



## Press release

To the media

Geneva, April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007

### **Katyn and Switzerland**

#### **International colloquium: forensic investigators and investigations in humanitarian crises**

**The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Faculties of Law, Arts and Medicine of the University of Geneva have organized a colloquium on the topic "Katyn and Switzerland: Forensic experts and investigations in humanitarian crises." From 18 to 21 April, historians, researchers and forensic experts from all over the world will gather at the Louis-Jeantet Medical Foundation in Geneva to discuss the duty of humanitarian organizations to denounce war crimes. The case of professor François Naville and the consequences of his participation in the international commission set up in 1943 to investigate the Katyn massacre will serve as a starting point for their exchange of views.**

The call made by Germany in 1943 for the establishment of an international commission to determine responsibility for the massacre of several thousand Polish officers in Katyn forest provides a good illustration of the diplomatic, military, political and ethical considerations that weigh on forensic investigations.

The predominant role played by the Soviet Union in the struggle against the Third Reich, the issues at stake in the Cold War and the singularity of Nazi crimes had a major influence on the attitude of governments and humanitarian organizations and on the subsequent fate of the forensic experts who took part in the commission's work.

These questions, and that of how Katyn was remembered in Poland until the Russian Federation officially admitted the facts of the case in 1992, will be the subject of the opening lectures given on Wednesday 18 April at the University Medical Centre.

Beyond Katyn and the Naville affair (François Naville, who took part in the investigation, was a professor of forensic medicine at the University of Geneva), other examples drawn from history and current events will be used by the



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lecturers to examine the constraints and humanitarian consequences of forensic investigations.

The colloquium will close on Saturday morning, 21 April, with a lecture and a round table on contemporary forensic practices.

### **Contacts:**

**For further information, please contact:**

ICRC: Jean-François Pitteloud Tel: 079 244 64 39, e-mail: [jfpitteloud@bluewin.ch](mailto:jfpitteloud@bluewin.ch)

University of Geneva: Prof. Timothy Harding Tel: 0041 22 379 55 94, 0041 79 376 00, e-mail: [Timothy.Harding@hcuge.ch](mailto:Timothy.Harding@hcuge.ch)

**Presse, information, publications:**

24 rue du Général-Dufour - CH-1211 Genève 4 - Tél. 022 379 77 17  
Fax 022 379 77 29, E-mail: [presse@unige.ch](mailto:presse@unige.ch), [www.unige.ch/presse](http://www.unige.ch/presse)