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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 1960.

The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, today sent the following telegram to Monsieur Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo.

"Mr. Prime Minister,

I have learned today with very grave concern that Canadian Service personnel on United Nations assignments have been molested and subjected to humiliating treatment in your country.

Yesterday, another incident occurred in which an Air Force officer and his assistant were prevented from carrying out their duties. We were then inclined to believe that what had taken place must have been due to a misunderstanding as to their identity and the nature of their mission.

The latest incident puts both occurrences in a different light and raises important questions.

As you pointed out during your recent visit to Ottawa, our two countries are already in diplomatic relations and you were hoping that because of special circumstances, cooperation between them might be increased to our mutual benefit. In view of this approach, which I sincerely welcomed, I agreed promptly to your request for facilities in recruiting bilingual experts in this country and emphasized that the Canadian Government and the Canadian people would welcome the opportunity to support any organized United Nations programme of assistance to your country.

The Canadian personnel involved in these incidents referred to in the first two paragraphs are the representatives of a Government and of a country which immediately and generously had responded to your own as well as to United Nations requests for assistance in the reorganization of your country.

Such totally unwarranted and unjustified attacks on Canadian Service personnel are of a most serious character. I expect an immediate assurance that effective measures will be taken to ensure that the forces under your control will refrain from threatening the security of Canadian personnel who proceed to your country on friendly and peaceful missions in the performance of tasks determined by the United Nations."