

## Action Sheet 9

# Family Unity



### Key message

The family is a fundamental social unit which is entitled to special respect and protection. The family is also an important source of protection in itself. It unites individuals and provides important physical, social, legal, material and emotional stability and support to its members, in particular for children. Efforts aimed at preserving the unity of the family can prevent exposure to various risks and help individuals and communities rebuild their lives and minimize the adverse effects of displacement.

The **Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children** provide guidance on preventing family separation, undertaking family tracing and reunification, and ensuring adequate care arrangements for unaccompanied children pending reunification. The Principles are available from [www.refworld.org](http://www.refworld.org). This chapter provides basic guidance but does not replace or duplicate the Principles, which should be implemented in all emergencies.

## 1. What is a family?

There is no universally accepted definition of the family and the meaning of the term may differ from one country to another. In some cultures the term refers to parents and their children only; in others it includes a larger group of extended family members. It is important to understand and respect such differences and **adopt a working definition that suits the context**.

- Use a **practical, flexible and comprehensive** definition that extends beyond the nuclear family in order to include relationships of social, emotional or material dependency. In some cases, this may include individuals who are not blood relatives.
- Use **appropriate and realistic criteria** relating to documents and other evidence that may be required to demonstrate a family connection. Internally displaced persons have often lost personal documents and alternative methods may need to be developed to confirm family connections.
- Use a **broad definition of terms** such as “spouse” and “dependent child”. As an example:
  - “Spouse” should not be restricted to persons in legal unions only but extend to those who are engaged, have entered into a customary marriage, or have formed a household (cohabitation/common law couples). It may also include same sex partnerships and spouses in a polygamous marriage.
  - A dependent child is normally defined as any unmarried child under the age of 18. However, in some cases, children over 18 could be included, for instance if they remain dependent upon and continue to share a household with their parents. No distinction should be made between children born in and outside of marriage.

## 2. Family separation in the context of internal displacement

Families and communities are frequently torn apart as a result of forced displacement. Such separation can occur deliberately, for instance where parents entrust the care of their children to others, often in the belief it will be in their best interests, or accidentally, including during flight or when seeking shelter and assistance in large or crowded camps, settlements and urban areas. Internally displaced persons are often forced to flee on short notice and family members, in particular young children, older relatives or persons with disabilities, may be left behind or become separated on the way.

Separation can also occur as a result of well-meaning but ill-conceived or even unlawful, humanitarian interventions. By way of example, evacuating children or facilitating adoption arrangements can lead to forced and permanent separation of children from their parents. Providing them with shelter and other assistance without making arrangements for their parents or care-givers can also lead to separation. Humanitarian actors must always act to ensure that children are not separated from their parents against their will or against their best interest.<sup>1</sup>

Separation from family members and lack of knowledge about the fate and whereabouts of loved ones can give rise to grief, anxiety and depression. It can also expose individuals to various, but different, protection risks depending on their age, gender and specific needs:

- **Women and girls** often suffer as a result of discrimination and lack of access to land, shelter, public services or documentation in their own name. Separation may also place them at increased risk of various forms of gender-based violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation.
- **Men and boys** are often at increased risk of harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, and/or forced recruitment into armed forces or groups.
- **Girls and boys** face a wide range of protection risks as a result of separation from their families or caregivers, including neglect, abuse and exploitation, forced labour, slavery, trafficking, limited access to education, and forcible recruitment into armed forces or groups.
- **Older persons**, which may have limited ability to move or secure a livelihood, may be exposed to hunger or disease, and in some cases may suffer abuse and exploitation.
- **Persons with disabilities** may face obstacles when trying to move, seeking shelter, or accessing assistance and services, including health care.

#### Did you know that...

- A **child** is any person under the age of 18, unless majority is attained earlier under national law.
- A **separated child** is any child that has been separated from both parents, or from other legal or customary primary care giver, but not necessarily from other relatives.
- An **unaccompanied child** is any child that has been separated from both parents and other relatives and that is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.
- An **orphan** is a child whose parents, both mother and father, are deceased. This requires careful verification and must never be assumed. Referring to a child as “orphan” should be avoided until the fate of his or her parents, and other legal or customary primary care givers, has been conclusively determined.

Separated family members can face a number of obstacles when trying to trace and reunite with their families. Factors such as ongoing conflict and insecurity, collapse of institutions and infrastructure, lack of freedom of movement and means of communication, and responsibility toward other family members, can limit the ability to search for and unite with separated family members. Young children, older persons and persons with disabilities face particular obstacles in this regard. In some cases, separated family members may find themselves on different sides of a frontline or a border, which can make tracing and reunification very difficult.

### 3. Preventing and responding to family separation

Separated families and communities usually make significant efforts to find and reunite lost family members and such efforts should be supported where possible. Local and national authorities, as well as human rights and humanitarian actors, also play an important role in preventing and responding to family separation. Such activities can be divided into four categories:

<sup>1</sup> See reference to best interests of the child and Best Interest Determination (BID) Procedures under section 3 of this chapter.

- **Prevention** (*to be undertaken at all times*)
- **Identification, registration and documentation** (*to be undertaken from the beginning of displacement and continue until displacement has come to an end*)
- **Tracing, verification and reunification** (*to be undertaken by specialized agencies only*)
- **Temporary assistance and/or alternative care arrangements** (*to be provided if and as required*)

Several key principles should guide all efforts to prevent family separation and ensure family unity, in particular in cases involving children.

- **Respect for human rights, including the principle of family unity** — All men and women have the right to found a family and have their right to respect for the family observed. This requires efforts to prevent separation and to ensure rapid tracing and reunification in case it occurs, even in times of conflict and displacement.
- **Principle of non-discrimination** – Any direct or indirect discrimination, for instance on the basis of age, gender, ethnic or linguistic background, political opinion, birth or other status, including that of being displaced, is prohibited. In order to ensure full and equal access to assistance and services, efforts must however be made to meet any specific needs, including those of women and girls.
- **Participation, including that of children** – Separated family members should be informed about the relevant procedures and kept updated about any progress made. Their informed consent should be sought for the sharing of personal information and for reunification to take place. The child’s right to participation should also be respected and his/her opinion given due weight, taking into account the child’s age and maturity. Children may need to be interviewed by trained staff with experience of working with children.
- **Best interests of the child** —. The principle arising from Article 3 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, that “*the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration*”, should be applied in a systematic manner in any action that affects a child and must permeate both, actions of general character, such as assessments, planning or budget allocations, and actions affecting individual children. In situations of internal displacement, this principle requires a careful assessment of the best interests of the child at every phase of the displacement cycle, regarding any action that may affect the child. While relevant for all children, the identification of the best interests of unaccompanied and separated children in situations of internal displacement requires special attention due to the particular risks that they may face.

#### **Best Interest Determination Procedures**

National child protection systems usually foresee scrupulous procedural safeguards for decisions of a certain magnitude which require identifying the best interests of the child. Such decisions include separation from parents against their will (e.g. in case of abuse or neglect), determination of custody rights or decisions on adoption. These decisions can only be taken by competent national authorities, such as the judiciary, and are subject to procedural safeguards foreseen by law.

In humanitarian crises, protection actors may also need to establish formal procedures for the determination of the child’s best interests (known as BID procedures). In the context of family unity, BID Procedures are to be established when considering durable solutions, alternative care arrangements, and removal from family when a child’s safety is in question and, in some cases, family reunification. These should be developed building on domestic child protection systems. They should ensure that decisions are taken by more than one person with relevant expertise and are based on a balancing of all relevant factors. BID Procedures should ensure adequate child participation without discrimination. The views of the child should be given due weight in accordance with age and maturity.

## 4. The responsibility of the State

The family is considered to be a fundamental social unit and is entitled to special protection under international law as well as by most national legal frameworks. The national authorities carry primary responsibility for protecting and ensuring respect for family unity and family life (see section 7 below). This includes taking any necessary legislative, administrative and other measures to prevent and respond to family separation. States should, for example:

- Take action to **prevent** family separation from taking place, including by ensuring that any action or inaction by the State does not result in separation of families who wish to remain together, including during evacuations or other population movement. This may include ensuring proper registration of births, deaths and/or changes in civil status (e.g. marriage or divorce), as well as the equal rights of men and women to manage family property and care for their children.
- Enable the rapid **tracing and reunification** of separated family members, for instance by establishing tracing mechanisms, facilitating inquiries, assisting separated families to reunite, and cooperating with humanitarian organizations engaged in such activities.
- Provide **protection and assistance** to persons that have become separated from their families and families that are caring for such persons, in particular where unaccompanied or separated children are involved. Children who cannot be reunited with their families should be provided with alternative care and support. Care arrangements must be regularly monitored and measures taken to protect the child from any form of violence, maltreatment, neglect or abuse.
- Make all efforts to establish, and inform next of kin of the **fate and whereabouts** of missing relatives. In the event of death the authorities should endeavour to collect and return the mortal remains of dead relatives to their families.

## 5. The role of human rights and humanitarian actors

Human rights and humanitarian actors can support efforts to preserve family unity by helping to prevent family separation, by providing protection and assistance to those that have been separated from their families, and by supporting family tracing and reunification efforts where appropriate. Such efforts should be coordinated by actors having the required skills, expertise and experience. They should also be in line with existing guidelines on the subject, in particular the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children. In most cases, close cooperation with national authorities and relevant line ministries is needed.

### 5.1 General activities



#### In our work we can ...

##### Assessment

(see Part III.1)



- Ensure that protection assessments take into account the risk of family separation, including its main causes, consequences, and those most at risk. Such assessments should also identify the means and mechanism used by the community to prevent or respond to such separation (e.g. community-based tracing, reunification and provision of temporary care and support to those in need).

##### Coordination

- Ensure that family unity is adequately addressed by the protection working group and other coordination mechanisms if needed. This may require the establishment of a focal point or a working group that takes responsibility for coordinating the response (see section on key actors below).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors are clear, that adequate standard operating procedures are in place and joint referral/response mechanisms established, and that existing common standards and tools are used and implemented, including the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (see the reference list below for key resources).</li> </ul>
<b>Referral and response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that a referral and response mechanism is available and known to staff and partners. Such mechanisms are needed to ensure immediate registration, documentation and appropriate care, protection and assistance, of any identified separated family members, in particular unaccompanied children. Such mechanisms should be coordinated by actors with the required expertise.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b> (see Part IV.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all staff and partners, including those involved in protection monitoring, know how to identify separated family members and are familiar with relevant referral/response mechanisms.</li> </ul>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that actors working with unaccompanied and separated children and other separated individuals respect privacy and confidentiality of information, and that measures are taken to guarantee data protection.</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Preserving family unity

Efforts to preserve family unity should take place during all stages of displacement. Such efforts can prevent family separation from taking place and, in case it occurs, greatly facilitate rapid tracing and reunification.



<b>In our work we can ...</b>	
<b>Advocacy</b> (see Part IV.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate with relevant actors, particularly with local and national authorities, to take appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and protect the principle of family unity. This may, for instance, include advocating for the recognition of customary marriages to ensure respect for the rights of women to claim custody of their children and to inherit land and property upon the death of their husbands; and for the full and equal rights of children born out of wedlock.</li> </ul>
<b>Community mobilization</b> (see Part IV.10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with relevant actors, including parents, community groups and local and national authorities, to raise awareness of the risks of family separation and take measures that can help prevent separation from taking place, or where such separation occurs, can facilitate tracing and reunification. As an example, children can be taught to remember their name and that of their parents, date of birth, address and other details that could assist with family tracing in the event of separation.</li> </ul>
<b>Civil status and documentation</b> (See Part V.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with relevant stakeholders, including local and national authorities, to ensure that all births, deaths and changes in civil status (marriage, divorce) are registered and documented, and that IDPs and have access to documentation and/or replacement documentation, if needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Access to assistance and services</b> (See Part IV.7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate and take other steps to ensure that families with children have access to public and/or relief assistance and services, including shelter, food, non-food items and income-generating activities, to enable them to remain together and prevent families from having to abandon or give their children away. Pay particular attention to single headed households, especially those headed by children, single women, older persons and persons living with a disability.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Programme planning and implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that humanitarian programmes and projects do not cause or result in separation of families, either deliberately or accidentally. As an example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Make sure that family members are accommodated and assisted together wherever possible. Children should not be accommodated separately from their families or other legal or customary primary care-givers.</li> <li>– Avoid transferring unaccompanied or separated children from the location where they were found, unless the best interest of the child so require, as it may make tracing more difficult.</li> <li>– Make arrangements during distribution of assistance to prevent separation of families from taking place. This may, for instance, include organized community child-care.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Preventive measures in case of evacuation or assisted transfer</b> (See Part IV.9)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action to ensure family unity during evacuation or assisted transfer, including during return or relocation. This may, for instance, include ensuring that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Evacuation/transfer, reception and care are planned in advance and form part of a coordinated plan of action.</li> <li>– Families are registered and transferred together. Children should, as a general rule, not be transferred without their parents or other primary care-givers. Where this is not possible, adequate reception and care arrangements must be made in advance and reunification should take place as soon as possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 5.3 Identification, registration and documentation

It is important to ensure that separated family members, in particular any unaccompanied or separated children, are identified, registered and documented as early as possible. This will increase the likelihood of successful tracing and reunification and facilitate the timely provision of adequate care, support and protection to those in need.

Unaccompanied and separated children should always be registered and documented, even when they are in the safe company or care of an adult, as it is prerequisite for tracing and reunification with the child’s family. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the process does not undermine existing care arrangements or raise false expectations about assistance and support.<sup>2</sup> The process must thus be explained in advance and should preferably be undertaken by experienced staff or specialized actors.

In order to ensure a consistent approach it is important that relevant actors use existing inter-agency tools, forms and guidelines, which have been developed based on years of experience.



<p><b>In our work we can ...</b></p>	
<p><b>Identification</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that mechanisms are in place to identify separated family members, including in particular any unaccompanied or separated children. Such mechanisms should be coordinated by actors that have the required expertise (see section on key actors below). All staff and partners should however be familiar with signs indicating family separation and available referral/response mechanisms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Registration and documentation</b> (See Part V.2)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that separated family members are registered and documented immediately following identification. Registration may include collection of information such as name, data and place of birth, name of parents and other close relatives, former address, present location, and a photograph. Registration records should be updated as required and kept by or with the separated family member, and a copy shared with actors that oversee family tracing and reunification.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> This can result in a pull-factor, with parents registering their own children as separated in order to access assistance, or a push-factor, with care-takers avoiding registering unaccompanied or separated children in their care out of fear that the children will be taken away. In some cases, caregivers may reject a child in their care if expected assistance or support fails to materialise.

- Where limited time and resources are available for registration, for instance due to security reasons, priority may need to be given to very young children or children with disabilities, who may have difficulty in recalling important information at a later stage. Unaccompanied children may need to be provided with immediate care arrangements.

### 5.4 Tracing, verification and reunification

Family tracing, verification and reunification should take place as soon as possible, including in times of conflict and displacement.

**Tracing** can take place by different means, including by:

- Dissemination of Red Cross Messages (delivered by ICRC or Red Cross/Crescent national societies);
- Mass tracing, which involves displaying or disseminating name lists and/or photos;
- Radio broadcasting of limited personal information, such as name, sex, age of the separated person and possibly parents/siblings;
- Photo tracing, which involves dissemination of photos;
- Cross-referencing tracing records with other available records, such as birth or school registers or census databases; and
- Case-by-case tracing, which is mostly used for small case-loads or where other efforts have proved futile.

For confidentiality and security reasons, the current location of the separated person should be kept confidential until the family relationship has been verified and those involved have agreed to be reunited. In some cases, reunification may be neither feasible nor desired, for instance if the separated person suffered neglect or abuse at the hands of other family members prior to separation or if reunification would place the person at risk.

Tracing, verification and reunification is usually coordinated and undertaken by specialized actors, but other humanitarian actors can facilitate and support such efforts.



#### In our work we can ...

##### Tracing and verification

- Support and facilitate the work of specialized actors involved in tracing separated family members. Tracing and verification should generally be undertaken by the authorities or by specialized agencies such as ICRC or UNICEF, but other humanitarian actors can support such efforts. This can, for instance, include sharing information when needed, facilitating access and/or transportation, and providing temporary care and support during the process.

##### Reunification

- Support and facilitate family reunification efforts when possible. This can, for instance, include facilitating transfer or transport of separated family members or providing temporary meeting space, shelter or other assistance for reuniting families.
- Support efforts aimed at establishing or re-establishing family bonds prior to or pending reunification of separated family members. Children and other family members may need to be provided with information about the process and in some cases may require short familiarization visits or periods before formal reunification can take place.



**Follow up**

- Ensure that relevant records, including those relating to distribution of food and other assistance, are updated in order that the reunited family receives needed assistance and services. Where children have been reunited with their families, additional measures may need to be taken, for instance to ensure that the child is enrolled in and has access to schools and other education or vocational training programmes.
- Support community groups or structures that can provide support and assistance to families with children, including those that have experienced separation before, to facilitate reintegration and minimize the likelihood of separation occurring or recurring.

## 5.5 Protection and assistance, including alternative care arrangements

While ideal, reunification may not always be possible or feasible, either in the short or the long term. In such cases, it is important to ensure that adequate care, protection and assistance is provided to separated persons, in particular unaccompanied or separated children. This includes ensuring security and physical, social, economic and emotional support, and access to services, such as education and health care.

In the case of children, alternative care arrangements may need to be made. These can take various different forms, including:

- **Community-based care**, which builds on existing social structures, is usually the preferred option. It includes extended family, previous care-givers, or social group/community that is well known to the child.
- **Foster care**, which refers to a situation where children are cared for in a household outside their family. It can take different forms. Such arrangements must be made carefully and in consultation with the child and the community.
- **Institutional care**, such as in an orphanage, is an option of last resort. It often has detrimental effects on children and it can make it more difficult to prevent neglect, abuse and exploitation.
- **Group living**, refers to a situation where children have come together to form household units. It is not desirable, but where such arrangements exist they can be supported, for instance through day-care rather than residential care.

Adoption, which involves the permanent and legal or customary transfer of parental rights and responsibilities to the adopters, should only be considered once it has been established that the child is free to be adopted. In practice, this means that there is no hope for successful tracing and reunification or that the parents have given consent to an adoption. Adoption must be in line with national law and procedures and be subject to close governmental control and scrutiny.<sup>3</sup>

Alternative care arrangements, whether short or long-term, must always be monitored and periodically reviewed to ensure the welfare of the child. Efforts must also be made to protect children from any form of discrimination, maltreatment, neglect, abuse or exploitation, and ensure their full and equal access to education, health care and other services.



### In our work we can ...

#### Monitoring

- Ensure that adequate monitoring systems are in place to monitor the welfare of children in alternative care arrangements. This can, for instance be done through community child welfare committees or through informal means, for instance with the help of friends, teachers and neighbours. A child in foster care should receive appropriate care and protection on equal basis with other children in the family. ►►

<sup>3</sup> For further information see pp. 55-57 of the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

## Assistance

- Advocate to ensure that foster care families receive adequate support and assistance in order to enable them to care for a child. Foster children should be protected from discrimination, neglect, abuse and exploitation and have full and equal access to services, such as education and health care.

Do you have suggestions about other activities? If so, please share them with us at [hqidphb@unhcr.org](mailto:hqidphb@unhcr.org)

## 6. Key international legal principles and standards

**International (and regional) human rights law** guarantees the right to respect for the family, including the freedom from any unlawful or arbitrary interference. As a fundamental unit of society, the family is also entitled to special protection and assistance.<sup>4</sup>

See Principles 16 and 17 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (in Annex 1).

Women are entitled to equal rights with men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, including the same rights and responsibilities regarding their children, whether during marriage or at its dissolution.<sup>5</sup> Women also have an equal right to own, inherit, acquire and manage property, including family property. The full and free consent of both spouses is required before entering into marriage. The marriage of children is considered unlawful.

Children and their mothers, both before and after childbirth, should be provided with special protection and assistance. In particular, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is nearly universally ratified, contains many important provisions, including:

- The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. Their right to life, survival and development, and to non-discrimination and participation must also be respected.<sup>6</sup>
- States must protect the right of children to be cared for by their parents. Children must not be separated from their parents against their will, unless such separation is deemed to be necessary for the best interest of the child and necessary procedural safeguards are complied with. In the event of separation, children must be provided with special protection and assistance, including appropriate care arrangements, taking into account the child's age, maturity and ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background. Alternative care arrangements must always be subject to periodic review.<sup>7</sup>
- States must take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation. States should also provide necessary support for the child and his or her caregivers and take action to ensure prevention, identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up in all cases of maltreatment.<sup>8</sup>

**International humanitarian law** requires that the family rights of protected persons be respected in times of armed conflict. In case of evacuations or other transfer of people, all

<sup>4</sup> See Art. 16 of UDHR; Art. 10 of ICESCR; Arts. 17 and 23 of ICCPR, Arts. 16 and 18 of CRC and at the regional level, Art. 18 of AfCHPR; Art. 17 of AmCHR; Art. 38 of ArCHR; Art. 5 of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam; Arts. 8 and 12 of ECHR; and Art. 16 of the revised ESC.

<sup>5</sup> See at the international level, Art. 16 of UDHR; Art. 23 of ICCPR; Art. 10(1) of ICESCR; Arts. 5 and 16 of CEDAW, and at the regional level, Art. 18 of AfCHPR and Arts. 6 and 7 of its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; Art. 17 of AmCHR; Art. 5 of Protocol 7 to ECHR.

<sup>6</sup> These general principles are outlined in Arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12 of CRC.

<sup>7</sup> See at the international level Arts. 7, 8, 9, 20 and 25 of CRC, and at the regional level, Arts. 19, 20 and 25 of AfCRWC; and Art. 8 of the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam.

<sup>8</sup> See at the international level, Art. 19 of CRC, and at the regional level, Arts. 16, 27 and 29 of AfCRWC; and Arts. 17 and 18 of the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam.

possible measures must be taken to ensure that the members of the same family are not separated.

In case separation occurs, family members should be able to receive news from each other and be provided with information about the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives. All appropriate steps should also be taken to facilitate the reunion of dispersed families. Separated children should be identified, registered and provided with special protection and assistance at all times.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of internment or confinement, for instance to a camp, members of the same family should be accommodated together, be allowed to correspond with their families and receive visitors, especially close relatives.<sup>10</sup>



## 7. Key Actors

While various core activities, such as family tracing and reunification, should be undertaken by specialized actors, all human rights and humanitarian actors play a role. These include:

- At the **national level**, internally displaced persons and host communities; child-welfare and social support services; ministries of social affairs and education; the media, local NGO's or faith-based organizations.
- At the **international level**, specialized actors include the ICRC and the national Red Cross/Crescent societies; UNICEF, UNHCR, IRC, Save the Children Alliance, and World Vision International. Other actors include OHCHR, OCHA and IOM.



## Resources

- *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, ICRC, 2004. à [www.refworld.org](http://www.refworld.org)
- *Separated Children, Action for the Rights of Children*, Save the Children Alliance/UNHCR/UNICEF and OHCHR, 1998
- *Working with Separated Children* (Field Guide and Manual), Save the Children UK, 1998.
- *The Lost Ones – Emergency Care and Family Tracing and Reunification of Children from Birth to Five Years*, UNICEF/IRC, 2003. [www.unicef.org/protection/index\\_armedconflict.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_armedconflict.html)
- General Comment No. 19(1990) of the Human Rights Committee on *the protection of the family, the right to marriage and equality of the spouses* (Art. 23). [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/comments.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/comments.htm)
- General Comment No. 17(1989) of the Human Rights Committee on the rights of the child. [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/comments.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/comments.htm)
- *Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams: Tools for Family Tracing and Social Reintegration Work with Separated Children*, Brigitte De Lay, International Rescue Committee, 2002
- *UN Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children*. Draft, forthcoming 2008. [www.crin.org/docs/DRAFT\\_UN\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/DRAFT_UN_Guidelines.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Rules 105, 117 and 131 of Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules (ICRC, 2005). See also Arts. 25, 26, 27 and 50 of the Fourth Geneva Convention; Art. 74 and 78 of Additional Protocol I; and Art. 4(3)(b) of Additional Protocol II.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. Rules 125 and 126 of Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules (ICRC, 2005). See also Art. 82 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Art. 75(5) of Additional Protocol I.