

Human rights are also a concern in Gaza and Jericho as the new Palestinian administration undergoes the transition from liberation movement to government. The Palestinian police have been accused of excessive use of force (the first death in custody occurred in July), notably in the quelling of riots. The régime ordered the closure of a newspaper (since reopened). The influence of radical Islam is having a negative impact on the rights of women. However, Palestinian human rights advocates report that there do not appear to be systematic rights violations although there are disturbing incidents. Free elections, to be negotiated with the Israelis, are still awaited.

CANADIAN POSITION

The Canadian Government, through the Embassy in Tel Aviv and missions to international bodies, keeps abreast of human rights issues and related developments in occupied areas as well as in the Palestinian-administered territories. It coordinates closely with responsible international bodies as well as with non-governmental institutions, the Israeli government and Palestinian authorities. It also provides funding through multilateral agencies and bilateral aid programmes to support greater respect for human rights.

Canada supported a resolution of the CHR establishing a special rapporteur with a mandate to investigate violations of international law and to report to the CHR "until the end of the Israeli occupation of those territories". It called on Israel (through bilateral contacts, ministerial statements and position adopted in UN fora) to apply the 4th Geneva Convention and reiterated the position that violations of the convention by the occupying power are contrary to international law.

As experience to date with the Declaration of Principles demonstrates, only the successful negotiation of peace negotiations will break the cycle of violence and ultimately help eliminate human rights abuses in the Occupied Territories.