

Task of the International Tracing Service

1. The sole idea behind the creation of the International Tracing Service was to help tracing missing persons from Allied countries and members of their families by registering them and attempting to reunite them. This has remained the guiding principle for all of the organizations which have directed the work of the International Tracing Service in the past 40 years.

2. These tasks are set out in the Bonn Agreements of 1955 as follows:

The International Tracing Service was established for the purpose of tracing missing persons and collecting, classifying, preserving and rendering accessible to directly concerned individuals, the documents relating to Germans and non-Germans who were interned in National-Socialist concentration or labour camps, or to non-Germans, who were displaced as a result of the Second World War.

3. The activities of the International Tracing Service continue to be guided exclusively by humanitarian concerns. The preamble to the Agreement on the Relations between the International Commission for the International Tracing Service and the International Committee of the Red Cross contains the following:

"Desiring that the future operations of the International Tracing Service shall be conducted in such a way that the information contained in the archives of the International Tracing Service shall, as hitherto, be freely available to directly concerned persons and authorities, for humanitarian purposes, ..."

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