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CANADA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIAL SESSION ON THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today announced that Canada will participate in the special session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), August 13-14 in Geneva. The purpose of this first-ever emergency session of the UNCHR is to examine the deteriorating human rights situation in the former Yugoslavia. The Canadian delegation will be headed by Anne Park, Canada's Head of Delegation to the UNCHR.

"The conflict in the former Yugoslavia has led to deplorable acts of violence and to the denial of basic rights and freedoms. The existence of numerous detention camps underlines the gravity of the situation," said Mrs. McDougall. "We want to ensure that these abuses end."

The Minister stated that the International Committee of the Red Cross must be given immediate and unconditional access to all places of detention. She stressed that all parties to the conflict must respect the Geneva Conventions on the Treatment of Civilians and Prisoners of War, and added that they must be held responsible for their conduct.

Canada is firmly committed to a multilateral approach to finding a just and durable solution to this very complex and tragic situation. "We intend to be at the table in London later this month to work toward the achievement of a comprehensive settlement to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia," said Mrs. McDougall.

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