



# PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 32

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1961.

A press release was issued on November 7, 1960, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Howard Green, concerning an agreement reached between the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees providing for indemnification of refugees who were persecuted because of their nationality by the National Socialist regime. (A notice concerning this agreement was also published in the Canada Gazette of December 3, 1960, issue No. 49).

The Secretary of State for External Affairs now wishes to bring to the attention of possible claimants residing in Canada that pursuant to this agreement a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Indemnification Fund was established in January 1961 for assistance to persons who suffered damage under the National Socialist regime as a result of persecution by reason of their nationality and in disregard of human rights. The German Federal Government has agreed to place at the High Commissioner's disposal the sum of DM 45 million to provide assistance to national persecutees other than those who already have a legal claim to indemnification under the German Federal Indemnification Law, under which national persecutees can obtain indemnification only if they have suffered permanent injury to their health as a result of persecution under the National Socialist regime.

In order to qualify for payments under the Fund, a person must have been a refugee in the sense of the 1951 Convention relating to Refugees on October 1, 1953, regardless of his present residence, even if, in the meantime, he has lost refugee status by returning to his home country, or by acquiring a new nationality.

Surviving dependents of persons who have died as a result of persecution may also qualify under certain conditions.

The UNHCR Indemnification Section is to administer the 45 million DM Fund. All applications should be made to UNHCR, Geneva, as soon as possible, and not later than December 31, 1961.

In addition, the Bonn Agreement of October 3, 1960 provides that those national persecutees who have suffered permanent injury to body or health will now receive the same compensation from the German Federal Government as is granted to other categories of victims of national-socialist persecution.

The German Federal Government has now announced details of the procedure for the implementation of this part of the Bonn Agreement, whose administration has been entrusted to the Federal Administration Office (Bundesverwaltungsamt) in Cologne. National persecutees whose claims have previously been rejected under the provisions of the German Indemnification Law now have the possibility of submitting new applications to the Bundesverwaltungsamt up to December 31, 1962. In their own best interest, national persecutees who have already previously submitted claims to the German Federal indemnification authorities on which a decision is still outstanding, or on which they have obtained a positive decision but would now be entitled to higher payments, should resubmit their case to the Bundesverwaltungsamt in Cologne. As an additional safeguard, all national persecutees who have not yet received a positive decision on their claim should also apply to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for payments from the Fund.

At a meeting held in Geneva on March 14, 1961 by the newly-established UNHCR Indemnification Fund Consultative Committee,

on which voluntary agencies and refugees are represented, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Felix Schnyder, said that, as time went on, some basic questions might arise with regard to the groups of persons to be considered for payments from the Fund. If the number of qualifying applicants should be too great and individual awards, consequently, too small, "we may have to give consideration to means of ensuring that those who suffered most and are most in need receive a fair share."

So far, some 1,100 applications for assistance under the UNHCR Indemnification Fund have been received in Geneva, primarily from persons of Polish, Russian and Ukrainian origin.