

Geneva, June 5th, 1926.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

**Conference on Russian and Armenian
Refugee Questions**

REPORT BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Note by the Secretary-General:

The following report by the High Commissioner for Refugees is circulated at his request to the Council.

Annexed to the report is the arrangement concluded at the Inter-Governmental Conference of May 10th-12th on Refugee Questions.

REPORT BY DR. NANSEN,

High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees,

The Council will remember that, at its meeting on September 28th, 1925, it had under consideration the following resolutions adopted by the Sixth Assembly relative to the extension of the work on behalf of Russian and Armenian refugees:

“ The Assembly :

“ 1. Having read with great interest the report of the Refugee Service of the International Labour Office on the work accomplished for the refugees during the first seven months of 1925, indicating the possibility of developing on an extensive scale the placing of refugee workers in employment in various parts of the world:

“ Wishes to record its deep gratitude to the Governments which have afforded their valuable co-operation in this connection by means of financial contributions, the collaboration of their technical services or by visa and transport facilities;

“ Expresses its great appreciation of the work accomplished by the Refugee Service of the International Labour Office in co-operation with Dr. Nansen, and notes the urgent necessity of finding employment for Armenian refugees living in Greece.

“ 2. Taking note of the proposals in the report for the continuation and extension of the Refugee Service, and, in particular, of the statement that an additional sum of 100,000 Swiss francs is required for the establishment of two additional agencies of that Service in South America, while recognising that it is an entirely temporary service:

“ Decides to include in the budget of the International Labour Office for 1926 the sum of 303,000 Swiss francs for the Refugee Service.

“ 3. In view of the fact that the Governing Body of the International Labour Office has not yet had an opportunity of examining these proposals:

“ Recommends that the report should be submitted as soon as possible to the Governing Body for its consideration, and authorises the Council to enter into negotiations with the Governing Body, if necessary, for determining the measures by which effect can best be given to the report.

“ 4. The Assembly urges the Council to arrange for the convocation of an Inter-Governmental Conference as soon as possible for the purpose of examining the suggestions put forward in the report for the creation and administration of a revolving fund of not less than £100,000 sterling to assist the migration of Russian and Armenian refugees, and of effecting an improvement in the present systems of refugee identity certificates.”

The Council referred these resolutions to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, which, at its meeting on October 17th, 1925, took note of and approved them in so far as they related to the technical aspects of the refugee work.

With a view to giving effect to paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Council authorised me, as its High Commissioner for Refugees, to summon, as soon as possible, an Inter-Governmental Conference for the purpose of finding means to improve the systems of identity certificates for refugees, and to create and administer the revolving fund of not less than £100,000 to assist the migration of Russian and Armenian refugees.

In pursuance of that request, I convened a Conference of Government representatives at Geneva from May 10th to 12th, which was attended by delegates from the following twenty-four countries:

Austria	France	Poland
Belgium	Germany	Roumania
Bulgaria	Great Britain	Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
Canada	Greece	South Africa
China	Hungary	Sweden
Czechoslovakia	India	Switzerland
Denmark	Irish Free State	
Esthonia	Latvia	
Finland	Norway	

The Conference recognised the necessity:

- (1) Of regularising the systems of identity certificates for Russian and Armenian refugees;
- (2) Of determining in a more accurate and complete manner the number and situation of Russian and Armenian refugees in the various countries;
- (3) Of creating a revolving fund to provide for the cost of the transportation and settlement of refugees.

With these objects in view, it adopted unanimously the annexed Arrangement, which includes a number of important recommendations calculated to advance the solution of the refugee problems, notably in regard to the definition of persons entitled to the refugee identity certificates; the return of refugees to countries from which they emigrate; the free issue of identity certificates, and entry, exit and transit visas to indigent refugees; transport facilities; inclusion of children on their parents' identity certificates; the general application of the identity certificate systems; and to the creation of the revolving fund by means of the issue by the High Commissioner of a stamp of the value of five gold francs to be purchased yearly by every self-supporting refugee as a preliminary to the issue to him of an identity certificate, identity card or a *permis de séjour*. Governments were also recommended to supplement the revolving fund by means of special contributions for specific transfers of refugees.

Finally, the Conference expressed the wish that the Government representatives at the next Assembly should be enabled to report on the measures taken to give effect to the terms of the Arrangement.

This Arrangement has already been signed by the representatives of the following twenty-two countries:

Austria	France	Poland
Belgium	Germany	Roumania
Bulgaria	Great Britain	Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.
Canada	Greece	South Africa
Cuba	Hungary	Sweden
Denmark	India	Switzerland
Esthonia	Latvia	
Finland	Norway	

The Council will recognise that, in spite of the difficulties which had to be faced in connection with the raising of the necessary funds for the final settlement of the refugees, the Inter-Governmental Conference has evolved a practical interpretation of the recommendations made by the Assembly and endorsed by the Council and by the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation.

I would now request the Council to approve the recommendations of the Conference and to urge all Governments Members of the League, and other interested Governments, to adopt at the earliest possible moment the Arrangement devised by the Conference. It is believed that the application of this Arrangement will confer not only obvious benefits on large numbers of refugees estimated at more than one million but also on the countries for whom the unemployed refugees represent a heavy expense, and on the immigration countries anxious to increase their productive populations

I venture to submit that the results achieved by this Conference constitute a very important step towards the constructive liquidation of the refugee problems, and to invite the Council to express its approval of the efforts of the Conference in a resolution in the following terms:

“ The Council:

“ Having considered the Arrangement on Russian and Armenian refugee questions adopted by the Inter-Governmental Conference held at Geneva from May 10th to 12th, 1926;

“ Convinced of the necessity for introducing measures for the improvement of the identity certificate systems for refugees and for the creation of a revolving fund to assist the migration and settlement of refugees:

“ Urges the States Members of the League and other interested Governments to adopt, at the earliest possible moment, the Arrangement recommended by the Inter-Governmental Conference of May 10th-12th, 1926; and

“ Recommends the Governments Members of the League to authorise their delegations to acquaint the next Assembly with the measures taken in their territories to give effect to the terms of the Arrangement.”



ANNEX.

R/I. G.C. 7. 1926.

ARRANGEMENT RELATING TO THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY CERTIFICATES TO RUSSIAN AND ARMENIAN REFUGEES, SUPPLEMENTING AND AMENDING THE PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENTS DATED JULY 5TH, 1922, AND MAY 31ST, 1924.

The undersigned, representing the Governments which took part in the Conference regarding Russian and Armenian Refugee Questions convened at Geneva on May 10th, 1926, by the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in pursuance of the resolution passed by the Sixth Assembly of the League of Nations and adopted by the Council of the League of Nations on September 28th, 1925;

Having considered the excellent results obtained by the system of identity certificates for Russian and Armenian refugees;

Considering the necessity:

- (1) Of regularising the systems of identity certificates for Russian and Armenian refugees;
- (2) Of determining in a more accurate and complete manner the number and situation of Russian and Armenian refugees in the various countries;
- (3) Of creating a revolving fund to provide for the cost of the transportation and settlement of refugees —

Adopt the following resolutions, supplementing and amending the Arrangements of July 5th, 1922, and May 31st, 1924:

1. The Conference urges all the States which have not yet adhered to the Arrangements of July 5th, 1922, and May 31st, 1924, concerning identity certificates for Russian and Armenian refugees to ratify these Arrangements as soon as possible.

2. The Conference adopts the following definitions of the term "refugee":

Russian: Any person of Russian origin who does not enjoy or who no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and who has not acquired another nationality.

Armenian: Any person of Armenian origin formerly a subject of the Ottoman Empire who does not enjoy or who no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality.

3. In order to facilitate freedom of movement of the refugees, the Conference approves the principle of the affixing of return visas on identity certificates for refugees leaving a country, on the understanding that Governments shall be free to make exceptions to this principle in special cases.

4. The Conference agrees that children under 15 years of age should be included on the identity certificates of their parents.

5. The Conference recommends that the Government issuing a national passport to a refugee should withdraw from him his identity certificate and return it to the authority which issued it.

6. The Conference considers that the fee for an identity certificate in each country should be the same as that for its national passport.

7. The Conference recommends Governments to grant free of charge the various entrance, exit and transit visas to indigent refugees on the recommendation of the International Labour Office or of its representatives in the different countries.

The Conference expresses the wish that in general the Governments will regard favourably the proposals of the International Labour Office with regard to possible reductions in the fees for these visas.

8. The Conference expresses the wish that all Governments will afford favourable consideration to any request from the International Labour Office for special facilities for the transport of refugees proceeding to a country in which employment has been found for them.

9. In addition to the fees payable in each country according to national legislation for the issue either of an identity certificate for Russian or Armenian refugees, the period of validity of which should not, in principle, exceed one year, or of an identity card or *permis de séjour*, a charge of five gold francs shall be made for the benefit of the revolving fund created by the League of Nations. This fee shall be charged, at the discretion of the States, either for the issue of one or other of these documents or for both of them, in order to ensure that the fee shall be paid by all Russian and Armenian refugees, except those who are without means.

10. The Conference recommends that steps be taken to obviate payment of the above fee more than once a year by any refugee.

11. The Conference urges the various Governments either to generalise the use of the identity certificate or to take steps to ensure that every refugee pays the fee every year.

12. In order to secure the payment of the fee of five gold francs, Governments will obtain, or the refugees will be required to obtain, a stamp to the value of this amount to be issued by the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees, which will be affixed either to the identity certificate or to the identity card or *permis de séjour*, and cancelled by the authority issuing either or these documents.

13. In order to husband the resources of the revolving fund, the Conference recommends that the States should make special contributions to cover the cost of transportation and settlement of numbers of refugees leaving or entering their territory.

The Conference recommends to the States represented at the Conference, to the States Members of the League of Nations, and to States which are not members of the League, the adoption of the present Arrangement.

The Conference requests the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees and the Director of the International Labour Office to continue their negotiations with the Governments in order to obtain by way of advances the necessary funds for the placing of refugees in employment, pending the payment of the fees provided for by the present Arrangement;

And expresses the wish that the representatives of the Governments at the next session of the Assembly of the League will be enabled to report on the measures taken to give effect to the terms of the present Arrangement.

DONE at Geneva, May 12th, 1926.

J. REVEILLAUD.

Fridtjof NANSEN.

Albert THOMAS.

G. A. JENKIN (South Africa). With reservations on 8 and 9.
KRASKE (Germany). 9-12 *ad. ref.*

E. PFLÜGL (Austria). With reference to paragraph 12 of this Arrangement, it is understood that the levying of the contemplated tax will be effected in Austria by the representatives of the High Commissioner.

H. COSTERMANS (Belgium).

GONNE (Belgium).

D. MIKOFF (Bulgaria).

J. BRUCE WALKER (Canada).

Aristides DE AGUERO (Cuba).

C. R. PUSTA (Esthonia).

Eino WÄLIKANGAS (Finland).

DE NAVAILLES (France).

W. Haldane PORTER (Great Britain).

D. NICOLOPOULOS (Greece).

Dr. BARANYAI ZOLTAN (Hungary).

J. W. HOSE (India).

Charles DUZMANS (Latvia).

Chr. L. LANGE (Norway).

Léon MALHOMME (Poland).

N. P. COMNÈNE (Roumania).

ADLERCREUTZ (Sweden).

DELAQUIS (Switzerland).

ROTHMUND (Switzerland).
