

Canada Shocked by Scale of Syrian Brutality

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News Release

January 21, 2014 - Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird today issued the following statement in response to reports, supported by a massive release of more than 55,000 images, indicating the systemic torture and killing of an estimated 11,000 prisoners by the Assad regime.

This comes ahead of the Geneva II conference tomorrow, where Minister Baird will speak about the challenge of achieving peace in Syria.

“These photographs are overwhelming evidence, and yet another stark reminder, of the terror Assad’s war has brought upon his own people. This horrific and inhumane behaviour, including the torture, maiming and murder of prisoners, is not new to the Assad regime. The scale and brutality of this systemic murder is shocking.

“Canada condemns this abhorrent mistreatment of prisoners in the strongest possible terms. We call on the Assad regime to treat its prisoners with the respect and dignity that all people deserve and to adhere to its international obligations.

“Assad has invited Iran and its proxy, Hezbollah, into Syria to torture prisoners and terrorize civilians. He has promoted sectarianism and opened the door to foreign terrorism for the sake of his own personal privilege and power.

“It is time for the leaders of Syria to put the people of Syria first. Those taking part in the Geneva II peace talks must do so with openness, honesty and with the people of Syria as the principal focus of our efforts.”

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