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CANADIANS JOIN UN ELECTION MONITORING TEAM IN HAITI

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Bill McKnight, today announced that Canada has agreed to a United Nations request to send military observers to Haiti. These observers will assist Haitian authorities in formulating and implementing a security plan designed to ensure that the country's December 16 elections are free and fair.

"The strengthening of democratic institutions is one of Canada's major foreign policy goals," stated Mr. Clark. "In assuming their important responsibilities in support of free and fair elections, our observers are making a major contribution to this objective."

"The Canadian Forces have played and continue to play a major role in many UN missions," stated Mr. McKnight. "Their recognized expertise will contribute to the orderly operation of the elections in Haiti."

Canada is sending 10 Canadian Forces personnel to participate in the UN observer group for the verification of the elections in Haiti (ONUVEH) charged with verifying Haiti's upcoming election process. The Canadian observers will be part of an unarmed multinational group. Brigadier-General Gabriel Zuliani, a Canadian Forces officer, is in charge of the security aspect of ONUVEH.

Canada has already contributed one million dollars to Haitian authorities to help with the organization of the elections. The decision to participate in the UN election monitoring exercise is further evidence of Canada's commitment to actively support the democratic process in Haiti.

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