
NEWS RELEASE

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CANADA CALLS FOR MEANINGFUL TALKS IN ETHIOPIA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and the Minister for External Relations and International Development, the Honourable Monique Landry, today called upon parties to the conflict in Ethiopia to use the present situation as an opportunity to initiate a cease-fire and a meaningful round of talks.

"Canada hopes that the departure of former President Mengistu Haile Mariam and the readiness of the present Ethiopian government to work towards a transitional government will create the conditions for successful peace talks between the Government of Ethiopia and the rebel groups," stated Mrs. McDougall.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs noted that the rebel groups had been insisting that a change of leadership in the Ethiopian government was a precondition for successful peace talks. The parties agreed recently to launch peace talks in London, U.K., on May 27.

Minister Landry called on the parties to allow emergency food aid to reach the several million Ethiopians in immediate danger of starvation. "The fighting over last

weekend has seriously endangered relief efforts along the "southern line." A cease-fire is crucial for Canadian and Western emergency relief to reach northern Ethiopia," stated Mrs. Landry.

The so-called "southern line" for relief supplies flowing to northern Ethiopia was cut because of the massive rebel offensive over the weekend.

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