

Canada joins International Syria Support Group: Minister Dion attends Vienna talks

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News Release

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The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today announced that Canada accepted an invitation to join the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) and that he is participating in today's discussions in Vienna, Austria.

The invitation to join the ISSG is a clear sign that Canada is making a difference in countering the so-called Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIL) and in bringing peace and stability to Iraq and Syria. Engagement and steadfast commitment are paying off. Through participation in the ISSG, Canada will be better equipped to help restore peace, provide humanitarian relief and protect Canadians.

Foreign ministers from over 25 countries and representatives from key multilateral bodies will discuss efforts to reinvigorate peace efforts and ways to address challenges related to the crisis in Syria, including the reinforcement of ceasefire mechanisms and the provision of sustained and improved access for urgent humanitarian assistance.

Canada has supported UN-led peace efforts from the outset of the Syria crisis, including, most recently, through providing technical assistance and training for members of the negotiating team of the Syrian opposition delegation participating in talks in Geneva, Switzerland.

Canada believes that a negotiated political settlement is the only way to end the war in Syria and, further, that the Syria-wide agreement for the cessation of hostilities must be respected. Now, Canada is at the table and can add its voice to one of the most important global security and humanitarian issues of the day.

Being at the table is an additional way to ensure Canada does everything it can for the brave men and women in uniform and courageous civilians who play an important role in securing peace for Iraqis and Syrians each and every day.

Quotes

“I am proud that Canada will now be at the International Syria Support Group. Together, we can and we must find a diplomatic solution to this conflict.

“Canada’s role in the fight for peace and the protection of civilians in the region will be enhanced by our participation on the ISSG. This week’s development is a testament to the advantages of engagement over isolation and to the strength of Canada’s commitment to multilateralism.”

- *Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Quick facts

- The ISSG was first convened in the fall of 2015 in an effort to reinvigorate the peace process and find a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Syria.
- The ISSG is made up of 26 countries and organizations, including the UN but excluding parties from inside Syria. The United States and Russia are co-chairs of the ISSG.
- In response to the crises in Syria and Iraq, Canada will contribute more than \$1.6 billion over the next three years in a comprehensive and integrated approach to security, stabilization, humanitarian and development assistance, and enhanced diplomatic engagement.

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