

Niger Bridge:

The situation at the broken Niger Bridge merits special mention. There are thousands of refugees and many private motor vehicles waiting to cross the ferry from Onitsha to Asaba. Some refugees reported that they had been waiting two, three and four days to cross. There is a fee of one pound per vehicle and three shillings per person, but many of the refugees had not even three shillings. It will remain a bottleneck while prospective passengers are without money to pay the fare. Relief vehicles should be given priority on the ferry.

Freedom of Movement:

During the period under review, and for the first time since it started operating, the Team experienced difficulty in obtaining transportation from Lagos to the divisional areas. In some cases, the Team also found difficulty in obtaining vehicles in which to carry out their tours in the divisional areas.

The Team did not consider the failure to provide vehicles, when requested, was an attempt to deny the Team freedom of movement. The Team appreciates that there were administrative difficulties at divisional headquarters. Nonetheless, the Team was inconvenienced and found that its work was hampered.

Once the Team had vehicles and liaison officers, it enjoyed complete freedom of movement, its itineraries were accepted by the divisional commanders. It acknowledges the cooperation of the commanders at all levels.

Special Inquiries:

Mbaise

A) A report in a foreign newspaper, dated January 15, 1970, alleged that when the federal soldiers advanced into the secessionist area, atrocities had occurred at Mbaise near Abu. The Team received information that Mbaise could be Mbawsi (north of Abu) or Abu (south of Nguru, which is the chief village of the Mbaise district). The Team decided to visit both these villages on January 30 to find out whether the statement could be true.

B) The Team carried out a thorough inquiry and is of the opinion that no massacre or large-scale killing