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# news release

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Date **February 2, 1993**

No. 25

For release

## CANADA ANNOUNCES HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT TO RUSSIA

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall and the Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Kim Campbell, today announced that Canada will airlift \$5 million in medicines and medical supplies to the Russian Federation over the next five weeks. This is the second year Russia will benefit from a humanitarian airlift financed by External Affairs and International Trade Canada, transported by the Canadian Forces and distributed through the Canadian Red Cross.

On February 6, the first Canadian Forces Boeing 707 will depart CFB Trenton en route to Kirov. By mid-March, a total of 20 flights will have been made to cities in Siberia, the Ural Mountains and the Caucasus. "Operation Boreal 2" will deliver 225,000 kilograms of medicine and medical supplies for distribution by the Canadian Red Cross Society, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Russian Red Cross.

This year's airlift will supply 200-250 hospitals in outlying regions of Russia with basic medicines and medical supplies for one year. The humanitarian aid is dedicated to some of the most vulnerable groups in society: children in hospitals and orphanages and pregnant women.

"As Russia struggles through this difficult transition period, it is most important that we do not forget the most vulnerable," said Mrs. McDougall. "This assistance will reach some 875,000 Russian children and expectant mothers -- something in which all Canadians can take pride."

"Again this year the Canadian Forces is proud to contribute to such a humanitarian effort," said Ms. Campbell. "Despite being heavily committed in operations around the world, the necessary aircraft will be provided for the relief operation in Russia."

Last year, Operation Boreal delivered a total of 400,000 kilograms of medicine and medical supplies to Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union and the Baltic States, reaching an estimated one million people.

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