

**A. Deal with the Syrian and Egyptian crises by giving priority to humanitarian concerns.****1. For Syria – address the humanitarian crisis**

- i. *Help Syrian refugees:* Provide the UNHCR 4.5 percent of the amount required from the OECD countries to meet refugees' needs. Institute a special programme for refugees from Syria's civil war: relax immigration criteria; staff visa offices adequately and locate an application facility in Syria; fast-track immigration and refugee applications; resettle 30,000 refugees in Canada over next two years; do not return refugee claimants already in Canada. Include Palestinian refugees resident in Syria in these programmes. Provide special funds to UNRWA to meet needs of Palestinian refugees who have fled Syria.
- ii. *Provide aid to civilians affected by the civil war:* Provide generous assistance (again, 4.5 percent of total amount requested from OECD countries) to the UN bodies and neutral international agencies working with them (ICRC, Red Crescent, FAO, etc.) This will enable them to meet the needs of Syrians and Palestinians internally displaced by the civil war.
- iii. *Denounce all human rights abuses promptly and impartially:* Denounce all abuses, regardless of whether the perpetrators or victims sympathize with or oppose Assad or the Free Syrian Army. To be effective, the denunciations must be timely, detailed and well publicized.

2. For Egypt – address the crisis of government legitimacy

- i. *Condemn the military overthrow of an elected government:* Canada has yet to unequivocally condemn the military coup that deposed Egypt's last elected president, Mohammed Morsi. Canada's government must firmly signal that Egypt's military must submit to control by an elected civilian government, rather than the reverse.
- ii. *Pressure the interim government to release all political prisoners:* According to Amnesty International (AI), between July 3 and September 12, 2013, security forces arrested about 3000 people, of whom only 600 were later released. More detentions have followed. According to AI and other human rights groups, most detainees did not engage in actions that warrant detention. Canada must press for their release.
- iii. *Promptly condemn both state-sponsored human rights abuses and acts of terrorism committed by militant groups:* According to AI, there is an alarming pattern of excessive use of force by Egypt's security forces. Scores of detainees arrested following the dispersal of two large pro-Morsi sit-ins in Cairo in August have been deprived of their most fundamental legal rights. A small minority of Morsi supporters have also engaged in abuses, e.g. attacks on the churches identified with the Mubarak regime or the interim government. Canada should impartially condemn all abuses, irrespective of the perpetrator or the victims' alleged allegiances.
- iv. *Pressure the "interim government" to allow internationally supervised free and fair elections.* Insist that all political currents be allowed to exercise freedom of association and expression and to organize openly without fear of arrest or other penalties. Press the interim government to schedule fair elections and lift the state of emergency.

B. Identify strongly authoritarian Middle East regimes and develop policies encouraging participatory decision-making and civil liberties

1. Adopt an impartial framework to assess the level of democratic representation and civil liberties in Middle East countries. The robustness of these particular aspects of democracy should be evaluated:
 - i. Citizen participation and the rights, the freedoms and the means to participate.
 - ii. Authorization of public representatives, through free and fair electoral choices, in a manner that produces a legislature which fairly represents the diversity of public opinion.
 - iii. Public institutions socially representative of the citizenry as a whole, resulting from treating different groups of citizens even-handedly, according to their numbers.
 - iv. Accountability of all public officials both to the public directly and through mediating institutions.
 - v. Transparency. Government responsiveness to requests for information and disclosure.
 - vi. Public responsiveness, through a civil society which is encouraged to articulate needs. A healthy civil society should include independent trade unions, human rights groups, etc.
 - vii. Solidarity with vulnerable segments of the population at home and grassroots struggles for democracy abroad. Canada should encourage social solidarity *within* Middle East countries, and penalize cross-border interventions to crush popular protests (e.g. the Saudi incursion in Bahrain).
2. Identify highly authoritarian regimes, based on detailed assessments using the above-described impartial framework. High priorities for such an assessment would include the following countries: Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan.
3. Develop a strategy to define if and how Canada engages with authoritarian Middle East regimes:
 - i. Establish clear criteria for Canadian corporate activity that ensure such activity benefits average citizens, does not limit their future economic options, is not environmentally unsustainable, and does not enable human rights violations or benefit from them. For example, Canadian companies should not be engaged in construction of prisons in Middle East countries engaging in arbitrary detentions and torture (e.g. SNC Lavalin's building under Gaddafi's rule of a massive prison in Libya).
 - ii. Respect emerging democracies' right to implement economic policies which meet their citizens' needs. These include the following:
 - a. The right to limit resource extraction;
 - b. The right to impose performance requirements on foreign companies and to filter foreign investment;
 - c. The right to establish government procurement policies;
 - d. The right to reject labour "flexibilization" policies;
 - e. The right to reject export-oriented industrial and agriculture-food policies.
 - iii. Provide debt relief, aid and better access to the Canadian market for Middle East producers, conditional on greater democratic representation and greater respect for human rights.
 - iv. Halt direct and indirect arms exports to the Middle East. Most of the governments in this region have a history of human rights violations. Unless a particular regime demonstrates long-term respect for human rights, Canada should avoid this weapons market. Otherwise, such Canadian-made weapons may simply be used to oppress civilian populations.

For more Information...

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