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CANADA SIGNS CONVENTION ON THE SAFETY OF UN AND ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Defence Minister David Collenette today congratulated the United Nations General Assembly on the adoption of the Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel.

"Today's conflicts are generating unprecedented casualties among UN personnel. The signing of this Convention signals the international community's concern for those courageous men and women who risk their lives on behalf of peace," said Mr. Ouellet.

"Canadians have long played a significant role in UN operations. I welcome the signing of this Convention, which recognizes the value of the contribution of our peacekeepers and the need to provide them with a measure of security during the course of their duties," said Mr. Collenette.

Canada chaired the year-long negotiations on the Convention. Under its terms, attacks against UN peacekeepers, peacemakers and their premises are considered international crimes. Signatories are obliged to prosecute offenders in the country where the crime is committed or to extradite them to another state (e.g. the victim's home country or the country of origin of the accused).

The Convention applies to UN personnel engaged in operations to maintain or to restore international peace and security, or where the Security Council or General Assembly has declared that there is an exceptional risk to safety.



The personnel covered by the Convention include the military, police and civilian components of UN operations; persons engaged by the Secretary-General or UN specialized agencies; UN officials present in an area where operations are taking place; persons deployed by non-governmental organizations under specific agreements with the UN; and members of multinational forces, where there is an agreement of the Security Council or the General Assembly.

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