

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

- **ensure adequate resources for enhanced linguistic and analysis capabilities within the Canadian government, and consider the establishment of a mechanism within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to coordinate dialogue activities with the countries of the Muslim world.**

The recently-established Working Group on Canada's Relation with Muslim Communities is also considering tools to mainstream its eventual recommendations in the way the Government manages its relations with regions and countries of predominantly Muslim populations.

Canada monitors human rights around the world and expresses its concerns at all appropriate opportunities with respect to human rights violations. We raise our concerns through various methods such as including through interventions by our missions abroad, visits with human rights defenders, attendance at trials and other court appearances, and collaboration with like-minded missions in raising human rights issues with affected governments. Recent examples include active Canadian engagement on both Sudan and the Kazemi case, where the Government is working to draw international attention to the serious human rights violations in Darfur and Iran respectively.

Canada actively pursues progress on human rights issues in multilateral fora, including the United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Commission on Human Rights, as well as at regional and international conferences dedicated to preventing discrimination and enhancing security. Domestically, the implementation of the Multiculturalism Act promotes the goal of encouraging Canadians to retain their identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging. Canada presents this as an example of best practice in its bilateral contacts with other countries.

Canada's human rights priorities include assisting states, and international and non-governmental organizations to promote and protect human rights, including gender equity, and to advance humanitarian action. Canada is an active advocate of the need to protect human rights while enhancing security, an agenda of significant importance post 9/11. This is achieved through technical cooperation to reinforce local capacity to monitor and combat human rights abuses. Canadian embassies abroad support the work of local human rights organizations. Canada works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other UN agencies, to promote progress in the area of human rights field operations.

The Government views the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality as essential to achieving progress on human rights and democratic development. Canada has taken a leading role in ensuring a gender perspective and women's participation in conflict prevention and peace building efforts. Most recently, the Government has been focussed on the establishment and implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In 2001, the Government supported the establishment of the Canadian Committee on Women, Peace and Security, a unique consortium of Government, Parliamentarians, academics and civil society representatives.

The provision of effective support and protection for Canadians travelling and living abroad is of the highest priority to the Government. We will continue to urge all countries to respect