

International Task Force Calls for Concrete Steps to Open Holocaust-Era Archives of the International Tracing Service in Germany

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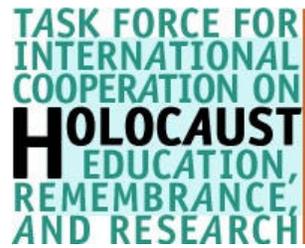
At their plenary meeting in Trieste on December 16, 2004, in Trieste, Italy, the member countries of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research called for immediate steps to be taken to inform the public about the long-inaccessible Holocaust-related archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS) of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and to open the archives for research by making copies of the material available at major research centers.

Over six months ago, the ITS and ICRC committed to open the archives by the end of 2004. Since that time, however, the initiative to open the ITS records has failed. In addition, a delegation of Task Force member countries that traveled to Bad Arolsen in October 2004 was refused access to inventories and was unable to obtain responses to any of its inquiries regarding the content and organization of archives or the archives digitization project undertaken several years ago.

In response to these developments and based on their commitment to the principles of the Stockholm Declaration of 2000, which calls for open research access to all archival records relating to the Holocaust, the Task Force calls on the ITS and the ICRC to immediately release information regarding the content of the ITS archives, specifically:

- A complete list of all the archival collections reposing at ITS, including both the original deposits made in the 1950's and the annual accessions of new documents assembled by the ITS since 1955.
- Descriptions of the organizational units in which documents are held, the approximate amount of documentary material in each unit, and a description of the finding aids, shelf lists, guides, etc. that exist for each unit.
- Information on the archival materials that have already been digitized or are already on microfilm or in microfiche form, including a detailed list showing the name/designation of every archival collection, including the central card file, that has been digitized or duplicated.

The Task Force also calls for immediate research access to the holdings of the ITS archives at major international centers of Holocaust research (e.g., Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, Yad Vashem in Israel) via digitized or microform copies of the archives to be deposited at those sites and made available to scholars in accordance with the relevant national laws and archival practices of the country where each center is located.



The Task Force calls on countries represented on the International Commission of the ITS to support and facilitate achievement of these goals.

A White Paper entitled “International Tracing Service (ITS), Bad Arolsen, Germany,” prepared for the June 2004 meeting of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research in Rome is available upon request.