

International Committee of the Red Cross

Archives and Information Management Division

Consultation of Agency archives

This procedure relates to the Tracing Agency archives as defined in the *Rules governing access to the archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross* of 2 March 2017, in particular in Section I, Article 2 (c), which refers to “general documents, individual and event records, card files, lists of names produced or received, in whatever format, by the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency in the course of its work.”

It defines the consultation terms of these archives which, according to the above mentioned Rules under Section II, Article 5.3(c), are protected for a period of 70 years.

Period of protection

For general documents, the relevant dates are those of the start and end of the ICRC's action. These documents are opened to the public 70 years after the date on which the ICRC's action ended.

For card files, lists and individual files, the key dates are the documents' outside dates. An individual file may be consulted 70 years after the date of the last document contained in it.

In the C TV sous-fonds, containing Travel Documents (1945-1993), it is not possible to see how many travel documents are open to the general public (delegations were allocated the numbers in batches, so their dates are mixed up). The 70-year closure period will therefore run from the date of the particular document in question.

The outside dates of a series or sous-fonds are those of the start and end of the ICRC's action. A detailed inventory of the series or sous-fonds will show whether or not it contains card files, lists or individual files whose dates go beyond the end date. If so, these documents – dating back less than 70 years – may not be consulted. The ICRC archivist will decide on exceptions.

Consultation terms

Access to the general files contained in the Agency's series or sous-fonds is provided by the general public archives service, which will tell users whether there exists a summary or detailed inventory for the files in question.

Lists, personal information and individual files are not made available in the reading room unless a detailed inventory makes it possible to select specific documents.

Card files are not made directly available to the public.

In the case of enquiries about a particular individual, searches (including in the C TV (Travel Documents) sous-fonds) are carried out by Agency archivists. Only information dating back more than 70 years may be consulted. Information about the person actually requesting the information is given without delay.

Brigitte Troyon

Head of the Archives and Information Management Division

Geneva, 1 April 2017

CIM_AIM 17/5 BTO/MHN