



PRESS RELEASE

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The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Howard Green, announced today that he has received information concerning an agreement recently 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 régime. Under this agreement refugees who suffered from injury to body or health will now receive the same compensation as that granted to other categories of refugee victims of persecution; they will receive back payments as from November 1, 1953 and a capital payment for the period 1949 to 1953. Furthermore, they will now be entitled to receive the medical attention they may still need. The claims of refugees persecuted for reasons of nationality which were rejected in the past will be re-examined automatically by the Federal Administration Office in Cologne, which will work in close co-operation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The agreement will apply to all refugees who were victims of the National Socialist régime for reasons of nationality, who were refugees on October 1, 1953, even if since that date they have acquired a new nationality, and irrespective of the place where they are now living.

For the benefit of these refugees, or their surviving dependants, who would still not receive indemnification under the new arrangements, the German Federal Government and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees have agreed on the establishment of a special fund. The German Federal Government will shortly place at the disposal of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees an amount of DM 45 million. Applications will be decided by a board, composed of representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, refugee organizations and voluntary agencies working for refugees. Applications for grants in aid given by this fund will be considered on their individual merits, bearing in mind the present economic situation of the refugees who qualify, and the persecution suffered. The German Federal authorities for their part, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, are working out all practical details for the application of this agreement.

It is not likely that it will be possible to file applications under this agreement before the end of the year. In the meantime inquiries should be directed to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva.