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MRS. LANDRY COMMENTS ON SITUATION IN LIBERIA

The Minister for External Relations and International Development, the Honourable Monique Landry, today expressed concern and dismay at reports of the massacre on July 30 of hundreds of Liberian civilians.

"We are appalled at the mindless violence which has been directed against civilian populations in recent months by Liberian government and rebel forces alike," said Mrs. Landry.

Mrs. Landry noted that there is no effective government in Liberia at present and efforts of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) to mediate a peaceful transition of government have been rejected by the combatants.

"Canada appeals to the parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under the Geneva Convention on the protection of the victims of armed conflict and to accept ECOWAS mediation."

The corruption of successive Liberian regimes and the absence of respect for human rights has inhibited the development of any Canadian bilateral aid program and closer diplomatic ties.

Canada has no resident diplomatic mission in Liberia. A consular officer of the Canadian High Commission in Accra, Ghana, and Canada's Honourary Consul in Monrovia, organized the evacuation of most Canadians resident in Liberia several weeks ago. Thirteen Canadians chose to remain in the Monrovia area. Under a mutual assistance agreement, these Canadian citizens would be included within the American contingency plan. Naval vessels of the United States are positioned off the Liberian coast to provide for the evacuation of foreign nationals.

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