

RESOLUTION No. AGN/32/RES/6

SUBJECT:

THE USE OF THE MASS MEDIA
IN SEARCHING FOR MISSING
PERSONS

TO BE CLASSIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

1 copy in the CHRONOLOGICAL SERIES:
Year 1963

1 copy in the SUBJECT SERIES:

Heading: Identification of persons
and dead bodies

Sub-heading: Miscellaneous

1 copy in the SUBJECT SERIES:

Heading: Juvenile delinquency - The
police and minors

Sub-heading: Repatriation of fugitive
minors

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

HAVING STUDIED the General Secretariat's report on the use of mass media in searching for missing persons and having discussed the report,

The ICPO-Interpol General Assembly, meeting in Helsinki from 21st to 28th August 1963 at its 32nd session:

RECOMMENDS that the following principles be borne in mind in connection with searches for missing persons:

- (1) Cases involving missing persons can be solved rapidly if all the information about such cases is centralized by the police or other competent bodies at the national or State level; the information collected may also deal with unidentified bodies and identified but unclaimed bodies.
- (2) The use of mass media to obtain the co-operation of the public in searching for missing persons would be likely to lead to the rapid solution of numerous cases; co-operation with these mass media, which should be sought by the police, could be based on agreements.
- (3) Whatever the relation between the police and their country's mass media, assistance from the latter should be used with discrimination so that they retain their full effect on the public.

It seems, in particular, that television should be used by the police only in exceptional cases (e.g. if children or adolescents disappear in certain circumstances, if a crime is suspected, etc.) and only when the police or the missing person's family can provide recent photographs or distinct elements for identification purposes.

- (4) Any request for a search for a missing person sent by one National Central Bureau to another should bring into play both the traditional procedures used by the police and, if necessary, the use of mass media in exactly the same way as if the missing person were a subject of the requested country.

Such requests for searches should be made only in important cases and when there are reasons for presuming that the missing person is on the requested country's territory. They must comprise full details of the missing person's identity and appearance and a brief account of the circumstances under which he disappeared.

- (5) As far as possible, the police should assist in conveying urgent and important messages to people who are travelling in their country without a fixed address. Assistance from the mass media - and from the radio services in particular - should be sought in such cases.
