

# International Family Tracing Service information sheet

## Purpose of document

This document has been written to provide information about the International Family Tracing service of the British Red Cross, and to address some common questions about what you can expect from us before and after you have opened a tracing enquiry.

## The service

The British Red Cross works together with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to locate people around the world and put them back in contact with their relatives.

The International Family Tracing service assists those who have lost contact with loved ones because of armed conflicts, disasters, migration or other emergencies. This service is available across the United Kingdom and for further information of local contact details, please see the British Red Cross website [redcross.org.uk/trace](https://redcross.org.uk/trace)

## Will I get a letter that I can use in my asylum claim?

We are unable to provide a letter for evidence in asylum proceedings. The International Family Tracing service operates solely to meet its humanitarian objective to locate and restore contact between families. We have limited resources that must be prioritised for those who genuinely wish to find lost loved ones.

Any information from the tracing service should not be relied on for legal proceedings (for example, by being afforded any official status or evidentiary weight), whether by individuals or the public authorities.

Locating family members overseas often involves our sister Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel working in countries that are affected by armed conflict, which means these individuals can be put at risk whilst trying to find missing family members. For this reason, it is important that we only open cases for those individuals who actually wish to find and restore contact with family members.

You will receive two letters after you have opened a tracing case with us and you will not receive any other letters whilst your case is open with us.

- When a case has been opened – This is to acknowledge when the tracing case has started. A tracing case normally starts when you have had your tracing interview and a completed tracing form is either sent overseas, or we have started the process to look for a family member in the United Kingdom.
- When there is a resolution on your case - This is to inform you of the outcome of your tracing enquiry.

### How long will it take to have an appointment?

There is currently a high demand for the service with most offices experiencing significant waiting times for new appointments.

Whilst you are waiting for your appointment, you can search and browse the Family Links Trace the Face webpage. This is a Red Cross/Red Crescent global website of photos of individuals looking for their family. <https://familylinks.icrc.org/europe/en/Pages/Home.aspx>

### After my appointment, how long will it take to find my family?

It is difficult to give an estimate on how long it might take to find your family, as this can depend on a number of factors (including the security situation in the country, access to a particular area in the country, the capacity and demand on the Red Cross and Red Crescent office in that country). However, some tracing cases can take a few months whilst others can take a number of years. We are unable to guarantee that we will be able to locate your family.

### Privacy

We are committed to protecting your personal information being transparent about what we do with it and respecting your right to request access to it. Please see our Privacy notice for more information: <https://www.redcross.org.uk/privacy>

### Mutual expectations

As a person who uses our services, you can expect that the British Red Cross will treat you with respect at all times.

In return the British Red Cross expects that you will show respect to everyone with whom you interact with, when seeking support from British Red Cross staff and volunteers.

For more information, please visit our website at [redcross.org.uk/trace](https://www.redcross.org.uk/trace)

