



Protection of CIVILIANS

Identifying HUMAN INSECURITY

Conflict has devastating implications for the safety and security of ordinary people. In fact, civilians now constitute a majority of casualties, with their injury and displacement often a deliberate war aim of combatants. In an age of instant communications and growing inter-connectedness, the knowledge of human suffering, no matter how distant, increases our need to act.

Strengthening protection for people in the global community we share is a clear and pressing priority. Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring state and non-state actors fulfill their responsibilities toward affected populations, and developing the tools and strategies as well as principles needed to help guide international responses stand out as critical challenges.



Canada's Protection of Civilians initiatives include the following issues:

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War-Affected Children

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Internally Displaced Persons

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Landmines

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Humanitarian Intervention

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Women, Peace and Security

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Legal and Physical Protection

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Human Rights Field Operations

Taking CONCRETE ACTION

Canada has been at the forefront of efforts to improve the legal and physical protection of civilian populations. This is evident in our work on conflict prevention, war-affected children and women and armed conflict, the International Criminal Court, landmines, small arms, internally displaced persons and refugee camp security. The protection of civilians in armed conflict was a priority theme for Canada throughout our recent Security Council mandate (1999-2000). Our work led to the development of two groundbreaking resolutions and we also actively sought to include provisions for civilian protection in Council decisions on newly established sanction regimes and peacekeeping missions. The Human Security Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has sought to reinforce these efforts and invests in initiatives that reduce the risks civilians face in all stages of conflict. The Program helped the United Nation's Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) create a training manual for the Sierra Leone Police Force. Since its introduction, reported human rights abuses have declined. Among the most vulnerable victims of conflict are the over 20 million people who are refugees within their own countries. Responding to this challenge, the Program supports the work of the Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons. This includes support for applying the Representative's guidelines, which seek to provide guidance relevant to protecting and assisting displaced persons.

Fostering FUTURE SECURITY

Continued Canadian leadership to protect civilians in armed conflict will be in the spotlight this year in several international fora. As Canada assumes the G8 Presidency in 2002, we will continue to work to enhance the legal and physical protection of civilians at meetings of Foreign Ministers. Canada will also promote renewed commitment among G8 members to develop practical strategies for conflict prevention. Within the UN, regional and other multilateral organizations, initiatives for advancing measures to protect civilians at risk will remain a Canadian priority. Canada will also continue to be active in addressing a range of other concerns including internally displaced persons, safety of humanitarian personnel and security in refugee camps.

