

## Draft Minimum Standard Dataset for the Search of Missing Migrants

### Call for comments

The Missing Persons Project, launched in 2018 by the ICRC, is currently developing a **Minimum Standard Dataset for the Search of Missing Migrants**.

We invite all interested parties to submit their written comments on this dataset.

All submissions:

- should be submitted electronically to this dedicated email address: [missingpersonsproject@icrc.org](mailto:missingpersonsproject@icrc.org)
- should have, in the subject line of the email: **Minimum Standard Dataset for the Search of Missing Migrants – comments**
- should be in a single document of no more than two pages, and indicate exactly which paragraphs the comments pertain to
- must be in English, French, Spanish, Arabic or Russian.

### Deadline

- Comments must be submitted by 30 November 2020.

### About the ICRC Missing Persons Project ([leaflet](#) and [video](#))

*The Central Tracing Agency of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a longstanding mandate and 150 years of operational experience in tracing missing persons and reconnecting separated families. Convinced that a worldwide joining of forces is required to improve the global response to the tragedy of missing persons and their relatives, the ICRC launched the Missing Persons Project in 2018. In partnership with other actors, this initiative seeks to bring together experts, family representatives and other key stakeholders from around the world in order to build consensus on best practices, promote existing technical standards and develop new ones, where needed.*

ICRC Missing Persons Project

# Minimum Standard Dataset for the search of Missing Migrants

Draft 3 -Including proposals and comments discussed  
during Tunis Experts Meeting 26-27 February.

# Minimum Standard Dataset for the Search of Missing Migrants (MM)

## Background:

In May of 2018, the ICRC Missing Persons Project, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF), convened a meeting of practitioners from around the world on the topic of missing migrants in Antigua, Guatemala. Participants were asked to identify areas in which the development of technical guidance would help improve the response. The need to harmonize data collection by way of a standardized data set was among three recommendations agreed upon at the meeting. Participants noted that different actors engaged with families of missing migrants on the basis of different mandates and objectives. As clarifying the fate and whereabouts of the missing migrant ought to be a shared objective for all actors, participants recommended to formulate a “minimum” set of data that should be collected by all actors notwithstanding “secondary” data sets in line with specific mandates, e.g. pursuing accountability or determining broader family needs.

The below is a first draft of such a data set that was developed by the ICRC Missing Persons Project and discussed and adapted at an expert meeting in Tunis in February of 2020.

## Introduction

One of the most significant obstacles to the effective search for missing migrants is the lack of compatibility of data gathered by different actors. This data set is intended as a means to harmonize such efforts by establishing a shared number of data- fields required for the search of a missing migrant, being alive or dead.

It is a basis upon which different organizations/ authorities may contextualize their data collection according to their needs, resources and mandate. As such, the dataset can serve either as a point of reference for actors with existing data collection efforts to ensure that these are compatible with others, or as the core content of a new form.

These data fields can be used for interviews not only of family members of missing migrants but also co-travelers, survivors of events leading to disappearance, and others with potential knowledge of where, when and how a migrant went missing. It should not be assumed that any one person may have the answers to all questions in this document. Rather, interviews with different persons might ultimately complement information on a given case.

Much of the information sought in this data set is highly sensitive personal data. This sensitivity is compounded by a migratory context of increasing securitization of borders. Data protection legal principles, and often national and regional laws, require that individuals who are providing data are given information on its intended use of this data prior to its collection. As requirements can differ depending on context and who collects, this data set provides general guidance in the form of a) a set of principles on data

protection and b) a checklist with minimum elements for an information notice (see Annex 1). These will need to be adapted according to context.

## Data qualifying the interview

This section may be filled in by the interviewer before the interview.

Data field name	Data field description/explanation	Sample input
Interview unique number / code	<i>The form should have a unique code for tracking purposes. This may be in the form of letters and numbers, bar codes or other E-supported options.</i>	
Owner of the interview:	<i>Name of organization</i>	
Storage location:	<i>Physical archive and/or digital storage location</i>	
Date of interview	<i>DD/MM/YYYY.</i>	
Place of the interview	<i>Country, region, city, village, precise location, as available.</i>	
Interviewer(s)	<i>Name(s), Title(s), Organization(s) or authority(ies).</i>	
Language(s) of the interview		
Interpreter	<i>Name, Title, Organization or authority.</i>	

## Interviewee

Full name in original language	<i>If possible, as it appears on official documents</i>	
Relationship with the MM	<i>I am the ..... of the missing migrant (father, mother, brother....); I traveled with the MM from... to.... I am a member of his community.</i>	
Preferred way to contact the interviewee, and alternatives.	<i>Full contact address Telephone(s) Email Facebook, Instagram, other social media</i>	

Other person(s) present during the interview	<i>Name, relationship with the MM, means of contact.</i>	
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## Data to be collected during the interview

### 1. Missing Migrant Personal Data

#### Names of the Missing Migrant

Full name in original language	<i>If possible, as it appears on official documents</i>	
Full name transliteration in working language	<i>For example, in English, Spanish, Arabic...</i>	
Also known as	<i>Nicknames, aliases used for the purpose of migration, and any other names used to address the MM?</i>	

#### Ethnic origin/ family lineage

Ethnic origin	<i>For example: Caucasian, black African/American, Asian, Amerindian...</i>	
Tribe /clan / sub clan	<i>record names of tribes, clans and sub clans (where applicable ).</i>	

#### Father's name

Father's full name	<i>If possible, as it appears on official documents</i>	
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#### Mother's name

Mother's full name	<i>If possible, as it appears on official documents</i>	
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#### Date of birth / Age

The date of birth should be collected, in particular the year of birth. Only where this is not available should an approximate age be indicated.

Date of birth	<i>DD/MM/YYYY If unsure indicate approximate current age</i>	
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## Place of birth

Place of birth	<i>Country, region, city, village</i>	
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## Nationality

Nationality	<i>If more than one, please use additional fields</i>	
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## Sex

Male/Female/Other/Unknown		
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## Last place of residence

Last place of residence prior to migration	<i>Country, region, city, village, precise location, as available.</i>	
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## Means of communication used by the MM

Migrants use a variety of means of communication with their families and others and increasingly so are using mobile devices and social media. This information may assist in their search.

How does/did the MM communicate with his family or friends?	<i>Please indicate <b>all known means of communication used by the MM</b> including phone numbers, email addresses, handle and alias used in different social media</i>	
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## 2. Information on the Migratory Route and on the Circumstances of disappearance

### Migratory Route

Which was the MM desired place of destination?	<i>Country, region, city, village, precise location, as available.</i>	
Where was he heading before the loss of contact?	<i>Country, region, city, village, precise location, as available.</i>	
Do you have information about the route, places, cities, ... through which the MM was going to reach his/her destination?	<i>Please provide details.</i>	
With whom was the MM traveling?	<i>Name(s)/sex/relationship/contact details as available.</i>	

### Details of the last contact

Date of the last contact with the MM	<i>DD/MM/YY. If approximate indicate a range of values.</i>	
Place where the MM was last contacted	<i>Country, region, city, village, precise location, as available.</i>	
Last person the MM was in contact with	<i>Name, relationship with the MM, contact details.</i>	
Nature of the last contact	<i>The last contact was a physical meeting, a phone conversation, a social network discussion or message. Register as many details as possible (phone numbers, accounts, etc.,).</i>	
Details given during the last contact which could help in the search	<i>Plans of the MM, any problem he/she could have had.</i>	



## Circumstances of disappearance

*[sample answers are provided to illustrate the notion of event and secondary event]*

Date and time of disappearance	<i>(DD/MM/YYYY) and time. If approximate indicate a range of values.</i>	<i>12 January 2020</i>
Place of disappearance	<i>Country, region, city, village, precise location, as available.</i>	<i>Mexico USA border</i>
Event or circumstances which believed to have led to the disappearance of the MM.	<i>This could be an accident, arrest, shipwreck etc.  Describe in detail what happened</i>	<i>The MM was attempting to cross the border with a group of 10 people. He called his mother on January 12 and said "I will call you when I reach the USA"</i>
Other persons related to this event or these circumstances (victims, survivors, witnesses...)	<i>Names, relationship with the MM, contact details if available.</i>	<i>none</i>
Other related events (secondary events)	<i>Events that may have had a direct or indirect connection to the disappearance. Sometimes it is inferred by context. It may complement the main event or even be a second version of what happened.  Describe: place, date, and details of what happened.  This can be information provided by the interviewee or by the interviewer based on other sources.</i>	<i>On January 14th 2020, a migrant detained by the Border Patrol in Texas stated he was travelling with other people and suddenly were surrounded by gunmen. He was the only one able to escape. The others (9 people) were forced into vehicles.</i>
Other persons related to this secondary event or circumstances (victims, survivors, witnesses...)	<i>Names, relationship with the MM, contact details if available.</i>	
Relatives of the MM who may have disappeared during the same events / circumstances.	<i>Names, relationship with the MM</i>	
Why does the interviewee think that the disappearance of the MM is related to the incident?	<i>Explain</i>	

### Additional information that could help the search

Other persons able to supply with additional information on the possible fate or whereabouts of the MM.	<i>Name, relationship with the MM, contact details as available.</i>	
Any public information or information from third parties available (that the MM could be in a certain place, wounded, detained, dead...).	<i>Describe. Source of information.</i>	
Whether the disappearance of the MM has been reported elsewhere.	Y/N <i>If yes, whom to/when/any outcome?</i>	

Based on the above information **the interviewer** should identify an initial search area where possible:

Based on the information collected above, where and how should the search start; what could be the initial search area?		
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### 3. Physical description

#### General description

What is the missing person's general appearance?	<i>Built, approximate height, weight, color of the hair or skin.... Ask if a picture is available to facilitate description.</i>	
What are his/her specific features?		
Can you give a copy of a picture of the MM?		

#### Marks on the skin

Does the MM have marks on her/ his skin (scars, tattoos, birth marks, moles, earrings or perforations...)?	Y/N. <i>If Yes, describe body part(s) concerned. Description and/or picture or drawing.</i>	
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#### Medical information

Does the MM have specific features which could come from injuries or surgical interventions?, ...	Y/N <i>Body part(s) concerned Description and/or picture if available.</i> Features could include broken bones, amputations, deformities, medical aids or implants.	
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#### Dental information

Does the MM have specific features related to her/his teeth?	Y/N <i>Teeth concerned. Description and/or picture if available.</i> Features could include missing teeth, a golden	
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	tooth, a gap or space between teeth, discoloration, denture, ornamentation	
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## Medical records and X-Ray

Are medical records of the MM available? If yes, where can they be found?	Y/N. <i>Location.</i> <i>Explain to interviewees that families should keep such records carefully for future reference.</i>	
Are dental records of the MM available? If yes, where can they be found?	Y/N. <i>Location.</i>	

## Fingerprints

Note that fingerprints might be collected during the transit of the migrant (for example in shelters).

Do you know if fingerprints of the MM are available? If yes, where can they be found?	Y/N. <i>Location. For example: in an official database; on a document (identity document, contract...).</i>	
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## DNA sample

Do you know if there is a DNA sample of the MM available? If yes, where can it be found?	Y/N. <i>A DNA sample is a biological sample (for example a saliva swap, a drop of blood, a hair, a baby tooth) which contains the DNA of the missing migrant or of a relative and which can assist in the identification of the missing person.</i>	
Does the MM have family members who could provide a DNA sample in case of need?	<i>Make a list of the closest blood relatives of the MM who could be available (mother, father, children,</i>	

	<i>brother, sister). The list should include the full name, degree of kinship, and contact details.</i>	
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## 4. Personal effects

### Clothing worn by the MM

The value of clothing as a possible identifier may differ, including according to context or length of migratory journey.

Describe any garment / piece of clothing the MM was always wearing, and which he/she could have worn when he/she disappeared?	<i>type, color, brand, size, condition, etc.</i>	
Can you provide a picture of this item?	Y/N	

### Personal belongings

Information on specific personal belongings, like watch, ring, jewelry, wallet, photos, eyeglasses, key holder, personal documents such as driving license or UNHCR ID card... can help the identification of a person.

Describe any specific personal items the MM may have carried when he/she disappeared?		
Can you provide a picture of this item?	Y/N	

*[the below sections on photographs and documents could form part of a user guide /instructions for this data set]*

## Photographs

**Photographs of the missing person are valuable** for the search. A photograph will often tell more than a long description. A picture may also reveal background details on the possible whereabouts of the MM.

- It can be selfies sent or posted by the MM which can be shared digitally.
- Verify that the photograph corresponds to the MM.
- If a paper photograph, the original should stay with the family, the interviewer should take a picture.
- The photograph should be as recent and as clear as possible.
- Photographs of clothes, personal effects, tattoos, scars, documents, etc, are also useful.
- The interviewee may object to the use/publishing/sharing of photos of the MM.

## Official documents

The interviewee may provide official documents concerning the MM which can be used to corroborate information, and which may contain fingerprints or photographs.

Document 1	Type, description, ask a copy (photograph).
Document 2	Type, description, ask a copy (photograph).
Etc.	

## ANNEX 1

### DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES AND INFORMATION NOTICE

#### **Annex to the minimum data set for missing migrants**

*[This annex was developed to complement the minimum data set, following discussions during the expert meeting in Tunis. It heavily relies on the ICRC Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action (thus not explicitly including data transfers to authorities) as well as on common practices of actors involved in the processing of personal data.]*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of a dataset on the minimum information to be collected to start a search for missing migrants calls for an analysis of basic data protection principles. The rights of those individuals (data subjects) whose personal data is being collected, including the information they should receive in relation to the data collection and processing, also need to be considered when collecting personal data.

Data protection laws and practice limit the processing of personal data of data subjects in order to protect their individual rights. An individual's right to personal data protection is not absolute however and should be considered in relation to the overall objective of protecting human dignity and be balanced with other fundamental rights and freedoms.

The data processing principles below do not replace obligations deriving from national and international legislation. The principles, which are based on recognized best practices and standards, should be applied without prejudice to these rules as well as internal data protection policy or rules, and contractual commitments and any other relevant applicable rules.

International organizations may have privileges and immunities (allowing them to perform their mandate attributed by the community of states under international law in full independence). NGOs (and law enforcement agencies/authorities) will be subject to the legislation of the country in which they operate.

#### **DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES**

##### **1. The principle of the fairness and lawfulness of processing**

Personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. The lawfulness of processing requires a lawful basis for processing operations to take place. Whilst consent is the most popular lawful basis for personal data processing, it will not be an appropriate basis when collecting personal data of missing persons or vulnerable persons who cannot provide consent that is "freely-given". Other lawful bases such as public interest or vital interest may therefore need to be relied on.

##### **2. The principle of transparency**

This principle requires that at least a minimum amount of information on the processing is shared with the data subject at the moment of collection.



## **2. The purpose limitation principle**

At the time of collecting the data, the specific and legitimate purpose for which data are processed needs to be determined and be provided explicitly to the data subject.

## **3. The principle of data minimization**

This principle seeks to ensure that only the minimum amount of personal data is processed to achieve the objective and purposes of the processing. The data handled should be adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purposes for which they are collected and processed

## **4. The principle of storage limitation**

Personal data should be retained for defined periods and deleted when they are no longer necessary for the purposes for which they were collected. Personal Data may however be retained if they are needed for legitimate historical, statistical, or scientific purposes.

## **5. The principle of data quality**

Personal data should be as accurate and up to date as possible.

## **6. The principle of security**

This principle seeks to ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to protect the personal data.

## **7. The principle of accountability**

This principle embodies the responsibility of data controllers to account for and be able to demonstrate that adequate and proportionate measures have been undertaken to ensure compliance.

## **INFORMATION NOTICE CHECKLIST**

As a minimum, data subjects are entitled to receive the following information:

- Mandate of the institution collecting the data
- For how long the information will be stored
- the identity of the data controller
- the specific purpose for processing of personal data
- a contact (e.g. Staff in Charge) and their contact details in case of questions/requests/complaints concerning the processing of personal data
- with whom the data may be shared externally
- data subject rights, including access to personal data, correction of inaccurate personal data, erasure of personal data, objection to the processing of personal data
- if applicable, whether data provision is a statutory / contractual requirement, which means that the data is processed on the legal basis of compliance with the law or with a contract

As to the communication of such information:

- it may be given orally and/or in writing
- it should be provided in a transparent way directly to the data subject. If this is not possible attempts to communicate by other means should be made (e.g. distribution of leaflets or publication of an information notice).

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