

News Release

Minister for
External Relations
and International
Development



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SITUATION IN RWANDA

"We rejoice at the news that the fighting in Rwanda has come to an end," said the Honourable Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development.

Since the conflict began, Canada has intensified pressure on all countries involved to find a peaceful, negotiated solution to the Rwandan problem. The Minister expressed the view that "such a long-term solution is inconceivable without respect for human rights, mutual tolerance among ethnic groups, agreement to greater freedom of movement or access, and progress towards the economic development of the region in the direction of pluralistic societies."

The situation has led to talks between Canada and Rwanda concerning the detention of civilians in Rwanda in the wake of events. Speaking to the Rwandan Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Charles Nyandwi, who visited Canada on October 11, the Honourable Monique Landry referred to "the importance that Canada assigns to human rights" and reiterated her "concern that the present internal situation be settled in such a way that human rights are respected." In addition to discussions between our governments, our embassy office has visited and, in several cases, assisted those detained.

The Minister noted that 150 Canadians have had to leave Rwanda since the outbreak of hostilities. The vast majority of the 130 left behind do not wish to leave. These include 67 currently in Kigali.

Although the departure of Canadian co-operants from Rwanda necessarily slowed down the operation of our projects, the co-operation program remains in place. Since a food shortage is imminent in Rwanda, the Canadian International Development Agency has expedited the implementation of the food aid project.

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In the face of this complex crisis, Minister Landry stressed the responsibility of all countries in the subregion and the potential role of regional agencies in maintaining the ceasefire. She also expressed the hope that the countries in the region would redouble their efforts to resolve the refugee problem that increasingly threatens to destabilize the entire Great Lakes subregion.

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For more information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874