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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CONDEMNS ROMANIAN ACTIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today condemned the Romanian authorities' repression of demonstrations in Timisoara and the arrest of the Reverend Laszlo Tokes during the weekend of December 16-17.

"I was profoundly distressed by reports that peaceful demonstrators in Timisoara were fired on by security forces and that many were killed and injured. The Romanian authorities' brutal treatment of their own people runs wholly counter to the behaviour expected of civilized governments. It stands in marked contrast to recent developments elsewhere in Eastern Europe," stated Mr. Clark.

The Romanian Ambassador was summoned to the Department of External Affairs yesterday to explain the reports of tragic events during the weekend.

"I am also extremely concerned about the Reverend Laszlo Tokes and his wife, who have not been heard from since they were taken away by security forces during the weekend," said Mr. Clark. "The case of Mr. Tokes will be monitored very closely."

In Ottawa, the Romanian Ambassador had earlier been called into the Department on December 14, at which time his government's treatment of the Reverend Tokes was forcefully condemned by the Canadian government. In Bucharest, the Romanian Foreign Ministry refused to receive the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires to discuss Mr. Tokes' case.

Mr. Clark commented that: "It is completely unacceptable that the Romanians have departed so far from normal diplomatic practice as to reject our representations. They have done this repeatedly with all Western countries in recent months. It is hard to maintain constructive relations when the Romanian government refuses to discuss important matters with us either bilaterally or through the channels provided by the Vienna Document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe."