
Editorial

The present edition of the Review deals exclusively with the issue of missing persons or persons unaccounted for.

Confronted with this issue on a daily basis, the ICRC has resolved to start a process of deliberation on it. The first phase has been devoted to gathering and analysing information on related topics, in close cooperation with academic institutions. The topics reviewed cover protection work and restoration of family links, support for the families of missing persons, collection and management of personal data, and mechanisms for handling cases of missing persons. The Review publishes herewith a selection of articles on the missing persons issue, some of which have been prepared for the deliberation process.

In February 2003, the ICRC is holding an International Conference on this issue, bringing together a wide array of governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, research institutions and individual experts. The aim of the Conference is to heighten awareness of the tragedy of people unaccounted for as a result of armed conflict or internal violence and the anguish of their families. The Conference should, however, also be of direct use to political and humanitarian players working in such situations and give them tools for action and communication. It will hopefully help to ensure greater accountability of the authorities for resolving the problem of missing persons, to assist the families more effectively and to prevent further disappearances.

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