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# News Release

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## CANADA TO SEND MILITARY OBSERVERS TO GUATEMALA

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy and Minister of National Defence Douglas Young today announced that Canada will deploy up to 15 military observers to a United Nations mission in Guatemala. The three-month mission was authorized by the UN Security Council on January 20, with a mandate to support the verification of the Guatemalan Peace Accords that were signed in Guatemala City on December 29, bringing to an end 35 years of civil conflict.

"We hope that the parties to the conflict will be committed to co-operating fully with the verification of the cease-fire and the other steps that will be necessary to further the peace process," said Mr. Axworthy. "Canada not only supports but is ready to assist Guatemala in the peacebuilding process with the deployment of Canadian military observers, as part of the overall United Nations effort. Canada's participation is an important step in this process."

Fifteen Spanish-speaking Canadian Forces personnel will participate in the mission. They will verify the cease-fire, the separation of combatant forces, and the disarming and demobilization of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) forces.

"Once again, Canadians are responding to a call from the international community to contribute to a more stable and secure world," said Minister Young. "The expertise of the Canadian Forces observers will ensure that our contribution brings a tangible benefit to the people of Guatemala."

The Canadian observers will be part of a 155-person military component that will be attached to the existing United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). Canadian personnel will be employed both within the mission headquarters and at the eight disarmament centres set up throughout the country.