



news release

Date October 3, 1989.

No. 235

For release

CANADA ACTS ON U.N. REQUEST TO SEND RCMP CONTINGENT TO NAMIBIA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and the Solicitor General, the Honourable Pierre Blais, announced today that Canada has agreed to a September 29 formal request from the Secretary General of the United Nations to provide police monitors for the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia.

Chief Superintendent Larry Proke of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has been named to command Canada's UNTAG police contingent, and is now in Namibia with an advance party. UNTAG is the integrated military/police/civilian operation supervising Namibia's transition to independence including elections in November.

"I am pleased to see our legendary Mounties - Canada's earliest peacekeepers - involved for the first time in support of our country's traditional commitment to UN peacekeeping", stated Mr. Clark. The Minister chairs the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, which offered last August to provide additional police to UNTAG if requested.

"The UN request reflects the high regard in which the RCMP is held internationally", noted Solicitor General Blais. Canada will contribute a contingent of up to 100 RCMP officers recruited from volunteer applications throughout the force. They will join UNTAG police from 24 countries already in Namibia as part of an overall expansion to 1,500 officers. The Canadian contingent, which is one of the largest, will be deployed by the second half of October. The Canadians will serve up to six months, mostly in northern Namibia. Their duties will include monitoring the law-enforcement activities of the local South African-controlled police and protecting election facilities and personnel.

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