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60 CFM INTER CHURCH COMMITTEE ON CHILE CDN

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES 40 ST CLAIR AVE E 921-4152 M4T 1M2 6.95

CRT TORONTO ONT 10-9 110P EDT (CONFIRMATION)

HON ROBERT ANDRAS MINISTER OF MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION

HOUSE OF COMMONS OTTAWA ONT

BT

DRAMATIC APPEAL OF CHILEAN REFUGEES IN BUENOS AIRES

REINFORCES NEED FOR SWIFT AND GENEROUS CANADIAN RESPONSE

STOP THE INTER CHURCH COMMITTEE ON CHILE URGES THE GOVERNMENT

OF CANADA TO BRING 5000 REFUGEES MOST IN NEED AND IN DANGER

TO CANADA AS SWIFTLY AS POSSIBLE STOP COMMITTEE RENEWS ITS

OFFER TO SEND A LIASON OFFICER TO ASSIST IN PROCESS WITH

REFUGEES AND OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA STOP STILL AWAIT DATE FOR

PROMISED MEETING STOP

JOHN FOSTER INTER CHURCH COMMITTEE ON CHILE



MAIL TO INTER CHURCH COMMITTEE ON CHILE

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40 ST CLAIR AVE E TORONTO ONT M4T 1M2.

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INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE ON CHILE

The Canadian Council of Churches

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FOR RELEASE

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The occupation of the offices of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Buenos Aires, Argentina, by Chilean refugees dramatizes the desperate predicament of thousands. There are an estimated 20,000 refugees from various Latin American dictatorships in Argentina, approximately 80% of whom are from Chile. Their living conditions are poor, crowded, disease ridden and insecure. Their movements are restricted and they are frequently harrassed by police and the Argentine armed forces. Many of the refugees lack work permits and few if any receive any assistance from the Argentine authorities, forcing them to fend for themselves in an increasingly chaotic society.

As Argentina veers toward civil war, these thousands of refugees are caught helplessly in the cross fire.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has been working under extremely difficult conditions. It requires new international support for its efforts in Argentina. In Argentina, for the first time in its world-wide-history, the High Commission has seen refugees under its care kidnapped and killed. The costs and difficulties of maintaining the refugees and of securing safety for them in the present situation are monumental. Only offers from other nations to receive large numbers of refugees can relieve this desperate situation.

The Inter-Church Committee on Chile has repeatedly raised

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the refugee emergency in Argentina with officials of the Canadian Government. Several members of the Committee have visited Buenos Aires recently and talked with United Nations and Argentina Church officials.

The Canadian Government has not, to date, seen fit to respond to this emergency with the energy and speed which it has exhibited in such recent emergencies as Uganda and Viet Nam. While Canada maintains an immigration office in Argentina, and has received many applications, the limited number of refugees who have arrived in Canada from Argentina have come only after lengthy immigration processes, and have seen many others rejected.

The dramatic appeal of the Chileans in Buenos Aires offers an occasion for a new and vigorous response from Canada. The Inter-Church Committee on Chile calls on the Government of Canada to bring 5,000 of the refugees most in need and in danger, from Argentina to Canada as swiftly as possible. The Inter-Church Committee renews its offer to send a liaison officer to assist in processes with the refugees and with United Nations and Church officials in Argentina.

The Inter-Church Committee on Chile is a two-year old organization co-ordinating the efforts of a number of Canadian Protestant and Catholic denominations in response to the emergency created by the 1973 military coup in Chile.

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