

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1962)

Rubrik: The Central Tracing Agency

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 26.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

do so, be authorized to meet each other at regular intervals at a place then to be decided upon, each one returning whence he came. The ICRC offers its services to the appropriate authorities to study methods for the realization of these meetings.

By making this appeal, the International Committee of the Red Cross is speaking for men, women and children separated from those closest to them, who no longer intend remaining the innocent victims of disagreements for which they can in no way be held responsible."

THE CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY

The activity of this important service of the ICRC was as intense as ever in 1962. In the course of the year under review, the Central Agency received 44,000 communications and sent out 35,000. It handled 60,500 cases and instituted 15,700 enquiries of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, governmental departments, the Registry Offices of the International Tracing Service and other institutions. Some 42 % of such investigations gave positive results.

The investigations undertaken in many cases concerned the fate of persons posted missing during the last World War and of more recent conflicts, although some enquiries necessitated recourse to files relating to the First World War.

Those cases which refer to the Second World War gave rise to a particularly voluminous exchange of correspondence with countries of Eastern Europe. The Agency continuously receives enquiries about military or civilian persons who were native of these countries and who disappeared whilst hostilities were going on. These requests, coming from the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR and even from individuals, concern Soviet military personnel posted missing during the war or held in captivity, as well as civilians who were deported to Germany.

Sometimes enquiries originating from the USSR refer to Russians who emigrated a long time ago and whose families remaining behind in the Soviet Union desire to renew contact. Enquiries are not all one-way ; people of Russian origin turn to the Agency to obtain news of their relatives who remained in their own country or who were deported to Germany during the war.

In many cases, the information contained in the records of the Central Agency in Geneva, or of the International Tracing Service at Arolsen, gave useful indications to facilitate enquiries. In order the better to bring such investigations to a successful conclusion, the Agency makes enquiries of other information bureaux, above all to those of the National Societies of the Red Cross whose co-operation is highly valued.

In 1962, the USSR Section of the Central Agency handled 700 to 800 cases monthly. The departments dealing with other sectors of Eastern Europe were no less active, particularly the Polish Section. Indeed, the Polish Red Cross, as well as Polish persons residing in their own country or abroad, also turn to the Central Agency to trace missing military personnel, deported civilians or families dispersed during the war or shortly after, and also to obtain captivity or death certificates.

As regards the more recent conflicts, we may mention that the Central Agency has made enquiries of the Chinese Red Cross in Peking concerning American military personnel posted missing in Korea. It has also endeavoured to bring to light the fate of American nationals missing in Laos. The Central Agency's activity was similar in North Africa. Often working under extremely difficult conditions, it made every effort to investigate the fate of missing civilian and military personnel who disappeared during the Algerian conflict. This work was later extended to investigate disappearances which occurred after the cease-fire.

The Agency was also preoccupied by the Sino-Indian conflict. It registered Indian prisoners of war whose names were communicated to it by the detaining power, the Chinese Government.

Events in the Yemen, where an armed uprising broke out following the revolution in the autumn of 1962, also made necessary the opening of enquiries to obtain news of persons who had ceased to communicate with their families.

In the Congo, the ICRC continued its tracing activity which it had begun in the summer of 1960. This work, which was administered from an office in Leopoldville, involved difficult investigations in various parts of the Congo, particularly in Katanga, where the Central Agency has also a correspondent.

With regard to Cuba, numerous Cuban families settled in Florida have appealed to the Central Agency in order to arrange for their relatives who have remained behind to obtain permission to leave Cuba to join them. The Central Agency is endeavouring to bring these cases to the attention of the Cuban Red Cross without, however, having met with any success so far.

It should also be mentioned that when circumstances require, e.g. following the interruption of normal postal services between two or several countries, the Central Agency organizes the transmission of messages between the dispersed members of families through the intermediary of the National Societies. In the course of the past year, the Central Agency has transmitted more than 10,500 such messages. The countries principally concerned were, on the one hand, Indonesia and the Netherlands, and on the other hand Israel and the Arab States. The transmission of messages between Israel and the Arab States involves the Central Agency in a considerable amount of work.

Events throughout the world are unceasingly bringing fresh cases to the Central Agency and it is thanks to the competence of its staff that it is able to reply daily to the innumerable anguished enquiries from people all over the world.

THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

The ITS in Arolsen (near Kassel) is still the main documentary centre relating to persons deported, displaced or missing in Germany and countries occupied by the German armed forces during the Second World War. The administration of the ITS was entrusted to the ICRC under the terms of agreements concluded in Bonn on June 6, 1955 and renewed on May 12, 1960.

The activity of the ITS continued with undiminished intensity in 1962. The number of applications for enquiries and certificates rose to 154,988 as against 129,465 in 1961. These figures (1961 shown in brackets) include :

13,115 individual enquiries (27,272) ;

