

BACKGROUNDER

CANADA'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Canada is participating fully in international efforts to promote a peaceful settlement to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. In September 1991, Prime Minister Mulroney led the call for a UN peacekeeping force as the only means to stop the fighting and to permit negotiations. Canada has been active in searching for political solutions both at the United Nations and at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). It has also given generously to international humanitarian relief efforts to help the victims of the fighting. In the last 12 months, it has extended the visas of approximately 15,000 citizens of the former Yugoslavia who had entered Canada as temporary visitors.

Peacekeeping

About 1,200 Canadian troops and 30 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) civilian monitors are deployed with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). One of the largest contributions to the international force, the Canadian contingent is based in Daruvar, Croatia. In June, Canada responded positively to a UN request to allow its troops to be reassigned to maintain security at the Sarajevo airport, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their presence there has made possible the airlift of relief supplies for the population of Sarajevo. In early August, the Canadian troops will resume their duties in Croatia.

Diplomacy

Canada has repeatedly called upon the parties to the conflict to end the violence and negotiate peacefully.

Canada recognized the independence of Slovenia and Croatia on January 15, 1992. On April 8, it recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the hope that international recognition would discourage any attempts by its neighbours to partition the republic and would strengthen the chances of finding a peaceful solution acceptable to all the ethnic groups. In light of the continued fighting, Canada has not yet established diplomatic relations with the three newly independent countries.

Canada's position with regard to Macedonia is that its people have a legitimate claim to recognition. Canada plans no action, however, that would contribute to the further destabilization of the region. It is hoped that a mutually acceptable solution can be found on the contentious issue of the name of the republic.