

Civilian Police Operations



Canadian Participation

The first Canadian Civilian Police contingent on the eve of departure for Kosovo, July 30

After conflicts are over, military peacekeepers come into action to maintain peace, usually under the flag of the United Nations. In recent years however, the demand for civilian police has been growing as peace operations have expanded to assist in the return to civil society.

Canada has an international reputation for supporting democratic development and human security through monitoring and building the capacity of civilian police. Since 1989, Canadian police, whether from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) or provincial/municipal police corps, have participated in missions in the Balkans, East Timor, Guatemala, Haiti, Namibia, South Africa, Western Sahara and now Kosovo.

In international peace operations, Canadian police monitor, train, advise and otherwise assist police forces to ensure that they become law enforcement agencies operating in accordance with internationally recognized standards, and with respect for internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Some Statistics on Modern-Day Conflicts

The nature of violent conflict has changed in recent decades. Most wars now occur within states, and civilians account for 90 percent of the casualties. In the past 10 years alone, the number of casualties has doubled. Currently, about 1 million people lose their lives each year. Since 1945, more than 22 million people have died in small, medium and large-scale conflicts. Millions more have been injured or permanently disabled. Entire populations have been displaced and dispossessed. The high proportion of civilian fatalities is a direct result of strategies and tactics that deliberately target women, children, the poor and the weak.

An anti-personnel mine costs as little as US\$3.00 to produce but as much as US\$1000.00 to safely detect and remove once it has been deployed. Mines kill or maim thousands of people every year. Most of the victims are women or children. Tens of millions of mines remain hidden in over 60 countries.

In today's post-Cold War world, non-nuclear arsenals pose a significant threat to human security. Military small arms and light weapons are the arsenal of choice and often of necessity in current armed conflicts. In some countries, it is easier to obtain guns than basic food or medicine. An AK-47 rifle can cost as little as US\$6.00, and ammunition is plentiful and cheap.

According to the latest reliable figures available (1997), there are some 22 million active military personnel throughout the world, more than 37 million reservists and 7.5 million paramilitaries.

Between 1992 and 1996, exports of major conventional weapons by the 10 leading international suppliers (a group that excludes Canada) exceeded US\$110 billion. ●

Canadian police officers currently serve in the following areas:

KOSOVO UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) — 38 officers, to be joined by another 17 in September

BOSNIA UN International Police Task Force (IPTF) — 23 officers

HAITI UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) — 24 officers
Bilateral Technical Assistance Program — 22 police technical advisers

GUATEMALA UN Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) — 5 officers

EAST TIMOR UN Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) — 3 officers