

No. 53/36 APPEAL TO STATES TO ACCELERATE THEIR ACCEPTANCE
OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISH-
MENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

Text of the statement made on October 8, 1953, by the Canadian representative in the Sixth Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Alan Macnaughton, M.P., (Agenda item 67)

The Canadian Delegation to the 3rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris in 1948 was among those who supported the principle that this convention should receive the widest possible application because we considered that the effect of the Convention on Genocide will depend in great measure on the number of accessions and ratifications of the different states in the world and that the good it will accomplish will increase as the number of accessions and ratifications will increase. The purpose of this convention, as we all know, is to prevent the horrible crime of Genocide which would cause the physical destruction or serious bodily or mental harm to members of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

Canada signed this convention on November 28, 1949. The Canadian Parliament subsequently approved without any reservations Canada's ratification of the convention. The Canadian instrument of ratification was deposited on September 3, 1952, with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It also gives me pleasure to state that, in accordance with Article V of the Convention, Canada has the necessary legislation to implement and give full effect to the provisions of this Convention.

I think the position of my Delegation on this important Convention can best be explained in the words of the Chairman of my Delegation, Mr. L.B. Pearson, when he introduced the resolution asking the Canadian Parliament to approve the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. I quote:

"The Genocide Convention is important not only because of the nature of the matter with which it deals, but because it is the first international convention, prepared at any time, which seeks to define an international criminal offence. This means essentially an offence to be prevented and punished by all the States which adhere to the Convention and for which they may be held accountable by other States".

Mr. Pearson went on to say:

"The human race has already become more civilized and the inherent rights of the

individual and the minority groups have become more important. They have become protected under domestic law, particularly under the laws of democratic states. We must hope that in the future protection under domestic law may be reinforced by international convention and international law. This Convention is designed to do just that. Up to the present these rights have not been protected as a matter of international law and I hope this Convention will at least be helpful in that essential process."

Consistent with the attitude Canada has taken in previous sessions of the General Assembly, we will vote in favour of the joint draft resolution, sponsored by Cuba, France, Haiti, Liberia, Panama and Uruguay (Document A/C.6/L.300), which will call upon states which have not yet signed or ratified this Convention to do so and also requests the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures designed to ensure the widest possible diffusion of the nature, contents, and purposes of the Convention.

(Note: On October 8, 1953, the Sixth Committee adopted by a vote of 44 votes in favour (including Canada) none against and six abstentions, the six power resolution referred to above. In the resolution the Committee reiterated its appeal to states to accelerate their ratifications of or accessions to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In this resolution it also requested the Secretary-General to continue taking all necessary measures for the widest possible publicity of the nature, contents and purposes of the Convention.

