

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

The leaders of the three bodies which, with the National Societies, make up the International Red Cross met in Geneva on Thursday, 18th May.

They are the Countess of Limerick (Great Britain), Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross; Mr. Samuel A. Gonard, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; and Mr. José Barroso (Mexico), Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League.

This is one of the regular meetings provided for in the statutes of the International Red Cross. The Standing Commission, headed by Lady Limerick, ensures the general co-ordination of the work of the different International Red Cross institutions between meetings, every four years, of the International Conference of the Red Cross.

Following their meeting, the three Presidents of the International Red Cross made the following statement:

The Countess of Limerick, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, Mr. Samuel Gonard, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. José Barroso-Chavez, President of the League of Red Cross Societies, meeting in Geneva, on May 18th, 1967, have viewed with deep concern the mounting tide of human suffering and loss of life in the tragedy now being enacted in Viet Nam. In accordance with the traditional humanitarian role of the Red Cross and its determination to secure the reduction of human suffering, particularly for those civilians whose homes are in the areas of armed conflict, the three Presidents solemnly call upon

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all Governments and authorities at present engaged in such armed conflict :

- 1. to affirm by their action the Declaration adopted by the Governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at the XXth International Red Cross Conference, held in Vienna in October 1965, which recalls the general principles of the laws of war and particularly the fact that the right of the parties to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited ;*
- 2. to refrain from all deliberate attacks upon innocent civilians in Viet Nam, whether by aerial or ground weapons, or by torture or wanton murder ;*
- 3. to use their utmost endeavours to ensure that innocent civilians are not killed or injured in the course of combat operations, whether by land, sea or air ;*
- 4. to allow the unimpeded distribution of medicaments and other relief urgently needed by the civilian population in all areas of Viet Nam ;*
- 5. to ensure the proper and humane treatment of all prisoners and detainees held by them, irrespective of their allegiance ;*
- 6. to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross, through their duly appointed representatives, to carry out their humanitarian and legitimate functions in all parts of Viet Nam in accordance with the requirements of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which they have accepted, and the dictates of conscience and good faith by which they are bound ;*
- 7. to conclude with the utmost urgency a complete and comprehensive cease-fire in all areas in order that this intolerable burden of human misery may be removed from the civilian populations of Viet Nam.*