

Mr. Chairman,

The UN Charter obliges all governments represented here to take joint and separate action to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all". This debate is one measure of how well we are living up to this promise.

The picture emerging from these annual discussions is inevitably imperfect, based on reports from a few rapporteurs hampered by limited resources and often inadequate government co-operation, and supplemented by the observations of individual governments. Last year, I suggested our debate would be enhanced if it was based on an authoritative annual report by the Secretary-General. While continuing to promote this idea, we will contribute as best we can to discussions within the prevailing framework. However imperfect it may be, this debate plays a key role in reaffirming the commitment of the United Nations to the aspirations of the people we all represent.

The momentous global changes of recent years - the irrevocable turn to democracy in Latin America and East and Central Europe, and the emergence of more open, democratic societies in many other parts of the world - make the ideal of more effective international human rights protection more possible than ever before. Rapporteurs and Special Representatives of the Commission have been the linchpin of the UN's efforts in this regard, and deserve the full support of this Assembly; but their ultimate effectiveness turns on actions and attitudes in countries suffering human rights violations. Authorities which blatantly disregard basic rights and refuse co-operation with the international community must be left in no doubt of the General Assembly's censure.

- Events in the former Yugoslavia remain an affront to every international standard of human rights. Those responsible for the atrocities must be held accountable. Canada is committed to helping the newly-created international Tribunal and the Commission of Experts to carry out their mandates and bring to justice all war criminals in the former Yugoslavia. While a negotiated settlement accepted by all the parties is the only way to secure a lasting peace, we will continue to support the efforts of all those working to ease the suffering and improve the human rights situation in the former Yugoslavia, including the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Mazowiecki.

- In Haiti, the military and armed civilians under their control are directly responsible for a campaign of terror and the profound disruption of Haitian society. Breaking all promises made at Governor's Island they have blocked deployment of the UN mission and forced the departure of UN and OAS human rights observers. Canada supports all efforts by the international community to end this tragedy.

- In Iraq, widespread human rights abuses, particularly against the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the southern marshlands, continue to be documented in reports from Mr. Van der Stoep and others. It is time to end the systematic oppression of the civilian population of Iraq. We call on Iraq to respect Security Council resolutions providing for humanitarian assistance and to introduce sweeping democratic reforms. The General Assembly should urge Iraq to co-operate openly with the Commission's Rapporteur and to implement his recommendations.

- This Assembly should also call for improved co-operation on the part of Iran, where the Commission's representative and others continue to document violations of the right to life, the authorities' repressive attitude towards women and continued discrimination against the Bahai community. The *fatwa* against British author Salman Rushdie remains an international outrage and an ever-deepening stain on Iran's international reputation.

- The Special Rapporteur on Burma must also be allowed to conduct his enquiries without hindrance by the government. The military dictatorship's continuing disregard for

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