

Canada has pursued the issue of protecting civilians by taking action at the General Assembly, the Human Security Network, specialized UN agencies, regional organizations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and groups such as the G-8. In February 1999, while holding the presidency of the Security Council, Canada sponsored two open briefings on protecting civilians. In September 1999, Canada drafted Security Council Resolution 1265 on protecting civilians in armed conflict. On April 19, 2000, the Council adopted Resolution 1296. Prepared by Canada, Resolution 1296 concentrates on key recommendations related to physical protection emanating from the Sept. 8, 1999, Report of the Secretary-General and ensures that provisions related to the protection of civilians will be included in reports to the Security Council. Canada is also preparing for Council members a checklist with relevant provisions from resolutions 1265 and 1296. These would be taken into account each time the Council considers formal action.

Canadian efforts have brought Security Council members face to face with key humanitarian and human rights officials to an unprecedented degree. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs has briefed the Council five times since January 1999. Heads of key UN agencies and the Secretary-General's special representative for children and armed conflict have also spoken at the Security Council. In September 1999, the High Commissioner for Human Rights made a first appearance before the Council. And, at Canada's request, the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor on Gender Issues participated in a Security Council debate on Afghanistan, focusing on the human rights and humanitarian situation.

Peace-support operations

Currently there are 19 United Nations peace support operations with about 36,600 personnel. Over 6,000 police are deployed in UN missions, 33 per cent of all UN peacekeepers. The UN has requested about 8,900 police peacekeepers, but has been unable to fill all the positions. Some 5,000 civilians work for UN peace support operations, of whom 3,500 are professional international staff. Slightly more than 100 of the international staff are Canadians. These figures do not include those who may have been hired by UN agencies to work within a peace-operation theatre.

Canada has a long history of participation in peacekeeping and is respected for the quality of its personnel and its leadership in peacekeeping policy. As of early July 2000, Canada was the 27th largest contributor of peacekeeping personnel to the UN. (This does not include 1,700 peacekeepers under NATO command in Bosnia.) Canada has 118 officers deployed on missions around the world and ranks 12th on the list of police peacekeeping contributors. As well, 2,730 Canadian Forces personnel participate in other peace-support operations.