

---

# news release

---

Date

May 9, 1994

No. 94

For release

## ICRC PRESIDENT TO VISIT CANADA

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), will visit Ottawa, May 9-11. During his visit, Dr. Sommaruga will meet with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Minister Ouellet, and Sergio Marchi, Minister for Citizenship and Immigration.

Dr. Sommaruga will also hold meetings with Huguette Labelle, President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), as well as with other officials from CIDA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Department of National Defence.

Canada is a strong supporter of the ICRC's humanitarian aid activities and goals. Over the last five years, Canada has contributed almost \$93 million in response to the ICRC's emergency appeals. The attached background document provides more details on Canada's contributions to the ICRC.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
(613) 995-1874

## Backgrounder

### CANADIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ICRC

Canada has always responded generously to special appeals for humanitarian aid launched by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Over the past five years, Canada's contributions have totalled almost \$93 million, reaching a peak of over \$32 million during the 1992-93 fiscal year. Canada also contributes to the headquarters costs of the ICRC in Geneva. In 1993, Canada provided \$1.5 million.

Most of the Canadian contribution is supplied by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The funds are used to finance the ICRC's activities in the developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In addition, over the past three years, the Central and Eastern Europe Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has made contributions to ICRC programs and special appeals in Europe.

During the fiscal year ending March 31, 1994, CIDA contributed over \$11 million to ICRC appeals. Of this amount, nearly \$4 million went to Asia, in particular to finance protection and tracing operations and provide emergency aid and medical care in Afghanistan; to establish blood banks, provide medical care and emergency aid, and reunite families dispersed by the Cambodian conflict; to visit and provide medical and material assistance to detainees and set up a public health program in East Timor; and, to support the emergency assistance program in Sri Lanka.

The countries of Africa were the second-largest beneficiaries of our contribution to the ICRC last year, receiving nearly \$3 million. Among ICRC activities supported by Canada were the medical and humanitarian assistance program in Burundi; the visiting of detainees and prisoners, and the provision of medicine, health care and emergency aid to victims of the conflict in Liberia; the provision of emergency food aid to Somalia; the protection of civilians, tracing of missing persons, dissemination of information and provision of medical and humanitarian assistance in Sudan; and, in Zaire, visits to detention centres, provision of emergency aid, and establishment of facilities for sanitation and for observing the situation of persons displaced by the conflict.

Contributions for the Middle East totalled \$1.8 million in 1993-94. Of this, \$300 000 was devoted to the program of protection and medical assistance for the victims of the Lebanese conflict. The remainder of Canada's contribution was used to support the ICRC program to protect civilian populations in the

Occupied Territories, for the tracing of missing persons, and for medical assistance.

CIDA contributed \$1.1 million for ICRC programs in Latin America last year, \$350 000 of which went to Colombia, and \$750 000 to Peru. These contributions helped to support the program for visiting political prisoners in the two countries, to provide transportation for the families of prisoners, to protect civilians from political violence and human rights violations, to provide medical and emergency aid, and to educate the security forces and the armed opposition concerning international humanitarian law.

The Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department's contribution to the ICRC for Central and Eastern Europe last year consisted of \$2 125 000 in response to a special ICRC appeal to help the former Yugoslavia, and \$250 000 for activities in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The funds were used mainly to purchase high-protein food and to provide emergency humanitarian assistance for the victims of fighting in these regions, as well as to send Canadians to work in ICRC operations in Bosnia.

In April 1994, Canada provided \$300 000 in support of the ICRC's emergency assistance program for medical, relief and protection activities in Rwanda. On May 2, Canada announced a \$2 million contribution in emergency food aid to victims of the conflict in Rwanda. The food aid will be channelled through the ICRC to feed Rwandan refugees in Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire, as well as those internally displaced in Rwanda.