Red Cross/Red Crescent’s Tracing Service

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“Whenever people are separated from their loved ones as a result of armed conflict and other situations of violence, natural disaster or other situations requiring a humanitarian response, the Movement responds efficiently and effectively by mobilizing its resources to restore family links.”

Restoring Family Links Strategy
for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
2008 - 2018
RFL is a range of activities that aim to:

• Prevent separations & disappearances
• Restore & maintain contact between family members
• Clarify the fate of the missing

Often inter-connected with other activities:

• Psychological and psychosocial
• Material support
• Resettlement & reintegration programmes
• Management of human remains
Role and Mandate - the Right to know

The Role and Mandate of the ICRC and RC/RC Tracing Services are described here:

- The Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols (GC 4. art. 25/26)
- Movement Statutes
- The principles of the RC/RC
- Resolutions and decisions in RC/RC Conferences
Movement component’s role RFL work

• RFL Strategy 2008 – 2018: roles of Movement Components

• It is the National Society in the country, where RFL is needed, who is lead of the RFL work, if possible. They must decide what action is to be taken during national disasters, and may call on the ICRC where the RFL response is beyond their capacity.

• As coordinator, the CTA (ICRC) decides what action is to be taken in armed conflict or other situations of violence. In other circumstances requiring an international effort it coordinates the activities of National Society tracing services to ensure the most effective possible response to RFL needs.
Movement component’s role RFL work


- **Federation Secretariat** strives, in coordination with the ICRC, to have RFL activities included in National Society development plans and to ensure that disaster preparedness and response plans emphasize the role and importance of RFL.
Situations Causing Family Separation

Conflict and other situations of violence

Natural and man-made disasters

Migration

And situations requiring humanitarian response
Principles guiding the RFL Response

• Rapidly, timely and relevant response

• Accountability

• Do no harm

• Respect for the individual
PROTECTION AND CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

- Protection of the individual is fundamental in our approach when carrying out our work.

- Consent from the enquirer is always collected before handling the case. (According to data protection law)

- It is the sought person who decides if contact should be restored with the enquirer if contact should be restored with the enquirer.
Movement tools for RFL

RFL in emergencies
• RFL pool of specialist → in every continent in the world. (consist of NS and ICRC)
• Phone calls (mobile, satphone)
• RFL Forms: “I am alive”, “I am looking for” “safe and well”
• https://familylinks.icrc.org
• Registration for minors separated with family

RFL in non emergencies:
• RFL website Family Links extranet, FL answers
• RFL forms: Tracing Request, Red Cross Message
"I am alive" & "I am looking for" form
In mass disaster

- No active tracing
- Self registered on https://familylinks.icrc.org
Family links website announcement
“I am alive” & “I am looking for” form
Seperated Children form

REGISTRATION FORM FOR SEPERATED AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

RC No ____________________________

Unaccompanied child ☐ Separated child ☐

- A seperated child is any person under the age of 18 who has been seperated from both parents or from either previous legal or customary primary caregivers, but not necessarily from other relatives. An unaccompanied child is any person who is under the age of 18 and who has been seperated from both parents or from either previous legal or customary primary caregiver and from other relatives.
- If the DMO does not remember the child's address, please note other relevant information, such as descriptions of distinguishing physical characteristics.

1. Identity of the child

Personel ID number (if applicable)

Full name (as expressed locally)

Also known as (nickname)

Name(s) given to the child by others after separation (if applicable)

Date of birth

Place of birth

Ethnic group / tribe

Language(s)

Distinguishing physical characteristics

Father's name

☐ blank ☐ does not know ☐ dead (if dead, please provide details)

Mother's name

☐ blank ☐ does not know ☐ dead (if dead, please provide details)

Other person(s) well known to the child

Address of child before separation (and person with whom he/she lived)

Name of previous caregiver (different)

☐ blank ☐ does not know ☐ dead (if dead, please provide details)

Complete form
Tracing Request

(depends on criteria set up by each NS, avail on FL extranet)

- when the sought person is a close relative or friend
- when you have not heard from the person for an extensive time period
- when you do not know the whereabouts of the sought person, and
- when you have information required to initiate search
- when you have reason to believe that something extraordinary has happened
- when you have reason to believe that the missing is interned, imprisoned or abducted
Red Cross Message

- when you know the exact address of the missing person, **but**
- when normal mailing service/telephone/mobile/net is not working
- when you only send family related content messages (photos ok – not propaganda, politics, religion, military activities, medicines, money etc.)
- when someone is interned, imprisoned, POWs etc., and RC/RC has a special agreement with the management of the institution/and or authorities.
- Message might be censored by authorities (OPEN messages)
What you can do?

On RFL services

• If internet is working ➔ https://familylinks.icrc.org
• Link with Red Cross/Red Crescent for possible red cross services

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AuIL_hYrzQ
Why?

Management of the dead

Dead → identified
Missing → located
Families

Families of victims find resolution!
ICRC Approach

local ownership + local capacity = SUSTAINABILITY

- ensures long-term presence of expertise
- ensures capacity in case of recurrence
- empowers local institutions in all their efforts
Before a disaster strikes...

- Understanding of roles and responsibilities → national guidelines
- Toolkit: practical steps, standardized forms → SOP’s field manual
- Training and dissemination → training modules, programs
- Pre-positioning of equipment and supplies
- Coordination plan (reporting, feedback)
- Communication and information management plan (with actors, media, families)
- Capacity (expertise) development

Established before a catastrophe as part of an emergency preparedness plan
Interview...

- Contact the closest family member as soon as possible
- Explain the situation
- Interview location is different than the location of the forensic identification
- Introduce ourselves as the interviewer
- Place and time must be agreed
- The wish and time for a break
Interview....

- Use present tense
- Avoid personal questions
- Try to answer questions from the family
- Minimize the visit and interview
Hand over to the family or relatives

The dead will be handed over if:

- Has been fully identified through forensic process
- Authorized by the authority
- Death certificate is issued
- In accordance with the local culture and practice
Terima kasih