

December 20, 2002

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of October 15, 2002, responding to the September 25, 2002 letter from Canadian church leaders regarding the situation in Iraq. We are pleased that you have again confirmed the Government's commitment to a resolution of the Iraq crisis within the framework of international law.

We are also grateful that UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors are now in Iraq and we pray that the Government of Iraq will meet its full responsibility to cooperate with the inspections, to destroy any and all weapons of mass destruction, and to provide verifiable assurances that it eschews all pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and that possible dual-use materials are not diverted for weapons purposes.

In addition to the importance of Iraq's cooperation, the successful resolution of this issue requires an inspections process that is thorough and fair, a reasonable understanding of what constitutes a material breach of that process, and an assurance that a satisfactory inspections process will lead to the immediate lifting of sanctions, as provided for in UN resolutions.

Canada has significant expertise related to inspections processes and we urge that your Government closely monitor the work of UNMOVIC and the IAEA to ensure a fair and constructive process and outcome.

We also remind you that in the event that the United Nations Security Council at some point finds Iraq in material breach of resolution 1441, it does not follow that war is a just or effective remedy. As the church leaders said in their earlier letter, "another Gulf War now would be wrong, first of all because of the suffering such a war would inflict on the population of Iraq people who have already suffered so bitterly. Our Christian colleagues in that region have urged us to educate our own societies about how crushing the international sanctions have been...[and] have been pleading with us to speak against the threat of another war."

The Security Council has a UN Charter obligation to seek alternatives to war. The United

Nations was formed to “lift the scourge of war,” not to elevate war into a routine enforcement mechanism, and we urge Canada to speak publicly and forcefully against the resort to further war on Iraq.

The long-term stability of the Middle East region requires that all states within the region provide full, verifiable disclosure that they do not possess weapons of mass destruction and are not attempting to acquire them.

Repeated calls within the United Nations that the Middle East be a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a region free of all weapons of mass destruction have not been heeded, and we urge your Government to take steps to bring this issue to the urgent attention of the international community.

Canadian churches will continue to monitor the situation in Iraq, to call for alternatives to war, and to pray that you and other world leaders are granted the courage and wisdom to find and walk the path to peace.

Sincerely,

Karen Hamilton (The Rev. Dr.)  
General Secretary  
The Canadian Council of Churches

Pat Steenberg  
Executive Director  
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

Ernie Regehr  
Executive Director  
Project Ploughshares