

United Nations owed to Canada resulting from the provision of transportation facilities for the United Nations Force in the Congo.

UNHCR and Refugees

A refugee is defined by the United Nations as a person who has left the country of his normal residence because of fear of persecution. At the end of the Second World War, the number of refugees in Europe was close to 2.2 million people. Immediately after the War, Canada and other countries joined together to form the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in order to assist refugees in their emigration, re-establishment in their country of present asylum or voluntary return to their original homes. In 1946, a United Nations Specialized Agency, the International Refugee Organization (IRO), was established to continue this work. Canada became a member of the IRO in 1947 and, from 1946 to 1961, Canada contributed about \$18.8 million to the Organization.

At its fourth session in 1949, the General Assembly decided to appoint a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for a three-year term, to continue to protect the interests of refugees after the termination of the IRO. In 1953 the Assembly extended the term of the High Commissioner's Office for another three-year period and in 1957 the term was extended for a further five-year period from January 1, 1959, to December 31, 1963. The situation will be reviewed at the Assembly's seventeenth session.

The High Commissioner's role was at first a non-operational one, limited mainly to the protection of refugees. However, in 1952, he was authorized to appeal for funds to enable emergency aid to be given to the most needy groups of refugees within its mandate. Funds raised by this decision were contributed to the United Nations Refugees Emergency Fund (UNREF). In 1954 this fund was incorporated in a new voluntary fund, the United Nations Refugee Fund (UNRF) and its programme was aimed principally at the promotion of a permanent solution by social and economic assimilation within European countries and the promotion of immigration.

On January 1, 1959, the UNREF was replaced by a new programme of the High Commissioner for Refugees, administered by the Office of the High Commissioner under the guidance of an Executive Committee composed of the representatives of United Nations member governments. Canada has been a member of this Committee since 1957. From 1951 to 1962, Canada contributed over \$2.5 million to the UNHCR and, in addition, donated \$350,000 in 1956-57 to the Canadian Red Cross for the assistance of Hungarian refugees. In its total pledged contribution from 1954 to 1962, Canada ranks as the fourth largest contributor.

Through the efforts of the refugee programmes of the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, the IRO and those of the UNHCR, the number of refugees in Europe has been reduced from about 2.2 million in 1946 to some 50,000 in 1962. This improvement has been made possible to a large extent by the contributions of governments to the United Nations and its related programmes,