

I-familia, global database to identify missing persons

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In news

Recently, Interpol has launched a new global database named "I-Familia" to identify missing persons through family DNA

About I-familia

- I-Familia is a global database for identifying missing persons based on international DNA kinship matching.
- The result of cutting-edge scientific research, the database seeks to identify missing persons or unidentified human remains when direct comparison is not possible, by using DNA samples from family members instead.
- Its aim is to reunite loved ones or to bring closure to cases and allow families to rebuild their lives.
- INTERPOL's I-Familia service provides the necessary international mechanism to allow missing persons DNA data to be compared globally.
- I-Familia is powered by Bonaparte, a forensic DNA matching software system developed by SMART Research. SMART Research provides the software system, maintenance and support to INTERPOL.

Two types of DNA identification

- **DNA identification through direct matching:** A direct DNA sample from the missing person, for example a prior medical sample or a personal item such as a toothbrush, can be compared to the DNA from an unidentified body or human remains to see if a match can be found. This type of identification has been carried out via the INTERPOL DNA Database since 2004.

- **DNA identification through kinship matching:** Biological relatives share a percentage of their DNA, depending on their relationship. In the event that a DNA sample from the missing person cannot be obtained for direct matching, DNA from close family members (parents, children, siblings) can also be compared. This is where I-Familia is set to make a difference.

Three components of I-Familia

I-Familia is made up of three components:

1. A dedicated **global database** to host the DNA profiles provided by relatives, held separately from any criminal data
2. **The DNA matching software, called Bonaparte**, developed by Smart Research
3. **Interpretation guidelines**, produced by INTERPOL, to efficiently identify and report potential matches.