

authority of the Afghan central government beyond Kabul, pursue counter-narcotics, support transitional justice and the strengthening of the rule of law and promote and protect human rights, including women's rights, in Afghanistan.

iii) Middle East Peace Process

Canada and the EU are committed to helping the parties take advantage of current opportunities to achieve a fair, lasting and negotiated peace leading to a two-state solution. We look forward to a full, complete and coordinated Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the Northern West Bank in a manner consistent with the Road Map. We urge the parties to respect their commitments and to refrain from unilateral actions that could prejudice final status issues. We welcome and encourage President Abbas' steps to prevent violence and implement security reforms. While remaining concerned by the lack of economic opportunity for Palestinians, we welcome and support the mission of Quartet Special Envoy Wolfensohn. Canada and the EU are working together to help build the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to promote security, good governance and economic development in the West Bank and Gaza, including private sector development and job creation. Canadian participation in the successful EU Election Observation Mission to observe the Palestinian Presidential elections in January is one example.

iv) Lebanon

Canada and the EU note Syria's recent withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon and the impending return of the United Nations verification team to the country. We fully support the work of the UN Secretary General and urge all parties to fully implement UNSCR 1559. We jointly support the independent commission of inquiry in its efforts to identify those responsible for the murder of former Prime Minister Hariri so that they may be brought to justice. We condemn the continuation of political assassinations in Lebanon and are deeply concerned about their politically destabilizing impact. We deplore actions at the Israeli-Lebanese border which risk escalating the violence in the region. We are supporting the ongoing Lebanese parliamentary elections where Canadian observers have joined the EU Observation Mission.

v) Iran

Canada and the EU, together with other partners continue to work very closely on measures to address the proliferation threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. We support the EU's efforts to negotiate with Iran a long-term arrangement, which will provide objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. We underline the importance of continued suspension by Iran of all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities as agreed in the Paris agreement. Canada and the EU also reiterate the necessity that Iran cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and calls on Iran to ratify the Additional Protocol of the IAEA.

Canada and the EU call on Iran to promote the rule of law and improve respect for human rights, particularly with regard to democracy, freedom of expression and the media, judicial independence and the treatment of religious and ethnic minorities. We share concerns about arbitrary detention and the treatment of prisoners.