty, the grave will need to be excavated and a number of bodies will need to be identified using forensic methods and procedures; and

(f) the fact that two bodies bore necklaces with Roman Catholic crosses--one bearing a small metal plate with the inscription "BOG I HRVATI" (God and Croatsians)--suggests that the grave is likely to contain the remains of Croatsians.

37. The following report describes the activities carried out by the PHR forensic team at the Ovčara site from 20 to 23 October 1993.

III. FIELD REPORT

A. Site preparation

38. At the time of the PHR forensic team's arrival, on the afternoon of 20 October 1993, the site was secured with two rows of concertina wire and guarded by a Russian contingent of UNPROFOR. The guard station is approximately 40 metres north-east of the site. The gravesite was indicated by a depression, situated at the head of a ravine. The relatively flat lands immediately adjacent to the site were in agricultural production.

39. The team first walked the perimeter wire to ascertain the condition of the site. The gravesite was observed to be overgrown with rank, weedy vegetation. Thistle and cocklebur were observed, as well as a variety of other tall weeds. Some vegetation extended to a height of 1.5 metres. This is all indicative of the revegetating of previously disturbed land.

40. After ascertaining the site condition, Canadian military police personnel, with the aid of Russian UNPROFOR soldiers, created an access point in the wire perimeter near the north-east corner. All ingress and egress to the site was monitored by military police personnel.

41. After gaining access to the site, three tasks were carried out simultaneously. One was the placement of the mapping datum, the second was initial clearing of the vegetation on and around the gravesite, and the third was photographic documentation of the site and the investigation.

B. Methods

42. Electronic Mapping Procedures. A professionally recognized archaeological mapping procedure was used to map the site, the grave pit, associated artifacts, natural and cultural features, and features of the previous excavation unit. The mapping procedure was enhanced by the use of an electronic data recorder, which allowed a high degree of precision in individual measurement and data logging. Precise location control was accomplished through the use of a total station theodolite and electronic data collector. The instrument was a Lietz SET5A total station theodolite with an SDR33 electronic data recorder. Each theodolite shot was recorded on the data recorder and given a previously established identification code. The specific artifact number was provided by the SDR33 used in auto-generate point mode. The electronic data recorder is equivalent to a surveyor's fieldbook.

43. A primary datum was established as a mapping control point at a convenient location on the site. This datum, numbered 1, was given the arbitrary coordinates of N100/E100 and an elevation of 120. Datum 2 was

established 3.9 metres west of datum 11 and was used as an orientation and backsite datum for all readings taken from this location.

44. The absolute location and elevation of datum 1 was established by readings taken with a Global Positioning System Unit, utilizing the WGS-84 datum. Datum 1 is located in UTM Zone 34, N5017695, E347778, and the elevation is 120 metres above mean sea level.

45. One subordinate datum was established, numbered 3, north of site to provide another check for accurate orientation of the theodolite.

46. The electronic mapping equipment was utilized to capture raw data, including horizontal angle, vertical angle, slope distance and elevation, for each reading taken. Each reading was automatically converted to coordinate position by the SDR33 data collector.

47. Data collected to generate the electronic map included, but was not limited to, locations of: excavation unit boundaries, artifacts found by metal detecting outside the excavation limits, and relevant cultural and natural features.

48. Each artifact found was piece-plotted as follows. The instrument was set up on datum 1, and distance, azimuth and coordinate point readings for each artifact location were recorded electronically. Distance was read to the nearest one millimetre, as well as the north and east coordinate.

49. At the conclusion of each day's field investigations the data collector was downloaded to a Dell 325N laptop computer containing the software MAP. The resultant computer file was then transferred to the software AUTOCAD for storage and final site map production.

50. Photographic Recording Procedures. Photography was conducted at the Ovčara site using both still and video cameras. Log books were used to record film numbers and to describe the activity being recorded on film. The log books were given to the Canadian military police at the site immediately after each roll of film or video tape was taken from the camera and labelled by the photographer.

51. Still photography at the Ovčara gravesite was begun by taking overview images of the site from various directions prior to the investigating team entering the concertina wire surrounding the site. Both colour transparency and black and white film were used. After an entrance way through the wire was established, photographs were taken of the investigative team clearing the site of vegetation and of those mapping the topographic contour and surface physical evidence. Photographs were taken of the site at the end of each day, after investigation personnel had left the site, and at the beginning of each work day, prior to personnel entering the site. Photographs, both colour transparency and black and white, were taken of selected physical evidence found in situ on the ground surface, and of bullet scars observed in trees at the site. In many cases, photographs of bullet scars and physical evidence were taken using a tripod-mounted camera. Plastic measurement scales (metric) were placed in each of these images.

52. The main purpose of the video documentation was to record the methods and procedures used in the medicolegal investigation of individual and mass graves. At various points during the investigation, experts in charge of specific areas of the work explained in front of the camera the procedures and objectives of each step. The investigators described the archaeological procedure used, how evidence was mapped and collected, and what chain of custody measures were taken.

53. Surface Inventory and Metal Detecting Procedures. The surface inventory was designed primarily to locate cartridge cases for use in firearms examination procedures. This effort was enhanced by the use of an electronic metal detector, a Fisher model 1235-X with a 30 centimetre diameter coil. Visual inspection of the surface was carried out concurrently with the metal detector sweeps.

54. The operator of the metal detector transected the site using a sweeping motion to examine the ground. A pin flag was placed at each target site identified visually or by detector signal.

55. The vegetation was cleared by pulling the stalks out of the ground or cutting them off near ground surface. The primary goal was to leave the ground surface intact. As the vegetation removal was occurring, a visual inspection of the site was made. The ground surface was littered with a variety of trash. (This trash was previously noted in the preliminary site exploration in December 1992).

56. The perimeter of the gravesite, which was visible during the December 1992 site exploration, was less visible by 20 October 1993. Natural slumping and vegetation growth had obscured the clearly visible details observed in December 1992. However, a disturbed and severely undulating area demarking the grave was visible, as was the line of the December 1992 test trench cut across the site.

57. After the vegetation clearing began, a Belgian mines clearance team with UNPROFOR arrived and conducted a visual clearing of the area north-west of the gravesite. They also worked to the south of the grave and returned a second day and worked to the south-west of the grave, until halted by orders to leave the site. The demining team pulled or removed some vegetation during their visual clearing operation.

58. All vegetation cleared from the site was removed by team personnel through the access point. It was removed to a pile area approximately 20 metres north to north-east of the site. After clearing the vegetation, team members visually observed the surface and identified cartridge cases and other artifacts found laying on the surface. No subsurface digging was undertaken.

59. Sixty-one cartridge cases (Field Specimen numbers 2000 to 2020, 2023 to 2028, 2030 to 2060, 2062 to 2064, and one live round of 7.62 by 39 millimetre ammunition, which is 2061, were found west to north-west of the gravesite. The location of each was recorded by using the electronic mapping procedures. Each item was collected and bagged by the Canadian military police. Each plastic bag contained one item which was labelled with the same number as generated by the SDR33. The bag was sealed by the MP team, and the artifacts were retained in MP custody at all times. The only other artifacts collected were two pieces of cloth and an unidentified object. These items may be intrusive trash and unrelated to the grave episode. However, their surface context was associated with the cartridge case concentration, so it was deemed appropriate to collect the specimens.

60. The cartridge cases appeared to fall into two clusters. One is from two to 10 metres west to north-west of the grave pit and the other is 12 to 15 metres west to north-west of the grave pit. The clusters may be artificial in that these were just the visible surface artifacts. Due to the team's expulsion from the site on 22 October, the surface investigation was left incomplete and no subsurface investigations were undertaken. Thus, the gap between the artifact clusters may be more apparent than real and only additional work can determine the real situation.

61. Two other activities were carried out at the site prior to the team's withdrawal. One was the photographic recording of the site and the vegetation clearing operation. Within the context of the photographic recording, several trees believed to bear evidence of bullet scarring were also recorded by utilizing forensic scales. These trees are to the south-west of the grave pit and at the edge or in the ravine that heads the grave pit.

62. The final task that was begun prior to the withdrawal was the initiation of recording topographic elevation points for use in constructing a site contour map. Thirty-six elevation points were recorded on 21 October. Plans were to continue to record elevation points on 22 October, but the team withdrew from the site before the data could be recorded.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

63. Inasmuch as the local Serb administration forced the forensic team to leave the site, no formal exhumations could be undertaken. This investigation confirmed the presence of a large concentration of spent 7.62 by 39 millimetre cartridge cases. In addition, the surface inventory and mapping of the cartridge cases suggests that there is a patterned distribution to the firearms data. Further investigations are needed to explicate fully the relationship between the grave and the cartridge cases. However, the surface distribution of the cartridge cases confirms the earlier findings that a mass execution took place at the gravesite.

64. To complete the medicolegal investigation of the Ovčara site, the following activities will need to be undertaken:

- (a) completion of the metal detecting, collecting and recording of firearms-related evidence at the site;
- (b) completion of the forensic firearms identification of the cartridge cases and bullets recovered at the site;
- (c) completion of the detailed mapping of the grave pit and contents as well as determining the relationship of the firearms evidence with the deposition of the bodies; and
- (d) completion of the exhumation and, to the extent possible, the identification and determination of cause of death of the human remains buried at the site.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

65. This report is based on a second site exploration of a mass grave at Ovčara near Vukovar (UNPA Sector East), in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, from 20 to 22 October 1993. The report was written by Douglas D. Scott, Ralph Hartely, and Eric Stover. Laura Reiner provided administrative support in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

66. Members of the forensic team were:

- (a) Eric Stover, forensic team leader and executive director of PHR, Boston, Massachusetts, USA;
- (b) Mercedes Doretta, forensic archaeologist with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

(c) Burnie McClurkan, archaeologist and historian with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, Little Rock, Arkansas, USA;

(d) Douglas D. Scott, Ph.D., archaeologist with the Midwest Archaeological Center, National Park Service, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA;

(e) Stephan Schmitt, forensic archaeologist with the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Team, Guatemala City, Guatemala;

(f) Melissa Connor, Ph.D., archaeologist with the Midwest Archaeological Center, National Park Service, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA;

(g) Ralph Hartley, Ph.D., archaeologist with the Midwest Archaeological Center, National Park Service, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA;

(h) William D. Haglund, Ph.D., forensic anthropologist with the King County Medical Examiner Division, Seattle, Washington, USA;

(i) Francis A. Calabrese, Ph.D., archaeologist with the Midwest Archaeology Center, National Park Service, Lincoln, Nebraska; and

(j) Luis Fondebrider, forensic archaeologist with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, Buenos Aires, Argentina;

67.PHR wishes to thank its members and several foundations and companies for their support of the organization's work in the territory of the former Yugoslavia: Soros Yugoslavia Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, Smith-Richardson Foundation, The New Land Foundation, Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, John Merck Fund, Lufthansa Airlines, Kamp Air Freight, Miles Dental Products, Henry Schein Company, Baxter Health Care Hospital Supply, Shandon Lipshaw, General Electric Medical Systems, Sokkia Corporation, Polaroid Corporation, AGFA Corporation, AGFA Compu Graphic, United Parcel Service and Vista Travel. PHR also is grateful to the US Government, which contributed equipment and supplies to the Commission for use during the medicolegal investigation.

68.PHR gratefully acknowledges the superb logistical and technical support provided by the UNPROFOR Dutch Support Unit.

Notes

1/ The War Crimes Investigation Team (WCIT) consisted of military personnel from the Canadian Office of the Judge Advocate General as well as military investigators who were seconded from Canada to the Commission of Experts for this specific mission. Similar teams were also seconded by Canada to the Commission for other missions. Such teams were referred to within the Commission and for purposes of its reports as the Canadian War Crimes Investigation Team.

2/ See Annex II, Physicians for Human Rights, "Report of a Preliminary Site Exploration of a Mass Grave Near Vukovar, Former Yugoslavia", in "Letter dated 9 February 1993 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council", S/25274, at 25-64 (10 February 1993).