



news release

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CANADA TO PARTICIPATE IN OBSERVER MISSION TO HAITI

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall, and the Minister for External Relations and International Development, Monique Vézina, today announced that Canada will make an initial contribution of up to \$2.35 million to the joint Organization of American States (OAS) and United Nations (UN) observer mission to Haiti. They further announced that some 50 Canadians will be among the international observers being sent to monitor human rights in that country.

"Canada has been working very actively with the OAS and the UN in an effort to restore democracy in Haiti," said Mrs. McDougall. "Canada is determined that this joint UN-OAS effort will not fail."

"The establishment of this mission is a critical and encouraging step," said Mrs. Vézina. "We are convinced that the Canadian contribution will bear significantly on the success of this mission."

In light of recent reports of human rights abuses in Haiti, Canada believes that the full deployment of this mission is even more urgent. The Ministers noted, in particular, the case of Bishop Romelus of Jeremie, who was attacked by demonstrators after celebrating a memorial mass for the victims of the recent *Neptune* ferry wreck. Members of the joint mission, aided by Canadian, German and French diplomats, intervened to protect the lives of more than 200 people who were in the church at the time.

As a result of efforts of Mr. Dante Caputo, the UN-OAS special representative on Haiti, a plan was prepared calling for an international civilian observer force to monitor the human rights situation in Haiti over the next year. The Canadian commitment of human and financial resources is for the first

six-month period of the mission. Ten Canadian observers are already in Haiti, while the remaining 40 will proceed later.

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