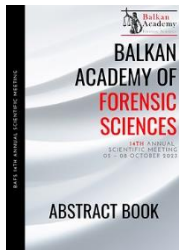## *Global Updates (by Country)*

The International members of the *Academy of Forensic Nursing* receive an invitation to provide updates of activities in their countries with each JAFN publication. The volunteer representatives' comments are below and listed in alphabetical order by country/region.

Balkans

Forensic Nursing Science in the Balkan Academy of Forensic Sciences

Prof. Ersi Kalfoglou
President of Balkan Academy of Forensic Sciences

The Balkan Academy of Forensic Sciences organized the 14th Annual Scientific Meeting as a hybrid congress in Istanbul, Turkey, October 05-08, 2023. Founded in 2003, the Balkan Academy of Forensic Sciences (BAFS) deals with all scientific, educational, and professional matters pertaining to the forensic nursing discipline on an international level. The primary goal of the Balkan Academy is to promote education for and research in the forensic sciences by encouraging the study to improve the practice, to elevate the standards and to advance the cause of the Forensic Sciences. Starting in 2021 the Balkan Academy endorsed a Forensic Nursing Section, in addition to 8 other preexisting sections. There are a very small number of NGOs in the Forensic Sciences arena with a Forensic Science Nursing Section. Therefore, we are proud to have the privilege of being one of the first institutions to undertake the responsibility to promote this science. We extend our gratitude to Virginia Lynch for her dedication and spirit. She organized the section and has been actively participating in the Annual Meetings for the last three years. The 2023 meeting hosted 275 attendees from 25 different countries and accepted 85 oral presentations and 50 posters in addition to two workshops and one panel. One of the most captivating sessions was the Forensic Nursing Session, and included presentations from scientists from USA, Canada, Switzerland Turkey, Portugal, Kosovo, and Iran on with topics such as:

- *Forensic Nurse Hospitalist: The Comprehensive Role of the Forensic Nurse in a Hospital Setting*
- *Responding to Interpersonal Violence: Challenges, Collaboration and Education for Nurses Forensic Nursing in Portugal*
- *Forensic Nursing Science: A Critical History in Kosovo", Building Quality Metrics For Pediatric Forensic Nursing Programs*
- *Consequences of Presence of Forensic Nurses in Health Care System*
- *Slaying Dragons: Prevention of Adolescent Human Trafficking*

GLOBAL UPDATES

Virginia Lynch, the founder of the Forensic Nursing Section of the Academy presented the very interesting topic *A Contemporary Response to Humanitarian and Human Rights*. The Balkan Academy of Forensic Sciences believes in the highly valuable contributions of Forensic Nursing Science and plans to continue supporting the idea in any possible way.

Canada

Aimee Falkenberg BSN RN SANE-A, President

Canadian Forensic Nurses Association 2023-2025

The Canadian Forensic Nurses Association (CFNA) had a busy year. We called out to our active membership for expert members willing to develop our standards of practice for the forensic nurse who is providing medical forensic care to survivors of all ages and all genders. The work is slated to be finished in early winter 2024. The work will also provide the foundation for our 2024 project committees, which are developing two guidelines for the care of adults/ adolescents and one for pre-pubescent patients. Our membership goals are met with the development of both a consensus *standard of practice* and *practice guidelines* for care of patients who are survivors of sexual violence.

In 2023, a busy year! …the CFNA executive worked alongside the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) to look for opportunities and options to bring certification to Canada for Canadian Forensic Nurses that would be managed and operationalized through CFNA. The process to standardize the forensic nurse practices in Canada for the Canadian Forensic Nurses and leverage the expertise and advanced level training that is essential in the role.

The response to survivors of violence is a major need in Canada. To bring attention, in the fall 2023, advocacy led CFNA and CNA to co-release a letter to the Canadian government requesting their time to review the national *state of response to survivors* and the need for improvement and government support. We are awaiting response to our request.

CFNA offered virtual leadership meetings every two months for all team leads and individuals coordinating and managing programs across the nation. The meetings opened the door for a larger conversation and the opportunity to work together on many different topics.

Futuristically, CFNA hosts its *very first* national conference June 6, 2024, in Quebec, Canada. The national conference is timely because our membership tripled in the last 18 months!

CFNA plans to continue our hard work into the next year, fulfilling our membership's mandate to support forensic nursing by influencing healthcare policies, taking the initiative, and driving innovation, all while advocating for best practices! We plan to continue to promote the need and value for forensic nursing services in healthcare across the lifespan by identifying and partnering with other organizations. We plan to continue to promote the value of the Canadian Forensic Nursing role through role recognition and out expertise, fulfilling our mission of promoting trauma-informed, patient-centred, and evidence-based forensic nursing practice in Canada.

Israel

Catherine Carter-Snell, JAFN Editor-in-Chief

As you may be aware, our international AFN members from Israel are immersed in the Israel-Hamas war. Many of us cannot imagine the burden on those involved. We recently received a letter from two of our AFN members from Israel, Shoshana Melech-Shalom, and Dr. Orli Grinstein-Cohen. I am including a quote from them with their permission:

> *"I am a resident of Sderot, one of the towns the terrorists entered, murdering innocent civilians on the street before attacking the police station. I have been a displaced citizen for nearly 50 days, continuing to travel long distances to my workplace in the south of the country despite the war and alarms. We have children, nieces, and nephews in combat. We have all lost colleagues and friends.*
>
> *Furthermore, it is important to note that a year ago, research was completed on the topic of nursing, medical and paramedic personnel on their attitude towards security prisoners and their medical and nursing treatment of them. Outstanding was the response of the personnel that they treated them as they would treat all other patients, giving them the best possible care without prejudice, because they believe that giving the best care is essential to all human beings."*

This perspective from someone involved in a war, regardless of sides, raises significant implications for all of us as forensic nurses. They are not asking us to choose sides, only to offer our support both individually and as an organization. We have forensic nurses in many areas of the world involved in war and disasters. The Ukraine-Russia conflict is another example. There are many implications for forensic nurses, even those not directly impacted. Those involved not only face the tragedies and losses of conflict but have the added burden of care. Some of the implications for AFN and its' members include the following:

a. **Awareness of current events**: Part of evidence-informed practice is being aware of the environment in which we give care. This includes being aware of what is happening in our communities and the world. We may not be front line but may provide care for refugees or front-line personnel coming to our countries. Some nurses I have spoken with were unaware or under-aware of the Israel-Hamas war or the one in the Ukraine. This is perhaps an unfortunate side effect of streaming services and isolation from news other than social media. Some students and professionals have told me it is too traumatizing to watch the news. Even social media may not provide news information in some situations. For instance, Canadian news was blocked from social media due to legislation requiring the media companies to pay for the news. News is therefore unavailable on social media unless actively seeking it. Furthermore, when we do watch the news, not all of it is credible or reliable. This has dire consequences for forensic nurses. We need to remain informed, critically evaluate the sources, and remain aware

of structural drivers for violence to effectively intervene and/or prevent violence

2. **Developing systems of communications to enable support**: Individuals and forensic nursing organizations need to develop strategies to support forensic nurses and reach out. Forensic nurses in war and disaster face personal as well as professional crises and are at risk without support. This does not mean sides have to be chosen but it is important to know that the nurses have support of their community. We find front line providers have more delayed PTSD risks as they give so much of themselves during the crisis and avoid their own self-care. We need to be there individually and organizationally to offer support. The Academy of Forensic Nursing (AFN) has an international special interest group, but we do not currently have any strategies as a group to support each other. We can do better- we need to have strategies such as to be able to securely share emails and countries of members so both individuals and the organization can identify those potentially at risk or involved and offer support.

3. **Avoidance of bias**: As our colleagues point out, it is important to provide services to all sides. This is an important position for forensic nurses. We provide services without bias to anyone involved in violence or conflict We are providing healthcare, and we refer to them as patients or clients, not victims or perpetrators for this reason. This is a key principle grounded in the codes of nursing ethics.

4. **Need for AFN to develop position statements**: We have also realized that we do not have a position statement against war, disaster, or structural violence with AFN. Tensions are rising in many areas of the world and forensic nurses will increasingly be involved. We need to involve our members in drafting position statements and protocols to voice our concerns about violence and its' consequences. AFN takes a stand against all violence and emphasizes the need to provide care for all individuals experiencing violence.
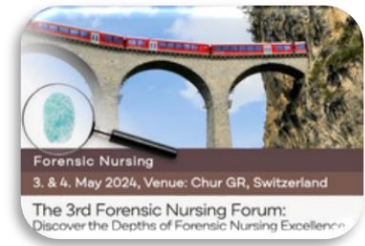
In summary, on behalf of the AFN Executive Board of Directors and the journal (JAFN) Editorial Board, we want to offer our support as well as our thanks to our Israeli forensic nurse members and colleagues for helping us to identify significant gaps. It is hoped that we can work with all involved in conflict to develop robust strategies for international support through the development of position statements against violence and communication strategies. Our hearts and prayers are with all the nurses involved in and affected by conflicts, their families, and their patients.

Switzerland

Valeria Kaegi & Dominici Hani

Forensic Nursing in Switzerland is constantly evolving and is becoming increasingly apparent in various areas where nurses encounter persons affected by violence, such as prevention, long-term geriatric care, and further training programs for nurses. The *Swiss Association Forensic Nursing* looks back on a successful May 2023 Forensic Nursing Forum and is already planning the next Forensic Nursing Forum, which occurs on May 3-4, 2024 in Chur, Switzerland. For further information and registration, visit *Swiss Association Forensic Nursing* website for updates!

Editor's Note

Catherine Carter-Snell, PhD RN SANE-A DF-AFN

These submissions do NOT represent the comprehensive list of our international member activities. Excellent work is happening globally to advance the role of the forensic nurse across the world! JAFN wants to hear from you and include your initiatives and activities in future issues. Interesting items to include are upcoming conferences, advancement of forensic teams, or relevant forensic collaborations. Email: jafn@afnmail.org or the editor ccartersnell@afnmail.org. The journal publishes issues in March, July, and November each year. Submissions are requested 1-2 months in advance of the publication month.