

UNHCR and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Canada calls upon the government to grant full access and adequate security guarantees to humanitarian organizations, so that they can come to the assistance of refugees and displaced Congolese. Canada is pleased that an agreement on deployment of the Secretary-General's human rights investigative mission has finally been reached, so that the mission can soon begin its work on the ground.

Internal conflict in a State is often used to justify abuse of human rights. It is argued that exceptional circumstances justify exceptional measures, that human rights are a luxury to be postponed until a more peaceful time. However, a government which fails to respect the rights of its citizens in its efforts to suppress terrorism or armed opposition soon loses the trust and loyalty of its people.

In Sudan, we remain concerned about continued reports of arbitrary arrests, indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets by government forces, religious intolerance and persecution, as well as slavery. The internal conflict in Sudan is causing great hardship and suffering, and all parties bear responsibility for violations of human rights and humanitarian law. We continue to hope for a negotiated settlement of the civil war in Sudan.

In Colombia, although guerilla forces have repeatedly violated international humanitarian law, notably during the recent election campaign, the government has a responsibility to safeguard human rights. Canada believes that the government must redouble its efforts to combat impunity and corruption. We urge it to investigate and punish atrocities committed by paramilitary organizations, and to provide increased protection for human rights defenders. We strongly welcome the government's cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogota.

The conflict in Sri Lanka throws into sharp relief the importance of protecting civilian populations, and the obligation of the State to defend human rights. We therefore welcome Sri Lanka's ratification of the first Optional Protocol to the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and hope the government will take all necessary steps to ensure that the recently established Human Rights Commission becomes fully operational at the earliest possible date. Canada likewise urges all parties to work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict, and we condemn the recent terrorist attacks which have taken place in Colombo.

Canadians are horrified by the massacres in Algeria, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms the terrorists who carry out these vicious attacks on innocent people. Ultimately a free and pluralistic society is an instrument against terrorism and human rights abuses. We therefore support the political and economic reforms the Algerian authorities have embarked on, and we urge vigilant respect for human rights by those charged with combatting terrorism.

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