

The Secretary of State for External Affairs announced today that Canada has ratified the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft and the Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation. Instruments of Ratification of the two Conventions, which were adopted by conferences convened under the auspices of ICAO, were deposited in the three depository capitals of London, Moscow and Washington.

The Hague Convention provides for effective legal measures to deter acts of unlawful seizure of aircraft, i.e. hijacking. Under the Convention a contracting state is obliged either to extradite hijackers located in its territory to a state wishing to prosecute, or itself to prosecute the offenders. Recent revisions to the Canadian Criminal Code adopted by Parliament render hijacking a crime in Canada. The Hague Convention which entered into force on October 14, 1971 has already been ratified or acceded to by 33 countries.

The Montreal Convention, which is not yet in force as an international agreement, provides for effective legal measures to deter acts of sabotage, armed attacks and other forms of violence, other than hijacking, directed against civil aviation and air navigation facilities. Like the Hague Convention, the Montreal Convention imposes an obligation on contracting states either to extradite or prosecute persons charged with offences described in the Convention. Canada is among the first states to become a party to the Montreal Convention.

Canada played an active role in the negotiation of these two Conventions whose purpose is to ensure that as among subscribing states no person who hijacks an aircraft or commits other acts of unlawful interference with civil aviation goes unpunished because of jurisdictional technicalities.