

Freedom of opinion has improved in the past few years, but is still subject to reprisals. The electronic media is still controlled and muzzled by the state.

Zaire has a form of tribalism drawn along ethnic lines. Tribal discrimination is particularly virulent in the provinces of Shaba, Kasai and Kivu. The Constitution guarantees all Zairians the same rights, but the problem lies in the effective realization of the rights of women: this is the result of many obstacles, namely discriminatory practices, customs and legal provisions.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada continues to support the democratic process borne of the NSC, in consultation with its French, Belgian and American partners. Canada opposed to the holding of the Francophone Summit in Zaire, and at the last summit in Mauritius, Canada's representative declared that francophone countries should not hesitate in naming countries, such as Zaire, that hinder democratic development. Visa applications are scrutinized on a case-by-case basis. Canada has closed its Embassy in Kinshasa in May 1993 for budgetary and security reasons but this decision can also be interpreted as a sign of displeasure at the lack of democratic progress. Bilateral aid was suspended in 1991, but humanitarian assistance is being channelled through NGOs. At the Third Committee of the 48th UN General Assembly, Canada declared that the Commission on Human Rights should consider what further action would be appropriate to address the serious situation existing in Zaire. Finally, the Canadian government has expressed its concerns to the Ambassador of Zaire on many occasions.

Recently, high-level officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs met with Mgr. Monsengwo who sounded more pessimistic about the future of his country. Instructions were then given to our representative in the US Embassy in Kinshasa to meet Prime Minister Tshisekedi, as well as a representative of the presidential faction, to encourage them to find a way out of the deadlock. Unfortunately, the latest news from Kinshasa is not encouraging for the short term.

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