



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THAI TSUNAMI VICTIM IDENTIFICATION RELOCATES TO BANGKOK.  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS CONTINUE SUPPORT OF THAI AUTHORITIES.**

**Phuket, Thailand** – The Thai Tsunami Victim Identification Information Management Centre (TTVI-IMC) is relocating to a permanent facility at the Royal Thai Police Headquarters in Bangkok.

The facility in Phuket will be officially transferred on Friday 16 December to re-open in Bangkok on Wednesday 4 January where it will continue to be supported by the international DVI community.

Relocating the IMC to the capital city will greatly reduce the substantial costs incurred by the Royal Thai Police which has deployed a large number of staff from Bangkok to Phuket. The move will also release back to TOT Communications, 60 per cent of their building space which had been occupied by the IMC.

During the past 12 months, nearly 2,000 personnel from 31 nations have been involved in the identification process, collecting DNA samples, conducting forensic analysis, logging data and helping with the repatriation of tsunami victims' remains. In addition to significant contributions of equipment and staff deployment by many of the countries involved, Interpol has played a key role in co-ordinating the international DVI effort and in providing logistical and communications support.

“No one country could have responded to the tsunami disaster on its own, and Thailand is extremely grateful for the support which has been given by so many countries,” said Head of the International DVI Command Structure in Thailand, General Ajiravid Subarnbhesaj.

“Before the tsunami, there was no DVI expertise in Thailand, and the skills that our officers have developed during the past 12 months mean that we can now also offer our assistance in any future international incidents.”

Of the 3,750 victims recorded by the TTVI-IMC, nearly 3,000 identifications have been made - approximately 45 per cent via dental records, 35 per cent by fingerprints and the remaining 20 per cent by DNA. The number of DNA identifications is expected to rise significantly during the final stages of the process.

Specialist assistance has been given by laboratories in China, Sweden, Britain and Thailand, as well as the International Commission for Missing Persons in Sarajevo which has developed expertise in obtaining DNA from low quality samples.

“That more than 80 per cent of the victims have already been identified is testimony to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved in this operation. We are aware that this process is not just about numbers, and that we are dealing with someone's loved one, and we will continue in our efforts to ensure the remaining victims are identified as soon as possible,” said IMC Commander Superintendent Derek Forest.

“The relocation of the IMC to Bangkok to a permanent facility gives the TTVI process a sustainable position to ensure that this operation continues the excellent work already achieved.”

As part of the ongoing identification and repatriation process, bodies currently being held at Maik Khao Cemetery (site 2) are to be transferred to the Thai Tsunami Repatriation Centre at Bang Maruan (site 1c) where current final examination and release procedures will be continued.

The vast majority of these remains are those of Thai nationals, and the Bang Maruan cemetery is a more central location for families on the mainland where many Thai nationals were killed. Bang Maruan also has three crematoriums on site enabling people of various faiths to fulfill any spiritual obligations which should be observed.

During the anniversary period, access to the Thai Tsunami Repatriation Centre will only be granted to relatives for the repatriation of victims, however the remembrance walls may be visited at any time. All enquiries about the commemoration ceremony and visiting relatives should be directed to the Thai authorities and the governments of the countries concerned.

For media enquiries relating to the TTVI-IMC please contact [ttvimedia@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ttvimedia@hotmail.co.uk) or [press@interpol.int](mailto:press@interpol.int).