

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada should urge Saudi Arabia to address the sources of terrorism and religious extremism within its borders, and offer Canada's cooperation in common efforts to combat such terrorism and extremism. The Government should also actively pursue opportunities to promote dialogue and to build ties with Saudi Arabia. In particular, Canada should:

- Strongly encourage changes in the direction of human rights, democratic, and educational reforms as being in Saudi Arabia's interest;
- Explore increased intellectual, educational and cultural as well as political exchanges.

The Government has actively contributed to the international effort to combat terrorism and has ratified all twelve of the fundamental United Nations-sponsored counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. Currently, Saudi Arabia is only party to eight of these instruments. The Government uniformly and consistently encourages all countries to accede to, and effectively implement, all twelve of the conventions and protocols, and other related international laws.

Saudi Arabia has been confronting terrorists on its soil and has met with some successes in dismantling domestic terrorist organizations. Saudi Arabia has also taken steps domestically since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States to suppress the financing of terror organizations, including the creation of a central body to supervise charitable collections and the closing of suspect organizations such as Al Haramain Charitable Foundation. There has also been increased public discussion in Saudi Arabia on the issue of religious extremism. The Government has welcomed public statements by senior Saudi officials and members of the Royal Family in support of religious moderation.

Saudi Arabia is an active partner in the international campaign against terrorism and will be hosting an international Conference on Counter Terrorism from February 5-8, 2005. The Canadian Government will be represented at this conference with a delegation including representation from Foreign Affairs Canada, and the portfolio of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Canada will use this opportunity to remind Saudi Arabia of its international obligations and domestic responsibilities in this area.

The Government continues to advocate for good governance in Saudi Arabia and welcomed recent Saudi initiatives to increase public participation in governance through the expansion of the legislative role of the Shura Council, the establishment of the Forum for National Dialogue and its commitment to holding nationwide partial municipal elections beginning February 10, 2005. Although disappointed that women will not be allowed to participate as either candidates or voters in the 2005 elections, the Government will press Saudi Arabia to follow through on its announcement that women will be allowed to participate in the elections scheduled to take place in 2009. The Government will continue to encourage Saudi Arabia to expand these governance measures.