

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT ON UZBEKISTAN
556TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
19 MAY 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

Canada is deeply disturbed by reports of numerous deaths during demonstrations this weekend in Uzbekistan, and we wish to express our condolences to the families of all victims. We call on the Uzbek government to show restraint in its response.

We also note with great alarm reports of subsequent deaths and violence due to large-scale internal movements of people provoked by the events surrounding these demonstrations, notably at several points on the border with Kyrgyzstan.

We call on Uzbek authorities to allow representatives of humanitarian organizations into the affected region to assist wounded and displaced persons.

We support UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour's call for an international independent investigation into the recent events and her call on the Uzbek government to ensure that any investigators have full access to the affected region and enjoy unimpeded contact with the population.

The accompanied restricted visit by diplomats and journalists that took place in recent days is a positive step but is not sufficient to alleviate our concerns with respect to the violent events of last weekend.

We note the intention of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to present an early report to the Permanent Council on the treatment of different media outlets in Uzbekistan during these events.

We urge Uzbekistan to respect its OSCE and other international commitments, including the rights related to freedom of the media and peaceful assembly.

We strongly encourage Uzbek authorities to cooperate with the international community, in order to ensure that the Uzbek government's efforts to combat terrorism and extremism do not become a foil for the use of force against unarmed civilians and for undermining the human rights of its citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.