

Human rights in Colombia is an important area of concern for Canada. Although we warmly welcome recent initiatives aimed at ending the long-running civil conflict, we have grave concerns about increasing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Canada was pleased that the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Colombia in October.

For all the changes the world has seen in the past fifty years, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains as relevant and important as the day it was adopted. Its principles provide for all governments an ultimate standard - a measure of their legitimacy and effectiveness in serving the best interests of their citizens. This represents a standard against which all countries must be assessed and against which all countries, including my own, will sometimes be found wanting. We can pay proper tribute this year to the Declaration and all that it stands for only by redoubling our individual and collective efforts to address such shortcomings wherever they may arise. In this indispensable task of the United Nations, Canada pledges its full cooperation with all.

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