



news release

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CANADA COMMITS TROOPS FOR UN TO SECURE SARAJEVO AIRPORT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Marcel Masse, today announced that Canada has agreed to a United Nations request to reassign, when and if conditions permit, a Canadian battalion from peacekeeping duties in Croatia to the Sarajevo airport.

A Canadian infantry battalion is currently based in Daruvar, Croatia, with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). If redeployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the 800 Canadians would form the core of the force maintaining security at Sarajevo airport. The Canadians may also provide security to convoys travelling into the city of Sarajevo to deliver humanitarian aid.

"Canada strongly supports the United Nations in its efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to the victims of this terrible conflict," said Mrs. McDougall. "We call upon all parties to co-operate with the United Nations in creating the conditions necessary to begin the delivery of relief supplies to those so much in need."

"The Canadian Forces are ready to aid the United Nations in whatever capacity is necessary at this critical stage in the conflict," Mr. Masse added. "The confidence that the UN has shown in our peacekeepers underscores Canada's reputation as an effective and highly respected peacekeeping nation."

On June 8, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 758, calling for the deployment of 60 UN military observers to verify that a durable ceasefire exists and that the warring factions have withdrawn their weapons. The observer group is being led by Canadian Brigadier General Lewis MacKenzie, UNPROFOR Chief of Staff.

Once the observers have established that appropriate conditions do exist, the Security Council will consider the deployment of the Canadians and others to maintain security at Sarajevo's airport, which would be operated under the exclusive authority of

the UN. The Canadian assignment could be temporary, pending the arrival of additional UN forces.

Canada has contributed approximately 1,200 peacekeepers to UNPROFOR. Twelve Canadians are also assigned to the European Community-led Ceasefire Monitoring Mission.

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CONCEPT OF UN OPERATIONS AT SARAJEVO AIRPORT

- PHASE 1
- Sixty UN military observers are deployed to Sarajevo to:
 - verify that an effective and durable peace has been established, and
 - supervise the withdrawal of anti-aircraft and other heavy weapons.
 - Technical personnel, possibly including international experts, would undertake an evaluation of:
 - the airport's servicability,
 - the condition of airport equipment, and
 - measures required to receive aircraft, offload stores and control the flow of humanitarian aid.
- PHASE 2
- The Canadian infantry battalion would be deployed to form the core of the force maintaining the security of the airport and its installations. Deployment could be temporary, pending the arrival of additional UN forces.
- PHASE 3
- Civilian personnel required to operate the airport and representatives of humanitarian agencies would arrive.
- PHASE 4
- Sarajevo airport would open for humanitarian and official flights under the exclusive authority of the United Nations.