

# News Release

# Communiqué

Department of  
External  
Affairs



Ministère des  
Affaires  
extérieures

No. 191

September 2, 1988.

## THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

The tragic events of the past weeks in Burundi have aroused the indignation of the international community and of Canada. Canada places a very high priority on respect for human rights, including freedom of speech and of worship, and equality of opportunity, regardless of ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs. The Canadian government has strongly condemned the abhorrent acts of violence that have exacted such a high death toll.

On August 31, the Burundi Ambassador in Canada was informed by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, of the grave concern of the government and people of Canada over these events. He expressed the wish that every possible measure be taken to ensure the protection of life and a return to calm. Mr. Clark also appealed to the government of Burundi to make a full disclosure of the facts surrounding these events to the international community.

When word of these events first reached Canada, an official was sent to Burundi from August 20 to 24 to make a preliminary evaluation of the situation, to see that the Canadians there were safe and to determine the scope of the relief effort that

.../2

Secretary of State  
for  
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État  
aux  
Affaires extérieures

Canada

should be put forth to assist those under duress, notably the refugees in Rwanda. Since that time, the External Affairs Department has sent its Ambassador to Kinshasa to Burundi on a fact-finding mission and to express to the authorities there the concerns of Canada in regard to the tragic events that have stricken the northern part of the country. The Ambassador will also visit the Rwandan refugee camps.

The Hon. Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development, has announced that the Canadian International Development Agency has granted emergency food aid of \$150,000 for these refugees, via the Canadian Organization for Solidarity and Development, and has raised the ceiling of the Canadian Local Initiatives Fund by \$100,000 for the purchase of blankets, medicine and other necessities. "More substantial humanitarian aid will be forthcoming as soon as the conclusions of the missions of the High Commission for Refugees and of the Red Cross to Rwanda and Burundi are known", Mrs. Landry said. The representatives of CIDA in Rwanda visited the refugee camps there this week.

Finally, consultations are under way with bilateral partners and with a number of international organizations, to examine possible means of assisting the distressed groups, and of restoring the peace and stability required for a return of the refugees and displaced persons to Burundi.