

return to civilian government. Ottawa's decision was strongly criticized by human rights advocates in Canada and Central America who allege that the human rights situation in Guatemala has not at all improved.

Moreover, Canada has been elected to a three-year term at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The election took place on 26 May at the meeting of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in which one third of the seats of the Commission were filled. The Commission is the key coordinating and policy-making body in the human rights field in the United Nations system. Canada last served on the Commission between 1976 and 1984.⁴

Finally, on 21 June 1988, the House of Commons Committee on Human Rights published a report entitled "Human Rights behind the Iron Curtain", in which it noted that "The countries behind the Iron Curtain have not lived up to the international obligations to which they have subscribed."⁵ Following public hearings held throughout the country during fourteen months, the report underscores that freedom of religion and national minorities rights remain very restricted in these countries; it condemns the USSR, Romania and Czechoslovakia for limiting freedom of movement and making emigration and family reunification very difficult, if not impossible.

Parliamentary Comment

Several members of parliament maintained that despite glasnost there are

⁴ DEA, News Release, No. 111, 27 May 1988.

⁵ "Human Rights Behind the Iron Curtain", First Report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, June 1988, p. 4.