

HUMAN Security

New thinking and new actions for a new millennium

Human security means safety for people from violent threats, such as organized conflict, gross violations of human rights, terrorism and violent crime. It also

means safety from non-violent threats, such as environmental degradation, economic crises, illicit drugs, infectious diseases and natural disasters. Once the nature of the threat has been identified, several tools can be used to promote human security. Some tools rely chiefly on persuasion. Others are more robust—for instance, sanctions or military intervention. Canada is acting to enhance human security in many different ways.



Landmines

Tens of millions of landmines remain armed and hidden in more than 60 countries, creating thousands of new victims every year. In dozens of countries, they continue to hinder refugee resettlement, post-conflict reconstruction, and social and economic development.

Canada led the international effort to negotiate the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, signed in Ottawa in December 1997. The most rapidly ratified treaty of its kind in history, the Convention became international law on March 1, 1999. As of early August, 135 states had signed the treaty and 84 had ratified it. To support the universalization and full implementation of the Ottawa Convention,

Canada has created a \$100 million fund. This is being used to support Canadian action programs, such as mine surveys, mine clearance and victim assistance, in over 20 affected countries including Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, Mozambique and Kosovo.

The International Criminal Court

The Rome Treaty creating the International Criminal Court was signed in June 1998. Canada played a central role in the creation of the Court, and is leading efforts to ensure that the ICC will be an independent and effective institution.

Chairing the committee that produced the final text of the Rome Treaty was Philippe Kirsch, Legal Adviser at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). He now chairs the commission developing the instruments to ensure the proper operation of the Court.

(For further details on the ICC, see article on international justice, p. 4.)

Small arms

Small arms are the weapons of choice in modern conflicts. There are many serious consequences to the uncontrolled spread and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons: they fuel conflicts, increase civilian casualties, worsen human rights violations and make crime more lethal.

Canada has adopted a three-track response to the issue:

- development and promotion of measures to ensure greater restraint and transparency in arms exports;

- measures to counter the illicit trade in small arms; and
- peacebuilding, governance and practical disarmament measures.

Examples of Canada's action on small arms include support for a program to promote the exchange of weapons for farming tools in Mozambique, and another program to exchange guns for consumer goods in El Salvador. In addition, Canada supports an initiative led by Mali to promote an arms moratorium in the region of West Africa.

War-affected children

In the past decade alone, wars have killed more than 2 million children, disabled 4 million and traumatized 10 million. Estimates suggest that there are currently 300 000 children serving armies, whether as combatants, sexual slaves or messengers.

Canada is supporting the negotiation of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the aim of raising the legal age of recruitment and participation in hostilities. Further, Canada is working to integrate child protection into humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. It supports the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, as well as the NGO Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.