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CANADA WELCOMES RELEASE OF CANADIANS FROM IRAQ AND KUWAIT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, expressed great satisfaction about the departure today of the majority of those remaining Canadians who were being held in Iraq and Kuwait against their wishes. The Canadian Embassy in Baghdad confirmed that a specially chartered Iraqi Airways 747 left Baghdad at 21:00 hrs local time (13:00 EST) and arrived in Frankfurt at 00:10 hrs local time (18:10 EST) with 30 Canadians and two non-Canadian spouses on board.

"I most heartily commend the courage and endurance of our Canadians held in Kuwait and Iraq during these last difficult months. I am extremely gratified that all those Canadians who have been illegally detained in Kuwait and Iraq can now be reunited with their families and loved ones during this holiday season, a season which traditionally symbolizes peace and good will for all," stated the Minister.

"This release is definitely a positive step -- the first fruit of the unequivocal message which the international community sent to Saddam Hussein by adopting UN Security Council Resolution 678 ten days ago calling for full compliance with all the previous relevant UN resolutions." Mr. Clark emphasized, however, that a number of other resolutions are outstanding, notably Resolution 660 which calls for complete Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. He urged Iraqi authorities to seize the opportunity provided by the present "Pause for Peace" to comply fully with the remaining resolutions.

Canadian Embassy officials in Baghdad arranged for today's contingent of Canadians to leave Kuwait and Baghdad for Frankfurt on an Iraqi Airways 747 chartered by the U.S. Special provisions have also been made for other Canadians to leave via regularly scheduled Iraqi airways flights between Baghdad and Amman. Of those Canadians who had previously been unable to leave, only ten remain, six in Iraq and four in Kuwait. It is expected that they will obtain the necessary exit permits within the next few days.

All members of the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait who were temporarily relocated to Baghdad on or prior to October 19 departed on today's flight to Frankfurt. Remaining in Baghdad are five members of the Canadian Embassy to Iraq.

The Canadians arriving in Europe tonight on the special Iraqi Airways 747 charter will stay overnight in Frankfurt. Many will depart Frankfurt Monday morning for Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. They are expected to arrive tomorrow evening, where they will be met and assisted with onward travel arrangements by Canadian Embassy officials. Some of the newly released Canadians plan to spend the holiday season with relatives in other parts of the Middle East or Europe before returning to Canada.

For more information, media representatives may contact:

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