

THE MINNESOTA PROTOCOL

Science & Law: How the Minnesota Protocol has helped lead to convictions on suspicious deaths all over the globe

THE PROBLEM

Investigations into claims of suspicious deaths, such as assassinations, were being done by groups sympathetic to the leaders being accused of the crimes.

THE SOLUTION

Bring together experts in law, human rights, and forensics to create a uniform investigatory standard that was credible, neutral, and beyond reproach.

THE RESULT

The "Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary, and Summary Executions," better known as the Minnesota Protocol.



1983

The Advocates for Human Rights' attorneys were concerned with the lack of government accountability for suspicious deaths and mass executions in the world.



1983-1987

The group teamed up with international experts in law and forensic science to research how to create a protocol that modeled a police homicide investigation.



Details of the Minnesota Protocol were hammered out at a conference in Spring Hill, Minnesota. The Protocol included technical guidance for conducting investigations; procedures of inquiry; and processing of evidence, such as models for autopsy protocol, disinterment, and analysis of skeletal remains.

1987



1991

The United Nations adopted the Minnesota Protocol in 1991 as a global standard to investigate suspicious and unlawful deaths.



The Minnesota Protocol has been used in investigations throughout the world, including in Rwanda, Bosnia, Guatemala, East Timor, and Peru.

1991-2015



2015-2016



The UN commissioned The Advocates to help update the Minnesota Protocol to meet the needs of the 21st century and better reflect changes in law and advancements in forensic science. The revised Minnesota Protocol is to be published in 2016.