

## UN CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF PERSONNEL

A draft Convention on the Protection of United Nations Personnel is being negotiated by an open-ended Working Group of the Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The Working Group and an Ad Hoc Committee established intersessionally have met four times since last fall in an attempt to complete the negotiations. Negotiations were motivated by the dramatic increase in deliberate attacks on UN peacekeepers and associated civilian personnel in UN operations such as Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and, most recently, Rwanda.

Traditionally, UN peacekeepers monitored or supervised cease-fires, truces or armistice agreements where they were unlikely to encounter serious casualties or deliberate attacks. More recently, however, peacekeeping missions have become more complex and diverse. Their mandates now include supervision of the disarming and disbanding of armed factions; the establishment of protected areas for persons subjected to human rights abuses; the enforcement of sanctions; the monitoring of elections, borders, human rights and repatriation of refugees; and the protection and delivery of humanitarian supplies to civilian populations. As such, peacekeepers are operating amidst armed conflict, both of an international and non-international character.

The draft Convention includes provisions on the obligation of States to prosecute or extradite individuals suspected of committing serious crimes against UN personnel. Among the issues to be decided during the negotiations are the scope of application of the Convention, including which personnel, which UN operations and which offences will be covered.

Canada will actively participate in the negotiations this fall (the Legal Adviser of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade chairs the Working Group) and supports the early adoption of the Convention.