

I am not sure if this is a result of post-Cold War complacency, satisfaction with the Pax Americana, or ignorance of what is really happening in the world.

Perhaps this 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will stimulate some thinking on these matters and help turn this situation around. I have already referred to a whole catalogue of human rights violations in all corners of the globe. Not only do these violations cause conflict in the countries and regions where they arise, they also very often cause instability and threaten the peace throughout the world, including Canada. Civil wars and human rights abuses in Somalia, for example, resulted in waves of refugees landing on Canada's shores, peacekeeping operations, and emergency aid. There are many other similar examples. All of these cost much more than would a preventive program dealing with conflict resolution, development assistance, and technical aid relating to human rights and democratic development (the work carried out by our Centre).

Since public support for international human rights is essential, it is important that organizations such as yours and mine - not only speak to each other - but reach out to inform and educate the general public. (As I said earlier, Canada can, and has recently made a very significant difference - with both land mines and the ICC - but will only continue to do so if there is a vibrant, informed Canadian constituency supporting and demanding that we do so. ) There must be enough Canadians who want their government and the UN to do this - that is to make a difference, in improving human rights and democracy - in Canada and throughout the world.