

Additionally, a Human Rights High Advisory Council has been operating since July and has recommended that an "Ombudsman" system be established. Past governments have also made commitments, and introduced some reforms, but unfortunately these have not produced the desired results.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Canada is concerned about abuses of human rights in Turkey and has offered to work with the appropriate Turkish authorities to assist in their efforts to improve the situation. Canadian representatives have consistently raised the human rights situation during discussions with their Turkish counterparts on every appropriate occasion, including during discussions at ministerial level. Minister Axworthy was last in Ankara in November 1997, when he met with his Turkish counterpart. Our Embassy keeps in close contact with and supports leading human rights NGOs in Turkey.

Canada condemns the terrorist activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and those of other violent opposition groups in Turkey. At the same time, Canada urges Turkish authorities to seek non-military solutions to the problems facing its citizens. The Canadian Government recognizes that Turkey has already taken some steps to address the issue of human rights, including disciplinary action against blatant cases of police abuses, changes to anti-terrorism legislation, and a degree of cooperation with organizations promoting human rights at the international level, including the UN Committee against Torture. These are steps in the right direction but Canada would welcome more.

The Turkish Government has stated that the most appropriate way to address the situation in the southeast is through enhancing socio-economic programs and improving the standard of living in general. We agree but believe that patterns of human rights abuses meanwhile need to be addressed.

Some Canadian NGOs have established contacts in Turkey with counterpart organisations. By working directly in support of Turkish NGOs and sometimes in offering concrete suggestions as to what can be done by third parties and governments, NGOs can play a very useful role in encouraging change in Turkey.

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