

Notification of a data security violation

Dear recipient,

We are contacting you because you have recently or previously used the Finnish Red Cross's services for restoring family connections.

This service helps the Red Cross reunite family members who have been driven apart from each other due to war, natural disasters or migration.

What has happened?

The electronic database of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been the target of a cyber security attack. Due to this data breach, a party outside the Red Cross has been able to access the committee's servers and systems used for restoring family connections. The Finnish Red Cross also utilises these systems. It is possible that the data breach perpetrators have also been able to view or record your personal data.

The data breach was noticed on 18 January, and it applies only to databases related to restoring family connections. The perpetrators used highly advanced methods to carry out the attack.

How might this affect you?

We do not yet know by whom or why the data breach was carried out. The International Committee of the Red Cross is currently reviewing these questions together with the authorities.

We do know that the perpetrators of the data breach have connected with the servers and systems that also stored your personal data. This information may include, for example, your name, contact information, the explanation of the events that led to the person's disappearance, as well as information about the people you are looking for that is saved into the database.

At the moment, there are no signs that the data in the database have been published or misused. Based on our current knowledge, neither have the data been edited nor deleted. However, it is possible that the perpetrator of the data breach will attempt to abuse the data in the future.

The breach does not affect other aid activities of the Finnish Red Cross.



What is the Red Cross doing about this?

The International Committee of the Red Cross has stopped the data breach and shut down all external connections to its servers. The Finnish Red Cross has submitted a data breach notification to the Data Protection Ombudsman.

We will relaunch the work for restoring family connections as soon as possible, when we are certain that the operations are secure.

What should you take into consideration?

At the moment, the situation does not require any actions on your part.

However, it is possible that the data breach perpetrator will attempt to abuse the data they have obtained. Due to this, you should remain cautious about any text messages, e-mails, phone calls or other messages that you deem suspicious.

- Do not answer any suspicious messages and do not open any attachments or hyperlinks that they may contain.
- Contact the police if you believe you have been the target of a scamming or blackmailing attempt.

Do you have any questions?

It is normal to experience feelings such as concern and uncertainty in this kind of a situation. We consider the confidentiality of your personal data and safeguarding your data to be highly important.

- If you have any questions about the data breach, please contact our services for restoring family connections by e-mail tracing@redcross.fi or by calling +358 (0)40 721 5577 (mobile call fee). We answer inquiries Monday to Friday 9.00–11.00 am and 12 noon–3.00 pm. Text messages cannot be sent to the number.
- You can also find up to date information about the situation on [the International Committee of the Red Cross's website](#).

Sincerely,

Marja Lehtimäki
Director
Finnish Red Cross