

News Release

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CANADA URGES HALT TO BOMBING OF CHECHNYA

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today urged Russian President Boris Yeltsin to follow through on his order to halt the bombing of Chechnya, the North Caucasian Republic of the Russian Federation, which has been under assault by Russian Defence and Interior Ministry forces since December 11, 1994.

"We recognize that this is a matter internal to Russia, but have been deeply disturbed by the suffering of innocent civilians and the violations of human rights," said Mr. Ouellet. "We hope that President Yeltsin will now move quickly to end the bloodshed and pursue all avenues, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict."

Mr. Ouellet stated that Canada believes such disputes should be resolved through negotiation and not through the threat or use of force. He said that in the last two days the Prime Minister and he have written to President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev expressing Canadian concerns.

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