

After the death of two ICRC Delegates

It will be recalled that on 30 September 1969, two delegates of the International Committee, Dr. Dragan Herčog, a member of the Yugoslav surgical team, and Robert Carlsson, member of a Swedish relief team, were killed during the fighting that was then raging around Okigwi, some miles north of Umuahia. At the same time and place, two persons working for the World Council of Churches were also killed and another member of the Swedish team wounded. Last November, the *International Review* published the circumstance of this drama which profoundly disturbed the Red Cross everywhere. It also mentioned that ICRC Commissioner-General, Mr. August Lindt, had protested strongly to the federal military government at Lagos. He demanded an enquiry and the punishment of those responsible. He further demanded the tightening up of orders to Nigerian front-line troops to ensure the safety of Red Cross personnel. On 1 February 1969, the following reply was sent to Mr. Lindt by the federal military government:

The Ministry of External Affairs presents its compliments to the Commissioner-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross in West Africa and has the honour to refer to the Commissioner-General's Note dated 3rd October, 1968, regarding the incident at Okigwi on 30th September, 1968. The Ministry quotes hereunder, for the Commissioner-General's information, the text of the Note addressed to the diplomatic missions of Britain, Sweden and Yugoslavia whose citizens were victims of the incident:

The Federal Military Government has noted the reports of the Observers in which a Swedish citizen and a Yugoslav citizen, both employed by the ICRC, as well as Mr. & Mrs. A. F. C. Savory, British citizens who had taken shelter in the ICRC station, are alleged to have met their death at the hands of

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Federal troops. Subsequent investigations have, however, failed to identify the culprits and the Federal Military Government can only regrettably conclude that the incident occurred at the instance of the first wave of front-line soldiers who very likely lost their lives in the battle for Okigwi.

The Ministry of External Affairs expressed the regrets of the Federal Military Government as soon as reports of this incident were received. The Ministry now wishes to place on record the Federal Military Government's sincere regrets together with its assurances that steps have since been taken to avoid any recurrence. The Federal Military Government would be grateful for details of the family circumstances of the deceased persons so as to be able to express its condolences to their next-of-kin.

The Ministry of External Affairs expresses its apologies for the delay in conveying a reply to the diplomatic mission's Note but trusts that the mission appreciates that the incident was of such gravity that very careful and detailed investigations had to be carried out by the competent authorities in order to ensure that there was no miscarriage of justice.

The Ministry of External Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Commissioner-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross in West Africa the assurances of its highest consideration.

Lagos, 1st February, 1969.