

News Release

Minister for
External Relations
and International
Development



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SITUATION IN RWANDA

The Minister for External Relations and International Development, the Honourable Monique Landry, on meeting the Rwandan Minister of Education, today expressed deep concern following recent incursions which have provoked violent unrest in Rwanda. Mr. Charles Nyandwi is in Ottawa to discuss Canada's bilateral relations. Mrs. Landry also expressed her hope for an early return to stability, not only in the capital of Kigali but in all regions of the country.

"We are following the events in Rwanda very closely and are deeply concerned over the reports of violence, including incursions from outside and injury to civilians," said Mrs. Landry.

Mrs. Landry noted that of the 252 Canadians registered at our Office in Kigali, all but some 50 missionaries are now in the capital where circumstances are reported to be calm. Twenty-three more Canadians are due to leave for Europe today, by commercial flight, en route for Canada. More are expected to follow on Saturday. Our Office in Kigali is continuing to maintain close contact with Canadians there. Canadian authorities are reviewing additional steps that could be taken to assist those Canadians wishing to leave Rwanda, and are continuing to remain in touch with friendly governments.

Rwanda is one of a number of African countries which Canada has been assisting in its struggle against under-development. The region has a history of ethnic tensions and refugee movements. Mrs. Landry emphasized her hope that Rwandan authorities would do everything possible to ensure that in this current difficult situation human rights considerations would not be overlooked, notably in the treatment of those arrested and detained for suspected involvement in these regrettable events.

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Mrs. Landry added that the Canadian government is encouraging neighbouring countries to do everything possible to help bring about a return to peace and to avoid any action that would complicate the crisis in Rwanda or delay a solution of it.

While our aid program in Rwanda will not be changed, it is unavoidable that, in the current circumstances, certain projects will be delayed. The signature of aid agreements, which was to have taken place today, has therefore been postponed to a later date.

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