

## INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Reference code** UNHCR 11/1  
**1.2 Title** Classified subject files, 1951-1970  
**1.3 Dates of creation** 1946-1975 (predominant 1951-1970)  
**1.4 Level** Series  
**1.5 Extent (quantity)** 47.5 m
- 2.3 Archival history** The genesis of the classification scheme adopted by the Central Registry in 1951 is not clear. It does not appear to follow either the League of Nations' or the International Refugee Organization's filing plan. UNHCR's basic scheme was to use a number for each main topic. Subordinate topics were coded with a number and a slash, then either subordinate numbers which could continue for several places (for example, 1/1/6/1) or numbers and then letters (for example, 1/1/47/CENT) or one or more blocks of letters (for example, 1/SPA/CHL). Numbers followed by letters were filed before numbers followed by other numbers. Consequently, to maintain that original order, the Archives has interpolated a "0" after the main number in number-letter files (for example, 1/0/SPA/CHL to make it sort before 1/1). In a few instances both a "0" and a double "00" have had to be inserted; see, for example, Classification 21. Finally, the files coded with letters were filed beginning with "GEN" (the General File on the topic), then the alphabetical files starting with A (for example, 6/6/GEN comes before 6/6/AUS).

On 10 November 1969, Inter-Office Memorandum 24/69 announced to UNHCR Headquarters that the Central Registry subject filing system was moving from a "classified" to a "decimal" system. One by one, categories of records were to be converted to the new system; from the appearance of the files, the conversion was not complete until well into the 1970s. Registry clerks continued to file into old filing numbers, while at the same time taking some existing files and moving them to the new system en masse. Researchers interested in the period from ca. 1965 to 1975 should check both series 1 and series 2 of the Central Registry. It is worth noting that in at least one file, 15/58, the Registry took a file that had been passed to UNHCR by the International Refugee Organization and incorporated it into the Registry classification. Consequently, this classification, used between 1951 and 1969, incorporates both earlier and later documents.

- 3.2 Scope and content** The strength of the series is its legal files. Classification 6, Protection; Classification 15, Special Groups of Refugees; Classification 16, International Status of Refugees – Convention; Classification 21, Repatriation; and Classification 22, Eligibility are all quite comprehensive. In addition, the statistical files (Classification 20) were retained in toto.

A topic well documented in the files is the extensive fund-raising operation during the East Pakistan crisis in the early 1970s; these records are found in Classification 27, Far East Operations. By contrast, the records relating to the 1956 Hungarian crisis and the Algerian conflict in the late 1950s and early 1960s are thin and scattered.

Nevertheless, this series is the single most important source for the first twenty years of UNHCR. It is indispensable for any history of a legal question relating to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol or of refugee law generally.

### **3.4 Arrangement**

The series is arranged in 27 numeric subjects:

1. General
2. Administration and Finance
3. Intergovernmental Organisations – United Nations
4. Voluntary Agencies
5. [no existing records]
6. Protection
7. Reports
8. Agreements
9. [no existing records]
10. Individual Cases
11. Migration and Resettlement
12. [no existing records]
13. Assistance
14. [no existing records]
15. Special Groups of Refugees
16. International Status of Refugees – Convention
17. Refugee Survey Group
18. [no existing records]
19. Refugees Service Committees
20. Statistics
21. Repatriation
22. Eligibility
23. Far East Operations
24. [no existing records]
25. [no existing records]
26. [no existing records]
27. Permanent Solutions

### **4.5 Finding aids**

File unit list

**5.3 Related units of description** UNHCR 4, Records of the United Nations Office in Geneva; UNHCR 9, Collective fonds regarding UNHCR matters, 1951-1965; UNHCR 13, Records of the Office of the High Commissioner, Sub-fonds 1, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan; UNHCR 23, Records of the Hong Kong Refugees Survey Mission, 1954; UNHCR 44, Personal Papers of Nelly E. Weiss; UNHCR 47, Records of the Vienna Office.

**7.2 Rules or conventions** Internal UNHCR rules

**7.3 Date of description** 2 August 2001