

Regional Initiatives: Human Rights Convention

QUESTION

Why hasn't Canada yet ratified the American Convention on Human Rights?

SUGGESTED REPLY

- Before Canada can ratify a human rights convention, we must ensure that we are in a position to fulfil the commitments we would undertake.
- Several provisions of the Convention are inconsistent with other important international human rights norms, making it difficult to comply with both.
- In addition, several provisions in the Convention are ambiguous or contain concepts unknown or problematic in Canadian law, since Canada did not participate in the drafting of the Convention.
- Some of the problem areas for Canada include: freedom of expression, equality, and the right to life.
- Government officials are working on solutions to these problems which would permit us to ratify the convention.
- In the meantime, Canada participates fully in the inter-American human rights system. Our human rights record is already subject to scrutiny by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and we are subject to individual complaints.
- Canada actively promotes human rights within the OAS and the inter-American human rights system.
- Canada is not alone in not signing the Convention; the U.S. and several other nations have also not signed.