The families of missing persons have both the right of families to know the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones is therefore essential that the authorities pursue all avenues of inquiry in the search for the missing person until clear and precise information is obtained about their whereabouts or what happened to them.

When circumstances are such that whether their family member is alive or dead, they lose their life’s work of perpetual ambiguity. Therefore, it is crucial for families to have proof of death and all the facts about what happened to their loved ones. This will allow the families to start to grieve. The human remains must be returned to the family, so that they can be buried in accordance with the rites and rituals dictated by their cultural, social and religious traditions. In order to provide an effective response and assistance to families, the authorities must establish and implement effective tracing and search mechanisms. Interinstitutional coordination is also required at both the national and regional levels to ensure the smooth flow of information between the authorities and the institutions concerned. Regular and effective communication must be established and maintained with the families throughout the search process, so that they can make informed decisions.

In cases in which the missing persons have died, it is crucial for families to have proof of death and all the facts about what happened to their loved ones. This will allow the families to start to grieve. The human remains must be returned to the family, so that they can be buried in accordance with the rites and rituals dictated by their cultural, social and religious traditions.

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The ICRC provides guidance and tools related to strengthening institutional capacities to develop the mechanisms necessary to search for missing persons, identify deceased persons, and develop registers containing the information necessary for search and missing persons.

The process of identification of deceased persons is a crucial step in the effort to give families closure and provide information about their loved ones. It is essential that families are granted a specific legal status, allowing them to exercise their rights, such as property ownership, the custody of children, getting access to inheritance or starting a new life, among other challenges.

In view of the complexity of the search, extortion, and forensic analysis procedures, the ICRC provides the authorities and institutions with computer software that facilitates the identification of bodies. It includes the data that is collected, organized, stored, used, and shared throughout the process and the information supplied by families and friends.

Search procedures generate a huge amount of information which must be systematically to facilitate the task of tracing missing persons and identification of bodies. To include the data that is collected, organized, stored, used, and shared throughout the process and the information supplied by families and friends.

As large a part of the information used to search for unidentified missing persons comes from different local, regional, and national entities, it is essential to establish mechanisms for the coordination, centralization, and exchange of information on the searching, identification, and transfer of bodies.

The ICRC works with authorities to strengthen their information management capacities and promote the standardization and implementation of unified data-gathering protocols and systems at the local and regional levels. To achieve this, the ICRC coordinates and exchanges with the authorities and institutions concerned by the issue, as well as the public at large, about the immense suffering caused by the uncertainty and humanitarian consequences resulting when a loved one goes missing.

The ICRC promotes the creation of mechanisms at the national level, as well as the development of legislation and regulations addressing the protection of missing persons and the issuance of a certificate of absence, which would protect the rights and interests of families of missing persons and their dependents. These mechanisms allow family members to exercise their rights without having to do their loved one’s rights, and of national legal instruments that acknowledge the problem and provide for an appropriate response to meet their needs. In this regard, the ICRC promotes the establishment of a legal status of the missing persons and the issuance of a certificate of absence, which would protect the rights and interests of families of missing persons and their dependents. These mechanisms allow family members to exercise their rights without having to do their loved one’s rights, and of national legal instruments that acknowledge the problem and provide for an appropriate response to meet their needs. In this regard, the ICRC promotes the establishment of a legal status of the missing persons and the issuance of a certificate of absence, which would protect the rights and interests of families of missing persons and their dependents.

The authorities must have legal frameworks in place that enable family members to make an application for a search to be undertaken, provide the information they have and be kept properly informed about the progress and results of the search.

They must also implement mechanisms that allow families to apply for and receive the support they require to meet needs arising from the disappearance of a loved one.

To this end, the ICRC promotes the adoption and implementation of legislation and regulations on the protection of missing persons and their families, and of national legal instruments that acknowledge the problem and provide for an appropriate response to meet their needs. In this regard, the ICRC promotes the establishment of a legal status of the missing persons and the issuance of a certificate of absence, which would protect the rights and interests of families of missing persons and their dependents.

The suffering of the families is compounded by the numerous legal obstacles they face. They often have to wait years before the absence of a missing person is officially recognized. During that time, they have trouble exercising certain rights, such as property ownership, the custody of children, getting access to inheritance or starting a new life, among other challenges.

In certain cases, it may also support them with legal assistance for their return profoundly and negatively affects the family. In some cases, the ICRC supports the families of missing persons during the search and identification process, offering them psychological support and assistance in their personal processes.

Additionally, in various contexts the ICRC works to establish universal support to respond to different types of needs of the families, including socio-economic, psychological, legal, and administrative needs, as well as gaining societal recognition of their plight and support to preserve the memory of the missing relative.