

Soviet Union, human rights are secondary to the rights accorded the Communist Party and the Soviet State itself. Furthermore, the ambiguity of many Soviet laws permits easy prosecution of individuals for policy purposes.

In the case of other countries, human rights may exist in law but the law itself may be routinely ignored, particularly in single-party states where there is no check on government. Indeed, it is hard to imagine cases in which non-democratic regimes have not also systematically denied human rights whenever they have found it convenient to do so - whether these regimes are of the right, or the left, or are merely despotic.

In still other cases, the rights of individuals may be incidental victims of war and conflict. Violence seldom brings out the best human traits of those engaged in it, frequently dehumanizing even the noblest of peoples. Combatants and non-combatants alike suffer the consequences, as we have seen in the Middle East, Central America and elsewhere.

Because each category of human rights abuse has its own distinct characteristics, and because within each category the character of individual cases may vary greatly, ideology and preordained responses are rarely helpful.

Therefore, having examined the problem, we need to proceed next to a consideration of our standing in a particular case, and to a judgement of what means are likely to be successful.

Canada has more than a duty to address abuses of human rights.

Our record on behalf of the world's poor and neglected, and a host of international legal instruments, together have given us an established right to address abuses and to seek practical ways of ending them.

Over the years, Canadians have provided tens of billions of dollars to combat poverty and hunger throughout the world, to alleviate the economic and social conditions so often at the root of human rights abuses.

We have also resettled and funded refugees in the hundreds of thousands over several generations - last year alone more than 15,000.

And we draw on the U.N. charter, the Universal Declaration, the Human Rights Conventions, and the Helsinki Final Act as sources of authority for concerning ourselves with what - in earlier times - were considered strictly internal matters. Even today, there are states who claim that international