

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada appreciates the civilian government's efforts to institutionalize respect for human rights in Guatemala. While recognizing that political space is limited, we urge that these efforts be expanded.

Canada shares the view of United Nations Human Rights Advisor Hector Gross Espiell that the Guatemalan government does not itself initiate human rights abuses, but we remain frustrated that it allows, or is unable to prevent, the abuses from continuing. We are concerned at the overall level of abuses and deeply regret the recent escalation of political violence. Over the past year, we have taken a number of opportunities to express our concern. The belief that international scrutiny is an essential mechanism of support for the Guatemalan government's efforts to establish the rule of law led Canada, in March 1989, to co-sponsor a resolution to maintain a United Nations Human Rights Advisor in Guatemala. In October, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, raised Canada's human rights concerns during a meeting with President Cerezo, and, in November, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations, Yves Fortier, strongly criticized Guatemala's human rights record in a speech before the Third Committee. Throughout the year, officials at our Embassy in Guatemala have raised specific incidents with the Guatemalan authorities.