

While we recognize that progress has been achieved in the area of human rights, we believe that this is only a beginning. We therefore exhort the Government of Haiti to work toward helping the people to gain an appreciation of the importance of judicial institutions, which must stand on guard against injustice. In order to keep sight of the changes that are occurring, Canada feels that the case of Haiti should continue to receive the attention of the Commission.

With regard to Lebanon, the Canadian delegation notes with satisfaction the progressive re-establishment of the Lebanese Government's authority over all of its territory and over the people living there. This enables the people of this country to again enjoy their collective and individual rights, free from local and external interference and exactions.

Positive developments have also been noted in several countries in Africa. For example, the Canadian Government is pleased with the progress achieved in the civil and political life of Benin. The referendum of December 2 and the parliamentary elections of February 17 are proof of the vitality of the process of openness currently underway. Canada hopes that the process culminating in the March presidential election will lay the foundation for true lasting development.

And although the human rights situation in Zaire is not ideal, and we have longstanding and serious concerns, we have nonetheless observed in this country a willingness to reform, notably where the press, trade unions, political parties, and elections are concerned, since the April 24 speech by President Mobutu.

This is to be encouraged, while keeping a watchful eye on the actual implementation of the reforms. We especially welcome President Mobutu's decision to invite a representative of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva to attend the trial of those accused in the Lubumbashi massacre. There have doubtless been other violations, but the significant factor lies in the reforms, which we hope to encourage through positive reinforcement.

South Africa continues to make encouraging progress on human rights. Over the past year, the government has released a number of political prisoners, unbanned the African National Congress and other parties, reached two agreements with the ANC, lifted the State of Emergency and repealed the Separate Amenities Act.

This month, President de Klerk promised to abolish by June the remaining legal pillars of Apartheid: the Group Areas, Population Registration and Land Acts. He also committed his government to democratic principles, including universal adult franchise, accepted the ANC proposal for a multi-party conference on the constitution and offered the negotiating parties a voice in policy decisions. The ANC for its part moved skillfully to strengthen reconciliation and cooperation with other anti-apartheid groups.

There are still important hurdles to clear. Progress on political prisoners and exiles has been slow, but the recent ANC/government agreement on armed struggle and the visit of a UNHCR team give hope that the April 30 deadline accepted by the government can be met.

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