

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

At the San Remo Institute :

Resolution on Family Reunification

The Conference of Experts on Family Reunion, which was jointly organized by the International Institute for Humanitarian Law, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the ICRC, the League and the Italian Red Cross, and held in Florence from 13 to 16 June 1974, emphasized the need to establish a set of principles for the reuniting of dispersed families.

The Scientific Committee on the International Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons implemented the proposal made at the Florence Conference. A document was drawn up in the course of several working meetings and was discussed at the San Remo Institute's Fifth and Sixth Round Table Meetings on Current Problems of Humanitarian Law in 1978 and 1979.

The Scientific Committee prepared the final version of the document below, taking into account the comments and suggestions put forward by the experts of the various working meetings. As a final step, the Council, which is the decision-making body of the International Institute for Humanitarian Law, examined and adopted the document at its session on 27 January 1980.

BODY OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROCEDURES ON THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES

The Council of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, at San Remo, on 27 January 1980,

Recognizing that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State;

Considering that the minimum concept of the family should be the spouse, dependent children and dependent parents as well as that consideration should however be given to widening this concept where the social and cultural custom recognizes a more extended family unit;

Considering that the Governments concerned should, for humanitarian reasons, take all possible measures to facilitate the reunion of families according to the request of their members;

Regards that, accordingly, the following principles should be observed:

PRINCIPLE 1: *Status of Family Members*

Family members who have been admitted to a country for family reunion, shall enjoy a status not less favourable than that of a family member with whom they have been reunited.

PRINCIPLE 2: *Tracing of Family Members*

The Governments concerned shall, for humanitarian reasons, facilitate the exchange of news and the tracing of separated family members.

PRINCIPLE 3: *Procedures*

Procedures for the reunion of families shall be carried out without delay.

PRINCIPLE 4: *Fiscal and Other Charges*

In the interests of the reunion of families, fees or taxes for travel documents, visas, or any other necessary document shall be as low as possible. No special taxes or charges, of any kind, shall be imposed upon a person who requests permission to be reunited with his family.

PRINCIPLE 5: *International Cooperation*

In the interest of the reunion of families the work of competent humanitarian organizations shall be facilitated and encouraged. They shall be permitted to assist any person in this regard and shall be granted all necessary facilities.

PRINCIPLE 6: *Family Visits*

Visits between family members who reside in different countries shall be facilitated. For such family members, passport and visa fees shall be as low as possible. In cases of hardship or for other compassionate reasons, passports and visas shall be issued as a matter of priority.