

## Red Cross Tracing and Refugee Services

One of the unique services offered by the Worldwide Red Cross Movement is the tracing and reuniting of thousands of families across the world who are separated as a result of war and natural disasters. The Red Cross Tracing Service in Australia is part of a global tracing network that operates in 181 countries to exchange family news and to assist people to find out what has happened to their missing loved ones. Services include International Disaster Enquiries, Tracing Requests, Red Cross Messages, Health and Welfare Reports, Travel Documents and Certificates of Captivity.

During 2003-2004, the Australian Red Cross tracing service helped 1,404 individuals and families to re-establish contact with missing relatives.

### **Red Cross Response - Tracing Missing Relatives in affected areas**

As a result of the strongest earthquake in 40 years and massive tidal waves in the Bay of Bengal, tens of thousands of people have died, gone missing or have been separated from their relatives. Families all over the world have lost contact and have been left without news of their loved ones in the region.

As part of a global response to this devastating disaster and in an effort to help those seeking information about their relatives Red Cross has sent staff to the affected areas to help separated relatives find each other.

The immediate priority was to help those in the affected areas to make contact with family members outside of the area. Mobile and satellite phones have been used wherever possible to so that victims could let their loved ones know they were alive safe and well.

Hang Vo, an Australian Red Cross Tracing Delegate went to Sri Lanka to work with the Sri Lanka Red Cross to help the victims desperate to find and be reunited with their family members.

### **Restoring Family Links Website**

The ICRC also launched its' "Restoring Family Links" website ([www.familylinks.icrc.org](http://www.familylinks.icrc.org)). The website aims to:

1. enable people in disaster areas to register themselves to inform their relatives that they are alive and well
2. enable people in disaster areas and elsewhere around the world to register relatives about whom they are seeking information

Over 3000 people have registered on the Family Links website to date.

#### Activity:

You are from an Acinese family now living in Malaysia. Since the Tsunami, you have had no contact with your family members who remained in Aceh. In recent days you have had contact with some Red cross workers who have taken all your details and the details of your relatives. Describe in a journal entry, your thoughts since the Tsunami hit, the process of meeting Red Cross workers and what happens next....



Tracing delegate Hang Vo and Sri Lankan Red Cross volunteer, Synthia, take a tracing request from a tsunamis affected man who is searching for his missing daughter.