



# communiqué

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## CANADA TO SEND OBSERVERS TO EL SALVADOR ELECTIONS

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs announced today that the Canadian Government has agreed to send observers to the El Salvador elections on March 25. Mr. MacEachen said he has asked Mr. R. Gordon Fairweather, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, to head the Canadian observer team. Other members will be Mr. R. A. Gould, Assistant Chief Electoral Officer for Canada and Mr. F. M. Filleul, Canadian Ambassador to El Salvador.

Mr. MacEachen said that he regards the decision to observe the electoral process as consistent with Canadian support of developments in Central America that could lead to peace, stability and more representative and responsible government. Fair elections responsibly conducted could help to reverse polarization to political extremes. While there is no guarantee that these elections will secure these goals, Mr. MacEachen said that "as long as there is an endeavour to promote the principles of representative government and freedom of choice, I believe Canada should send impartial and qualified observers to the elections. Without such observers, it would be difficult to make any value judgements concerning the electoral process."

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Canada did not send observers to the El Salvador elections of 1982 because the terms of the mandate of the observers were not sufficiently clear. Mr. MacEachen noted that this time the arrangements made for the official observers are better and more comprehensive. They will be coordinated by the Central Electoral Council of El Salvador. The official observers will be given full support facilities by the Council to allow verification of the process in its different phases, such as registration, voting, computation of votes, transmission of returns and announcement of results. Official observers are expected to evaluate the process and to report to their respective Governments. The Central Electoral Council of El Salvador, as host to the designated official observers, is offering security guarantees and support facilities to allow the observers to perform their task in any location of their choosing where their personal safety is not endangered.