



## International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), Initiative on Forensic Geology (IFG)

### Monthly Update and Information for IUGS E-Bulletin, February 2026

#### **New Standard on use of SEM-EDS for Forensic Examination of Geological Materials**

In December 2025, ASTM International published a new standard: “E3501 – 25 Standard Guide for Forensic Analysis of Geological Materials by Scanning Electron Microscopy and Energy Dispersive X-Ray Spectrometry”

<https://www.astm.org/search/result?q=e3501>. This standard will replace the proposed standard OSAC-2024-S-0012 on the OSAC registry. <https://www.nist.gov/standard/2561>. Once replaced, this ASTM International Standard will be freely available via the OSAC Web site. If anyone has concerns or suggested improvements to this document, please contact Libby Stern ([LStern@FBI.gov](mailto:LStern@FBI.gov)).

#### **ANSI Public Comment on Proposed ASTM Standard on use of Polarized Light Microscopy in Forensic Examination of Soils**

ASTM International is developing a new document, “WK96359 Standard Guide for Polarized Light Microscopy in the Forensic Examination and Comparison of Soils.” ANSI will soon seek public comment on this proposed standard

See <https://www.nist.gov/adlp/spo/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/how-to-work-with-us/standards-open> for instructions on how to provide public comments. Alternatively, those interested in providing feedback can contact Libby Stern ([LStern@FBI.gov](mailto:LStern@FBI.gov)). An older version of this proposed standard is available at: <https://www.nist.gov/document/osac-2025-s-0011-standard-guide-plm-forensic-examination-and-comparison-soilsregistry>. The formal public comment period is expected to run from mid-February to the end of March 2026.

#### **The Mineralogical Society of the UK and Ireland**

Rosa Maria Di Maggio, has been invited by the Mineralogical Society of the UK and Ireland to give a keynote lecture at the 150th Anniversary Congress, which will be held at the University of Manchester, UK from 23 to 25 June 2026. The title of the presentation is, ‘Tracing Crime through Minerals: The Role of Mineralogy in Forensic Investigations’.

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#### **Edinburgh Science Festival, Scotland**

IUGS-IFG have been invited to participate in the Edinburgh Science Festival, Scotland, which will take place at the National Museum of Scotland, on 17 April 2026. IUGS-IFG will be represented by Lorna Dawson, Laurance Donnelly and Fabio Salvador. There will be a focus on international illegal mining and the illicit trade in minerals. Included will be work conducted by students and postdoctoral researchers. There will also be a wildlife crime expert (Lucy Webster) collaborating with IUGS-IFG, and other subjects covered include whisky fraud, and the olive oil and honey trade.

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#### **TRACING Forensic Palaeontology, University of Bologna, Italy**

IUGS-IFG will host an event in Bologna, Italy, at a date to be confirmed in April 2027 to introduce ‘TRACING Palaeontology’. This will focus on a practical international effort to develop neutral, evidence-based tools for documenting, tracing and protecting palaeontological material. This non-traditional meeting will bring together experts from science, forensic geology, law, customs, commerce and communications to co-design pilotable standards, provenance templates, geoforensic workflows and traceability protocols, intended to reduce uncertainty, support lawful activity and strengthen heritage protection.

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#### **Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC): The Somali Gold Rush**

A report published in January 2026, draws attention to illegal, fragmented and unregulated gold mining in Somalia at 20 mining sites, operated by 18 commercial entities. These operations include the widespread use of mercury and cyanide leaching plants to extract the gold. The gold is reported to enter the supply chain with minimal security predominantly on commercial flights to Dubai. Since 2017 to 2023, reported imports of gold from Somalia to the UAE have increased from 2.8 to 5.0 tonnes, respectively. Illegal gold will form part of a proposed IUGS-IFGs workshop on gold traceability, to take place in Switzerland, at a date to be confirmed in 2026.

For a copy of the report: <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/somali-gold-rush-milxo-mining/>  
<https://globalinitiative.net/Articles>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-64162379>

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### **Sands of Change, London**

The illegal extraction of sand is rapidly growing around the world, with an estimated value to US\$ 350 billion. An in-person and virtual one day International Conference will be held at The Geological Society of London on 18 March 2026, in association with the Geological Society of London Forensic Geoscience Group, International Union of Geological Sciences Initiative on Forensic Geology and the British Geological Survey. This event is of interest to academics, practitioners, and those interested in the governance and mitigation of risks associated with illegal sand mining.

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Register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sands-of-change-the-global-challenge-of-sand-mining-tickets-1409896601689?aff=oddtcreator>