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WITHDRAWAL OF CANADIAN STAFF
FROM THE EMBASSY IN BEIRUT

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, today announced the Government's decision to withdraw provisionally all Canadian staff from the Embassy in Beirut. The Ambassador, Mr. Jacques Noiseux, together with his personnel, left Lebanon this morning and are now en route to Amman in Jordan.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs emphasized that this decision had been taken only after very careful consideration of the serious risks to which Canadian staff were exposed by keeping the Embassy operating, given the difficult conditions which prevail in Lebanon. Canada's essential interests in the country will become the responsibility, on an interim basis, of the Canadian Embassy in Jordan.

Mr. Clark stressed that this measure in no way affects Canada's continuing strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and for the well-being of its people. The Secretary of State for External Affairs also affirmed that Canada will persist in encouraging all appropriate international efforts to bring to a conclusion the recurrent violence in Lebanon.

..2

Canada has long been involved in a variety of humanitarian endeavours to relieve the suffering of the Lebanese people, particularly through the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Council of Churches. Mr. Clark reiterated the Government's intention to continue its active involvement in these vital humanitarian measures.