

21st January 2012

Mr. John Mc Guinness, TD
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.



Public Accounts Committee Hearing into Irish Red Cross 19th January 2012

Dear Chairman,

I watched the above hearing live on line and I can only describe my reaction to the statements and answers provided by the Irish Red Cross as one of shock, outrage and disgust.

The extent of misinformation and quite frankly untruths told is staggering. To do so on public record, in our national parliament and before elected representatives is astounding.

I believe great damage has been done to the image and reputation of the Red Cross, its emblem and everything it stands for. Based on what I witnessed at the hearing I greatly fear for the future, the integrity and the welfare of the Irish Red Cross.

Whether the Irish Red Cross representatives believed what they were saying to be accurate and true only they will ever know. Regardless it does not take away from the inaccuracy of very substantial parts of their evidence.

I intend to respond in detail to the statements and answers provided by the Red Cross representatives once the full transcript of the hearing becomes available. I will forward this to the Public Accounts Committee and the Department of Defence as a formal record.

In relation to one issue, however, I will record my view now. It is factually incorrect to say that when the Tipperary account was first discovered in 2008 that the then Head of Finance told nobody and that for a number of years no board member therefore knew about the account's existence and/or discovery. In 2008 when the bank account was discovered at least three senior board members were informed. One of these subsequently resigned over the organisation's failure to investigate the matter as well as other concerns the person had surrounding governance and finance. A fourth, the Vice Chairman who was one of the signatories on the Tipperary bank account, also obviously knew.

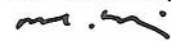
In addition to these board members the Secretary General of the Society at the time was immediately informed (2008). I am sure this can easily be verified by the individual who is currently a senior civil servant in the Department of Justice and Defence (he was on secondment to the Irish Red Cross as Secretary General at the time of the bank account's discovery).

As Head of the International Department I was personally informed by the Secretary General of the bank account's discovery circa Sept/Oct 2008. I have email correspondence to the Secretary General in early October 2008 stating that I felt the Vice Chairman should resign over the matter. I can provide a copy of this email if required. I continually called (until my dismissal) for an independent investigation into the account (at senior management meetings, at staff meetings and during numerous private discussions with two separate Secretary Generals).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you as Chair Deputy Mc Guinness and all members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for investigating the Irish Red Cross and the allegations of misgovernance and financial malpractice. Given the enormous workload on the Committee there are many of us very appreciative that the PAC discussed this issue not only once but on two separate occasions, 13th October 2011 and 19th January 2012.

I think it only correct to note Deputy Kieran O' Donnell for being an excellent Chair on the 19th and for allowing the hearing continue for well over two and a half hours thereby facilitating a rigorous and detailed questioning of the Irish Red Cross. Interventions by Deputies Derek Nolan, Simon Harris and Anne Ferris were also extremely important. In particular, however, I would wish to commend the lead questioner on the 19th, Deputy Eoghan Murphy. His knowledge of the subject matter was detailed and comprehensive and as such must have entailed a considerable investment of time, energy and preparation. In a time when public representatives are seemingly continually and collectively criticised I would want to put on record my own appreciation to all of those on PAC who obviously put significant effort and work into this case.

Yours sincerely,



Noel Wardick

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Cc: Minister for Justice and Defence, Mr. Alan Shatter, TD