

given as an example (form of request for enquiries relative to military personnel reported missing or captured).

When an enquiry is addressed to a civilian, the message form shown in Appendix C. should be used.

Transmission of family messages

Though prisoners of war and civilian internees have the right to exchange mail with their families, this is rarely the case for civilians **not** interned wishing to correspond with their relations who are also **not** interned, but from whom they have been separated as a result of military or political events which have led to a break in postal communications.

It would be inhuman to leave such persons deprived of news of their kith and kin.

National Societies therefore consider it their duty, whenever circumstances permit, to undertake the transmission of family messages, by making use of the form recommended by the ICRC (see Appendix C).

Headings can be translated into the languages used.

The National Society must, if required, have a sufficient number of such forms printed and supply them to its local branches.

Enquirers should fill in message forms at the central or local headquarters of the National Society. Care should be taken that **the text of the message is of a strictly personal and family character, set forth clearly, without allusion to military or political matters, otherwise it is likely that the message will be held by the censors of the sender's or of the addressee's country.**

If, because of current events, the National Society of the country of despatch has no possibility of routing messages to their destinations, it should send them in folders grouped together to the

ICRC which will see that they reach the National Society of the country of destination.

The latter, after getting in touch with the recipients and asking them to complete the reverse side of the form reserved for replies, will be responsible for returning these «reply messages» to the ICRC which will send them back to the enquirer through the National Society.

Important remark

Should it not be possible to reach the addressee, the National Society of the country of destination will have to open an enquiry on its own account in order to discover his new place of residence, or to obtain information concerning his hospitalization or possible death. The result of the enquiry will be put on the reverse side of the message form which will be returned to the National Society of the country of origin through the intermediary of the ICRC.

In view of the fact that the transmission of messages often results in the opening of enquiries into the fate of the addressee, the National Society should entrust its tracing service with centralizing, examining and routing these messages.

As we have already mentioned on page 23, the use of the family message form is recommended when an enquiry should be addressed to private individuals. The tracing service can complete it in the following manner:

Under the heading «enquirer» — indicate the enquirer's name and address, adding: «through the tracing service of . . .»

In the space for the message — (for example) «We are in excellent health but worried about you. Are you still living at the same address? Will you have to return to hospital?»

Under the heading «addressee» — the name and address of the person to whom this «enquiry message» is addressed.

The addressee can reply on the reverse side of the form and the tracing service will thus be in possession of a handwritten reply (written by the person being traced in his own handwriting) which will thus reassure the enquirer.