

Canada must press the Abubakar government to commence the investigation of abuses of military power under the Abacha and Babangida regimes and secure the return of all ill-gotten gains: all funds and property stolen by military personnel.

Canada must press General Abubakar to publish the constitution under which the new elections are occurring. It is critical that the law be publicly known.

Support must go to groups inside Nigeria that are in the heat of the struggle, those who are continuing the internal pressure to ensure the transition to democracy, such as journalists, trade unionists, pro-democracy groups, minority groups, and church and religious groups.

Canada must continue to support Nigerians in exile, especially promoting links between exiles and the democratic movements in Nigeria to ensure exiles are not isolated and are enabled to play an effective external representative role. Canada should substantially support external communications into Nigeria, like Radio Kudirat. Canada must ensure that the Nigerian situation is well known outside Nigeria, and specially promote a relationship between Nigerian journalists and those from other African countries.

Canada, in its consideration of overall refugee numbers, must recognize and be open to receiving political refugees from Nigeria, including for example Ogoni refugees and other minorities subjected to oppression and denial of fundamental rights. As well, where refugees feel the time is right to return to Nigeria, Canada must press for the creation of acceptable conditions of return and provide support for the return of such refugees.

Canada must press Nigeria for the return of the bodies of persons murdered by the military regime, in particular the Agoni 9 hanged in 1995.

(Text of group report to plenary)

The promise of a return to democracy in Nigeria, ending years of an abusive dictatorship, gives Canada the opportunity of helping to assure free and fair elections for the legislature in December and the presidency in February. The following steps should be taken immediately:

1. Canada can use money from the Democratic Development funds of CIDA to support civil society in Nigeria in mobilizing for the elections. The Group of 78 welcomes Minister Axworthy's statement of August 24 promising to sponsor a forum for pan-Commonwealth NGOs to give guidance to this process. Canada should encourage participation of all Nigerian groups, including the military, in the election process and in subsequent political arrangements.
2. Canada can take advantage of the coming meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Assistants Group to promote a strong Commonwealth contribution.
3. The services of Elections Canada should be made available.
4. Canada should offer strong participation in election monitoring.

Canada should await the success of the Nigerian elections, and the formation of a democratic government, before restoring full Canadian diplomatic representation. Canada should urge the