

Abstracts

Ethical Considerations in Forensic Identification and Investigation During the Iron Swords War

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Introduction: The “Iron Swords” war began with a Hamas attack on Israel, leading to significant civilian fatalities and over 800 military fatalities. This conflict necessitated the full deployment of Unit 6017, the Israel Defense Forces casualty identification unit, responsible for both casualty identification and medical investigation. While existing literature predominantly focuses on the ethical aspects of casualty identification in civilian contexts or mass disasters, this article uniquely explores the ethical considerations specific to Unit 6017’s operations during the “Iron Swords” war, including integrating medical investigation with standard bioethical concerns.

Method: The article reviews the medical, ethical, and operational principles guiding the casualty identification process and investigating death circumstances, using Unit 6017’s role in the “Iron Swords” war as a case study.

Findings: Unit 6017 operates under medical ethics principles, such as respect for the deceased and the family’s rights, while also adhering to IDF values. This necessitates medical investigations that may delay funerals and pose risks to the unit in complex situations.

Discussion: The unit’s work involves balancing ethical principles with military obligations, particularly in difficult situations related to medical investigations, informed consent, staff safety, and timely burial.

Summary: This article examines how Unit 6017 navigated the ethical complexities of its dual role, balancing bioethical considerations with military requirements during the “Iron Swords” war.

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