

What it Means to Locate Lost Family Members

The Case of the Holocaust Survivors

In the case of victims of Nazi persecution, six million people perished. Millions were displaced and became refugees in Europe, America, China, Australia and Africa despite the many immigration restrictions, bureaucratic barriers and antisemitism that they faced. Survivors of the Holocaust took many years just to regain physical and emotional strength. Their experience became part of their identity and the pain and trauma of the Holocaust remain very real in their lives.

Their families and communities were almost wiped out in Europe. Those who are alive were dispersed all over the world. Those who perished tragically in death and concentration camps have only been commemorated officially since 2001, after more than 50 years. The exercise of tracing their roots and their families is a painful one.

➔ After more than 50 years, family members are still tracing the whereabouts of their relatives

Agencies which provide services for families of Holocaust victims to trace family members:

- a) www.remember.org
- b) www.redcross.org/services/intl/holotracer/

Agencies to contact

www.redcross.org.uk/trace

Contact your local British Red Cross office (see your local telephone directory for details)

Telephone: 0203 541 3554
and ask for the International Tracing Service Department
<http://www.familylinks.icrc.org/>

International Tracing Service (UK)
Cranmer House
29 Brixton Road

Swindon
Email: isuk@family.vfree.com

The Salvation Army
Family Tracing Service
1 Newington Causeway
London SE1 6BN
Telephone: 020-7367 4747
www.salvationarmy.org.uk/familytracing

What procedures does Jetmir have to go through to locate his family?



Jetmir Gjeta was separated from his family in Kosovo in 1999 at the age of 13. He borrowed money from his uncle to pay for his passage to the UK in 2000. He has never seen his family or heard of their whereabouts since he lost sight of them. He has just finished college, and is waiting for a decision from the Home Office on whether he will obtain Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. Refugees who have been given an Exceptional Leave to Remain Status (now known as Humanitarian Protection), have their status reviewed when they turn 18.

Important Considerations

It isn't only the question of how to locate family members, but for the survivors of genocidal situations, it is also a question of why, who, where and when. It is important for families to find out what happened to their loved ones, and agencies dealing with such matters have to be sensitive to the needs and emotions of the survivors and their families. How much does it cost to locate one's family? How easy and how accessible are the procedures and services for refugees, especially for children? Is there adequate staff working to assist in this exercise and how much training have they received?