

ORGANIZATION PROFILE: TIEMS

By Kathleen M. Kowalski

The International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS) was founded in 1993 as a non-profit organization with the mission of bringing together users, planners, researchers, managers, technicians, response personnel, and other parties interested in emergency management, to exchange knowledge, experience, and ideas about innovative methods and technologies to improve our ability to manage emergencies worldwide. The Society reorganized in 1996, in recognition of the central role that practitioners and social scientists play in the development of emergency methods and technologies.

TIEMS embraces two major goals. First, it allows individuals who are dedicated to improving emergency management for natural and man-made disasters to interact and share experiences with colleagues from various countries and an array of government and private agencies. Second, The Society facilitates networking for these professionals. These goals are achieved through the on-going development of a world-wide network (<http://www.tiems.org>) of individuals from various disciplines and, most importantly, through a yearly conference.

The TIEMS annual conferences solicit papers on a breadth of emergency management issues. Conference discussion topics fall into three broad areas—research and development, application, and education and training. The research and development issues include agent-based simulation, artificial intelligence, behavioral aspects, emergency worker occupational safety and health, communications systems, data analysis and decision support systems, information management and technologies, knowledge acquisition and processing, new technologies, organization theory, policy analysis, risk analysis, simulation, societal factors, and systems engineering. The application areas include case studies, industrial and environmental accidents, natural disasters, hazardous materials, human factors, medical technology and emergency management, organizational issues, management approaches, mitigation and preparedness, planning and crisis management, policy issues, regional/

local and urban considerations, response and recovery, technological disasters, techniques for emergency and disaster management, terrorist threats, and transportation management. And the education and training agenda covers training and tutoring systems, educational experiences, professional education, degree programs, and international programs.

All meeting submissions are peer reviewed and published in a Conference Proceedings. For the past several years, papers have been selected for special editions of emergency management journals; for example, in 1995, *Safety Science* (20) selected papers for publication.

The annual conferences are devoted to specific themes, such as Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice, Globalization of Emergency Management, International Issues Concerning Research and Application in Emergency Management, International Challenges for the Next Decade, and Emergency Management in the Third Millennium. These themes are designed to facilitate cross-disciplinary networking opportunities where nuclear scientists can listen to psychologists, sociologists can share ideas with engineers, and practitioners can discuss emergency management issues with scientists. The diversity of the TIEMS membership and the interaction among disciplines is one of The Society's strengths and consequently leads to improved emergency management worldwide.

The annual conference venues alternate between North America and Europe. Past meetings have taken place in Florida's Hollywood Beach, Nice, Montreal, Copenhagen, Washington, DC, and Delft. Participants from six of the seven continents have attended the TIEMS meetings. TIEMS 2000 will take place May 16-19 in Orlando and TIEMS 2001 will be in Oslo.

Psychologists with an interest in emergency management issues are urged to attend the TIEMS conferences. The Society is encouraging psychologists internationally to develop relationships with emergency managers, academicians,

practitioners and others to foster greater understanding of the relationship between human behavior and emergencies. As our colleague Enrico Quarantelli, founder of the first university-based disaster center at Ohio State University, has said, "We are far from certain how much any of us understands about the nature of disasters, the nature of mental health, and the relationship between the two. The initial step is to recognize how significant that relationship may be."

TIEMS members have identified terrorism and the legal responsibility of emergency workers as focal points for future concern. With terrorism on the increase, both response teams and governments are seeking information on innovative methods to manage such man-made disasters. The legal responsibility issue hinges on immunity for emergency workers. Previously, it was common practice to give immunity to fire service and other emergency personnel who frequently put their lives at risk to help others. Since decisions must be made swiftly in hazardous circumstances, mistakes can occur. If immunity is not guaranteed for emergency workers, we risk defensive emergency management—a diversion of costly resources away from emergency intervention toward legal battles.

Kathleen M. Kowalski, PhD, is a Research Psychologist with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Pittsburgh Research Laboratory, US Department of Health and Human Services. She is the Secretary of The International Emergency Management Society. Dr. Kowalski can be reached by e-mail (kek2@cdc.gov).

PSYCHOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

Crimean Psychologists Investigate Multi-Ethnic Conflict and Social Change

By Carina Korostelina

Crimea is one of many regions of the former Soviet Union fraught with economic, social, and political instability. Extending southwards into the Black Sea, the Crimean peninsula was once a prime vacation spot for Soviet citizens. It is now an autonomous republic of the Ukraine, struggling with the country's highest unemployment rate, political upheaval, and brewing ethnic tensions. Conflict between Ukraine and Russia continues over the division of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet which is still based in the Crimean port city of Sevastopol. These tensions made the news in May 1999 when 20,000 Crimean Tatars staged a protest march that provoked a negative reaction by the peninsula's majority Russian population. This situation poses a challenge for psychologists working to find peaceful models of coexistence for the 2.5 million people residing in the 26,000 square kilometers that comprise the Crimean peninsula.

Ethnic Russians make up 64 percent of Crimea's population, 23 percent are Ukrainians, 10 percent Crimean Tatar, and the remaining 3 percent are Belorussian, Armenian, Greek, and German, among others. The Russian majority faces a complicated predicament in an area that was a Russian territory until 1954 but is now part of the Ukrainian State. The Ukrainian population—though sharing Slav ethnicity with the Russians—struggles with the fact that they are a minority in their own land. And even more complex is the situation of the Crimean Tatars, whom Stalin deported en masse

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Salvadoran AIDS Coalition Wins Appeal to Interamerican Human Rights Commission

By Richard Stern

On February 29, 2000, the Interamerican Human Rights Commission in Washington, DC, ordered the government of El Salvador to begin supplying anti-retroviral medications to 26 Salvadorans living with AIDS. The ruling came in response to a petition filed last September by Jorge Odir Miranda and 35 other Salvadorans. The petitioners are members of a non-governmental organization called *Atlatcatl*. The group contacted the Commission again in early January to advise that 10 of the original 36 *Atlatcatl* members had died during the previous four months and that urgent intervention was needed to save the lives of the survivors.

The case came to the Commission because the Salvadoran Supreme Court had failed to act on an April 1999 *Atlatcatl* appeal that challenged the failure of the government-run health care program—the *Instituto Salvadoreño de Seguro Social* (ISSS)—to provide anti-retroviral medications. Although not a cure as such, the anti-retroviral medications significantly strengthen the immune system allowing most people who take them to lead a relatively normal life. The ISSS, which insures 20 percent of the country's six million inhabitants, including much of the workforce, currently provides only AZT to people with AIDS. Anti-retroviral medications are available to the few people who can afford to buy them privately, at a cost of about \$700 a month in a country where the per capita income is still under \$300 a month.

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*Interview with
H.E. Vaira Vike-Freiberga,
Psychologist and President
of The Republic of Latvia
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