

# Air bridge for Biafra aid to open soon

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT—Geneva, Aug. 14

An air bridge for daylight flights into Biafra is expected to be opened soon by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Auguste Lindt, the committee's commissioner for Nigeria-Biafra, told a press conference today that an airstrip had been offered by Biafra for the purpose. Red Cross teams had taken over the strip, but it was not yet equipped for operations.

There had been earlier indications from the federal Nigerian side, he said, that it would regard favourably an arrangement whereby the Red Cross was responsible for the entire running of the strip, including ground and air control.

Mr. Lindt was clearly optimistic that the formal federal approval for I.C.R.C. operation of the new strip would be forthcoming very soon. He emphasized that the strip would be used only by Red Cross aircraft bearing the appropriate markings—but "anybody can put aircraft at the disposal of the I.C.R.C." and they would be readily accepted.

At present the committee has four aircraft on charter, but more will obviously be needed if the possibilities of the new strip are to be properly exploited. Mr. Lindt was unable to say what the maximum capacity of the air bridge might be; this, he said, was a question that experts were investigating.

He declined to specify from which points aircraft using the bridge might come, as this was a matter to be settled with the federal Nigerian Government.

He said that Red Cross night flights into Biafra from the Spanish island of Fernando Póo had been suspended on his responsibility because to the federal anti-aircraft gunners "all cats are grey in the

dark". He did not regard present night flights by aircraft chartered by voluntary agencies as really meaningful in the context of Biafra's acute need. The new airstrip would alter the position entirely.

Mr. Lindt sharply refuted suggestions that the I.C.R.C. had been dilatory in getting the relief campaign moving. Even if there had been no overt immediate development after his three-week visit to Nigeria and Biafra, detailed plans for coordinating relief work by the various agencies were now agreed, he said.

Where federal-controlled territory was concerned, Lagos had given the go-ahead for moving supplies out to Enugu and Calabar by any form of transport. With 5,000 tons of food and medicines stockpiled at Lagos, they were shifting supplies to Enugu, where 1,700 tons would be kept permanently available. A depot for 1,000 tons had been established at Calabar.

Mr. Joseph Tarka, the Nigerian Federal Transport Minister, said tonight that his Government wanted to check cargoes on I.C.R.C. aircraft at their points of departure for Biafra.

From these points, relief distribution was being carried out by volunteer teams, as civil administration had mostly broken down.

Aba, Biafra, Aug. 14.—A new wave of Biafran refugees streamed

into Aba by thousands today after at least two days of heavy mortar and artillery bombardment by the federal Nigerian forces of two towns to the south, Biafran officials said in Aba.

The boom of artillery, sometimes audible here, added to the anxiety of the refugee-swollen population.

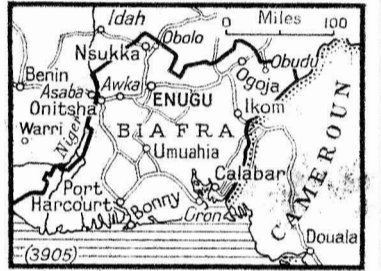
The officials said that Umuagbai and Akwete, about half-way between Port Harcourt and Aba, had been bombarded, forcing an estimated 35,000 people to flee the 30 miles to Aba.

**Washington.**—Mr. Robert Goldstein, whose Californian public relations firm has represented Biafra in the United States under a \$400,000 (£166,000) annual contract, has said he can no longer promote Biafran interests. His associates, however, stated that they would continue to work for Biafra. They said he had been discharged from the firm.

Mr. Goldstein said he would consider working for Nigeria. But the Nigerian Embassy stated that it had hired a public relations firm which "has no connexions with Mr. Goldstein and his associates".

**MALMO.**—A veteran Swedish pilot has broken the air blockade and flown 11 tons of food and medicine through anti-aircraft fire to Biafra. A spokesman for Transair said that Captain Carl Gustav von Rosen, had made the flight on Monday in a DC.7B, a four-engined propeller transport, from the Portuguese island of São Tomé.

He had been chartered to fly the supplies from Europe to São Tomé for the Roman Catholic organization Caritas. Seeing the supplies stranded on the island, he volunteered for the final lap.—Reuter, A.P., and U.P.I.



# Nurses plan mercy mission

BY A STAFF REPORTER

More than 130 Biafran nurses working in Britain are prepared to go home to work without pay in refugee camps there, Mrs. Uzoamaka Chukwuka, aged 36, president of the Biafran Nurses Association, said yesterday.

The nurses hope to fly out in relays of five to work for three or four months on unpaid leave from their jobs here. The first five, two paediatric nurses, two midwives and a hospital nurse, hope to leave London next week.

Mrs. Chukwuka will fly with the first group either to Lisbon or to Geneva, where arrangements for going on to Biafra will be completed. The journey is being paid for by the Ockenden Venture, the refugee relief agency formed in Britain 15 years ago.

Two of the nurses in the first group are married and their children are still in Biafra. "They know they are safe", Mrs. Chukwuka said, "They are being cared for by relatives."

These nurses will initially be going to work for Mgr. Joseph Delaney, Bishop of Owerri, who has raised £10,000 in Ireland recently for relief work in Biafra. Mgr. Delaney has appealed to Caritas International, the Roman Catholic relief agency, to open 400 feeding centres in Biafra and to staff them with doctors and nurses.

Mrs. Chukwuka, who works as a health visitor for Lambeth Health Council, said: "We will work for any relief organization that can use us and pay our expenses and pocket money. We would be working mainly in the refugee camps."

Mrs. Chukwuka is concerned about the lack of qualified staff in

Biafra may be leading to mothers using the wrong concentrations of food and producing severe, possibly fatal, digestive illnesses. As a health visitor in peacetime Biafra, she found mothers using the wrong concentrations because they did not understand the directions. "If there is nobody to direct them it could be happening in war too." Villages without refugee camps urgently needed health visitors to avoid starving children being given too concentrated food.

Married Biafran nurses with children in Britain are hoping that British mothers will look after their children to enable them to help in Biafra. In September, Mrs. Chukwuka and two colleagues will fly out to have talks with the Health Ministry to assess the needs there.

Each nurse who has registered with the association has indicated when she will be able to get leave to go to Biafra. They have paid 4 guineas, each in enrolment and subscription fees and this money will help to pay for Mrs. Chukwuka's delegation to visit Biafra. A fund-raising drive to help the nurses' campaign is being launched with a dance at Battersea Town Hall on August 24; the sponsors include Lord Brockway and Lord Soper.

The association was formed in April when a few Biafran nurses met to decide how they could help without involving the Biafran Government in any expense. A number of hospital patients, concerned at the plight of children in Biafra, have contributed to the association's appeal fund.

Dr. Christopher Woodard, a patron and former chairman of the Ockenden Venture, said in

London yesterday an idea to fly doctors and nurses to Biafra by daylight was welcomed at a recent meeting of the International Red Cross in Geneva.

Code named "Operation Compassion", the scheme would be a joint effort by the Ockenden Venture and Caritas International the Roman Catholic organization.

Dr. Woodard said a second stage of the operation would involve an idea to evacuate the most seriously injured, and starving mothers and children, from Biafra to friendly countries in the neighbourhood.

Ten more members of the Save the Children Fund emergency relief teams are flying to Geneva from Heathrow airport on their way to Lagos. It is hoped they will be working in areas which were formerly Biafran.

They will bring the number of S.C.F.-recruited emergency relief workers in Nigeria to 40.

# Rival claims of advances

From a Special Correspondent

Ikot Ekpene, Nigeria, Aug. 14.—Biafran troops claimed advances in three directions yesterday in the South-East Biafran front against almost no Nigerian opposition.

From Ikot Ekpene, which had been heavily contested for three months, the Biafrans moved to new defensive positions forward of it.

Biafran company commanders in the area attributed their advance to low Nigerian morale.

Lagos, Aug. 14.—Federal Nigerian troops were here reported closing in on Aba, the largest important city held by the Biafrans, in what appeared to be a drive to crush Biafra. Military sources said federal soldiers had

# Wilson told to face issues

Our Own Correspondent  
Washington, Aug. 14

# Allegation on passports

Barbados, Aug. 14.—Mr. Tom Adams, a member of the opposition Labour Party in the Barbados