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CANADIAN POLLING OFFICERS ARRIVE IN CAMBODIA

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall today announced that 47 Canadian polling station officers have arrived in Cambodia. The Canadians join nearly 900 international polling station officers from 44 countries who, under United Nations auspices, will monitor voting, settle disagreements and oversee the counting of ballots in the upcoming UN-supervised elections. The general elections, May 23 to 28, are being held under the auspices of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

"The UNTAC operation in Cambodia is one of the most ambitious and difficult in United Nations history," said Mrs. McDougall. "The presence of these Canadians at a moment so crucial to Cambodia's future underscores Canada's commitment to bringing peace to that country after decades of conflict."

The Canadian group is composed of representatives from federal, provincial and territorial elections offices, as well as academics and officers of External Affairs and International Trade Canada. Some have participated in similar exercises in Namibia and Central America. They join 73 Canadian civilians and 214 Canadian Forces personnel already serving in Cambodia with UNTAC.

The Minister noted that three other Canadians will observe the elections. They are Members of Parliament Lee Clark and Jesse Flis, and Toronto lawyer Nancy Jackman.

Canada has actively participated in international efforts to bring an end to the conflict in Cambodia, which has claimed an estimated one to two million lives since 1970. Canada co-chaired the Paris Peace Conference's First Committee on Peacekeeping, and is a party to the comprehensive political settlement signed in Paris in October 1991.

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