

## APPENDIX

## CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING AID TO NIGERIA-BIAFRA

Ottawa, September 21, 1968

Dear Secretary-General,

I wanted you to know that the Government and people of Canada share with other nations throughout the world the distress and dismay which you have expressed over the terrible toll of destruction, starvation and loss of life resulting from the tragic fratricidal strife in Nigeria. As you so eloquently stated on September 13 to the meeting in Algiers of Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity, "In the name of humanity it is essential that everything be done to help relieve the impact of this tragic conflict".

In face of this concern the Canadian people and indeed public opinion in many other countries find it difficult to understand how the United Nations could fail to concern itself with the humanitarian task of preventing death by starvation for these suffering people.

The Canadian Government fully supports the efforts of the OAU to assist the Nigerian peoples in their search for a solution of their political problems. That organization in a resolution adopted at its recent conference in Algiers asked all member states of the UN and the OAU to abstain from any action susceptible of impairing the unity, territorial integrity and peace of Nigeria. You said you believed that the OAU should be the most appropriate instrument for the promotion of peace in Nigeria and that it has been agreed that all humanitarian aid to victims of the Nigerian conflict should be channelled through the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Canadian Government agrees with these statements.

I realize that to raise the situation in Nigeria in general terms before the General Assembly could be divisive. There may nonetheless be a role for the UN in stimulating effective action on the humanitarian problem of opening ways of delivering relief supplies to the needy. This could help meet the earnest desire of people everywhere not only to offer assistance but to see that the help being given reaches those who are in greatest need. I can not help but feel that in

these circumstances every avenue must be explored.

I know that you and your representative in Nigeria have spared no efforts to urge the parties to facilitate the flow of aid to the civilian population. As a contribution to the efforts being made by the international community, Canada has made over one million dollars available to the International Red Cross for relief supplies for Nigeria. Canada has also responded to the invitation of the Federal Military Government to send an observer, along with those of other nations, the OAU and your own representative to observe the conduct of the Federal Military Government's troops. The Algiers resolution of the OAU appealed once more to all the interested parties to cooperate with a view to assuring the rapid despatch of humanitarian aid to all those who need it. We would like to see effect given to this appeal by the most effective means available.

In the light of these considerations, the Government of Canada would be grateful for your views as to any additional ways in which the good offices of the UN might be brought to bear at this time in relieving the suffering of the people of Nigeria. We for our part are studying possible measures which might be taken by the international community to assist not only in alleviating the effects of the fighting but also in the vital work of reconstruction in devastated areas.

Yours sincerely,

Mitchell Sharp

U Thant,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
New York

Press release

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

For immediate release

30 September 1968

NIGERIA

The Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, received on