

Canada - Africa  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
Canada - Afrique

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the Bilateral Mission to the  
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Djibouti**

**Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association**

**Amman, Jordan and Djibouti, Djibouti  
October 13 to 17, 2014**

# Report

## MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

The Canada–Africa Parliamentary Association was represented by the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair; the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Senator, Co-Chair; and Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by the Association Secretary, David Gagnon.

## MISSION OBJECTIVES

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association (hereinafter referred to as the Association) conducted bilateral missions to Amman, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and to Djibouti, in the Republic of Djibouti, on October 13-17, 2014. This was the Association's first mission to Jordan and Djibouti.

In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, emphasis was placed on parliament-to-parliament relations, discussing parliamentary diplomacy, accountability, and current political and constitutional reforms. The role of Jordanian parliamentarians in the context of current regional challenges was also examined. Further, the Association sought to deepen its understanding of Jordan's role in addressing regional instability, as well as the internal challenges presented by the high number of refugees coming to the country.

In the Republic of Djibouti, the Association sought to strengthen bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation, and to strengthen relations with regional organizations. Through contacts with parliamentarians, government officials, civil society groups, and business, the Association also sought to acquaint parliamentarians with Canada's activities in the region. The mission also provided an opportunity to develop understanding of the security issues affecting Djibouti and its neighbours, particularly as they relate to Djibouti's strategic location on the Gulf of Aden.

## HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

### A. Issues and Relations with Canada

Covering an area of 92,342 km<sup>2</sup>, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is located in the Middle East and shares borders with Saudi Arabia (to the east), Israel and the West Bank (to the west), Iraq (to the northeast) and Syria (to the north).

Jordan's population of 6.5 million is primarily Arab (98 percent), but also includes Kabaradians (1 percent) and Armenians (1 percent). The majority of the population is Muslim (97.2 percent) and predominantly Sunni. A small proportion of Jordan's population is Christian (2.2 percent), and a minor proportion of inhabitants practise Buddhism, Hinduism or Judaism. Some 56 percent of the population is under 24 years of age. Although Arabic is the official language, English is widely spoken.

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy headed by King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein. The kingdom's constitution vests executive and legislative authority in the king. The king appoints the prime minister, who forms a government in consultation with the monarchy.

Jordan's national assembly is bicameral, and consists of the Senate, or House of Notables, and the House of Representatives, or House of Deputies. The Senate has 75 members who are appointed by the king for a term of four years. The Senate has nine standing committees. The House of Representatives has 150 members (135 deputies are elected by the people and 15 others are elected through a system of proportional representation). Like senators, deputies serve for a term of four years.

Amman is the capital city of Jordan, and home to some 80 percent of the Jordanian population. This helps explain why the country's gross domestic product (GDP) relies mainly on the service industry (70 percent of GDP), which generates more than 75 percent of jobs in Jordan. The kingdom has one of the region's most open economies. Jordan is a member of the League of Arab States, and is looking to join the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Canada-Jordan bilateral trade is modest, but relatively consistent. Canada regularly enjoys a trade surplus with Jordan. The Canada-Jordan Free Trade Agreement came into force on 1 October 2012. In 2013, Canada's top merchandise exports to Jordan reached \$67.46 million, mainly in motor vehicles, wood, and pulses. Canada's main merchandise imports, valued at \$46.1 million, were knitted or woven apparel, nitrates, and vegetables. Jordan is considered a gateway for business in the vast Iraqi market.

Jordan did not escape the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring, which negatively affected revenues from tourism, foreign investment and transfers of funds during the first half of 2011. Energy prices also rose in Jordan, owing to Egyptian gas supply interruptions and energy price increases in the international market. These problems caused popular uprisings that resulted in a series of reforms aimed at amending the constitution, creating the conditions to establish an effective democratic system and tackling corruption. The purpose of the reforms was mainly to strike a better balance between judicial and legislative authority and civil liberties. Furthermore, new election laws were passed, public service wages were raised and energy sector subsidies were increased.

Jordan is hosting the third largest number of Syrian refugees in the region (over 621,000 registered refugees, and up to 1.2 million refugees in total). According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 16.2 percent of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan are living in camps, while 83.8 percent are living outside of camps in Jordanian communities. Tensions between Syrian refugees and Jordanians are rising due to competition for jobs, access to financial assistance and social services. The crisis is placing increasing pressure on Jordan's economy, budget, security and public services. The UN's 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan identifies US\$1.2 billion in programming needs for Jordan across priority sectors identified by the Government, including municipal support, education, health and water. Canada's total response to date to the Syrian crisis amounts to commitments of over \$ 703 million, of which over \$310 million is specifically directed to Jordan.

## **B. Meetings**

### **1. Meeting with Mr. Bruno Saccomani, Ambassador of Canada to Jordan**

Mr. Bruno Saccomani, Ambassador of Canada to Jordan, and his staff updated members of the delegation on the present Canada-Jordan relationship.

The briefing focussed on political and economic issues, and the regional crisis caused by the ongoing conflict in Syria.

A detailed account was also provided of the current situation in Iraq, and the government of Canada's initiatives. Security issues for Canadians and the region in general were also discussed.

### **2. Meeting with His Excellency Atef al-Tarawneh, Speaker of the House of Representatives**

The delegation met with His Excellency Atef al-Tarawneh, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Speaker graciously welcomed the Canadian delegation and indicated his strong support for an increased bilateral relationship, both at the governmental and parliamentary levels.

The Speaker outlined the concerns for his country's security and stability, given the increasingly difficult situation Jordan is confronting on its borders. An estimated 1.2 million refugees have crossed into Jordan, both informally and formally, of which some 20 percent are in refugee camps under the auspices of the UNHCR. Others have crossed and disbursed throughout Jordan. Those closest to the Syrian border have been most affected. The refugee situation is severely affecting Jordanian society, with increased complications for housing and other services. The goodwill of the Jordanians in receiving 400,000 Iraqi refugees was also discussed.

The Speaker outlined the regional political role the King and the government have played in ongoing efforts to solve the Syrian crisis. The Speaker underscored his belief that the crisis would ultimately be solved through political, rather than military, means.

The Speaker also addressed recent changes to Jordan's constitution, and the measures being taken to modernize parliament and implement these changes. These are of singular importance to Jordan in moving forward. The Speaker paid tribute to the King of Jordan for his vision and response to the needs of citizens.

The delegation engaged the Speaker in discussion about means to strengthen parliamentarians' role in Jordan. It was agreed that opportunities would be sought for further exchanges of information and best practices between Canadian and Jordanian parliamentarians.

### **3. Meeting with his Excellency Faisal al-Fayez, Deputy Speaker of the Senate**

H.E. Faisal al-Fayez, Deputy Speaker of the Senate, indicated that Jordan's monarchy has helped maintain national stability since the creation of the State of Jordan in 1921. Other institutions, such as the army and parliament, have also contributed to create a secure environment where political stability can thrive. With this in mind, the administration has

favoured an incremental approach to political reform. Notably, the country's constitution has been amended to strengthen the democratic institutions (such as the Royal Court). A law that will permit the creation of political parties will also soon be presented.

The importance of having an Upper House to review legislation and to improve popular representation was also discussed. The Deputy Speaker explained that Jordanian Senators are appointed by the King, who tends to choose knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated candidates to serve for four years.

The Deputy Speaker also addressed the challenges created by the large influx of refugees coming to Jordan. It was noted that Jordan is undertaking a formidable task and that international support, such as that provided by Canada, continues to be of critical importance.

The need to tackle youth unemployment to avoid social unrest was highlighted. The Canada-Jordan Free Trade Agreement could create job opportunities for the country's youth. Moreover, encouraging better linkages between educational institutions and the job market could help youths identify and obtain employment. The Deputy Speaker added that Jordan is working on major energy projects that will offer numerous opportunities for youth and investors within Jordan.

#### **4. Meeting with His Excellency Dr. Khaled al Kalalkeh, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs**

The members of the delegation met with H.E. Dr. Khaled al Kalalkeh, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Dr. al Kalalkeh welcomed the delegation to Jordan, and outlined the recent changes to the constitution and the election process. An overview of the parliament and its structure was provided.

The Syrian crisis and its impact on Jordan were also discussed.

#### **5. Meeting with Representatives of Jordanian-Canadian Business Association**

A working luncheon was held with representatives of the Jordanian-Canadian Business Association, including Mr. Nayef Stetieh, President of Jordanian-Canadian Business Association; Mr. Ghassan Azzar, Owner, Trinitae and Co.; and Mr. Halim Abu Rahmeh, President, Jordan Exporters Association.

The representatives outlined their association, Jordan's commodity export and import linkages to Canada, present economic activities between Canada and Jordan, and future opportunities that could help grow commercial relations. It was agreed that more attention to Canada in Jordan, and more opportunities for Canadian businesses, need to be nurtured. An example was made of the opportunities for increasing two-way trade in the textile industries.

All parties welcomed the recent Canada-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, but stressed that the agreement will not increase trade by itself. Further trade promotion and marketing is necessary. The need for an expansion of economic opportunities, growth and prosperity in

Jordan was linked to the needs of an increasingly young population. The security and stability of Jordan were also discussed.

## **6. Meeting with the Al-Hayat Center**

During this meeting, Dr. Amer Bani Amer, Director General of the Al-Hayat Center, and Ms. Mai E'liemat, Director of Research and Fundraising, discussed civil society initiatives and democratic development in Jordan.

The Center has an ambitious program for promoting civic engagement in Jordan. Its role includes observing and monitoring elections and the openness of government, and following constitutional changes and their effects. The Center also seeks to nurture grassroots involvement, local governance, the devolution of authority, and gender sensitivity. Since 2007, the Center has been involved in civic education – and education for women in rural areas in particular – with training sessions at the national and municipal levels. The Center also seeks to encourage youth involvement through Euromed and other groups. It also conducts research and provides training in neighbouring countries, including Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The Center's mandate also involves monitoring and raising awareness about human rights offenses, and providing support for human rights defenders.

Dr. Amer and his staff briefed the delegation on Al-Hayat's efforts to promote transparency and accountability within Jordan's parliament, as well as on recent changes to the election law. The recent changes in the constitution and parliament are, in the Center's opinion, a step in the right direction. The establishment of the independent electoral commission and the constitutional court were highlighted as being paramount to the success of these reforms. The devolution of authority, through a proposed decentralization and changes to the municipal laws made in 2014, needs to be implemented with the full participation of citizens. One major issue confronting the present political system concerns the lack of a culture of political parties. In their opinion, security will come from fostering political reforms as well as direct security or military intervention.

Delegates took note of the Center's unique approach to monitoring governance through a "scorecard approach." This process was developed as a means to monitor the performance of individual members of parliament, as well as the government's overall openness and transparency. By evaluating MPs in terms of their commitment, impact and team work, legislative performance, oversight performance, and representative performance and social interaction, the Parliamentary Performance Scorecard provides an innovative and engaging means to monitor, evaluate and publicly report on the activities of individual parliamentarians.

## **7. Meeting with the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies and UNICEF Jordan**

The Al-Quds Center for Political Studies has been working closely with the Jordanian Parliament since 2008, providing advice on bills and producing papers on a range of public policy issues. Director General Mr. Oraib Al-Rantawi noted that several of the Center's amendment proposals proposed have been adopted by Parliament. All of the Al-Quds Center's policy papers are available for free online.

Mr. Robert Jenkins, UNICEF Representative to Jordan, detailed issues related to the high number of refugees in Jordan. He indicated that the EU's substantial support for the refugee situation may soon decrease. Noting that 40,000 Syrian students in Jordan currently lack funds to go to school, Mr. Jenkins expressed concern that tensions in Jordanian society were already palpable and rising. In this context, Mr. Jenkins highlighted UNICEF's appreciation for the Government of Canada's support in Jordan, and underscored the need to maintain and even increase the aid in order to preserve the country's stability.

## **8. Visit to Al-Maqased Charity Hospital**

Ms. Gallant and Mr. Bélanger briefly toured the Al-Maqased Charity Hospital, where they met with Dr. Wail Balaawi, Director General, Mr. Simon Trichot, Field Coordinator of the Emergency Response Department of Handicap International, and Ms. Salam F. Kanaan, Country Director, CARE International, Jordan. The three organizations assist refugees that have settled in Amman.

During their tour, the delegates met three hospitalized youth: a 17 year-old boy, who had lost a leg in a bomb explosion; a teenage girl, who was slowly recovering from spinal injuries caused by a gunshot wound; and a young girl who had been admitted during the night and remained unconscious, with severe injuries which could lead to loss of limbs and sight. All were Syrians brought to the border of Jordan and then taken by ambulance to the hospital in Amman for emergency and follow-up treatment. All were accompanied by immediate relatives.

Canada has provided \$8 million to Handicap International for humanitarian assistance in Jordan and Lebanon (\$4 million each), which is helping to address the emergency needs of some 36,000 Syrian refugees.

## **9. Visit to an urban refugee centre in East Amman**

Ms. Gallant and Mr. Bélanger also visited an urban refugee centre and were greeted by Ms. Salam Kanaan, Country Director of Care International.

Given the large percentage of Syrian refugees living in the cities of Jordan as opposed to refugee camps, urban refugee centres have been set up by NGOs such as Care International, which receives \$3 million from Canada.

The Centre does not house refugees. Instead, it assists on an annual basis some 8,000 refugee households to access essential assistance in areas such as education and health with a focus on the more vulnerable households, often headed by the elderly or people with disabilities or by predominantly female single parents. It also provides, on a one-time basis only, emergency cash for food or clothing to about 3,500 households. The Centre also associates with other organizations to provide business and life skills training to about 400 women refugees. It is noteworthy that the centre also provides assistance to Jordanians requiring help.

Ms. Gallant and Mr. Bélanger had an interesting discussion with a small group of refugees from Syria and Iraq, one young and one older woman and one young man. After sharing their story, they thanked Care International for the help provided to them and their family.

## **REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI**

### **A. Issues and Relations with Canada**

The Republic of Djibouti is located in the Horn of Africa at the southern entrance to the Red Sea. Bordered by Eritrea to the north, Ethiopia to the west and southwest, and Somalia to the southeast, Djibouti covers an area of 23,180 km<sup>2</sup>.

The population of Djibouti is estimated at approximately 810,000, nearly two-thirds of which lives in the capital, Djibouti. There are two main ethnic groups: the Issa, who are of Somali origin and comprise 60 percent of the population, and the Afar, who are of Ethiopian origin and comprise 35 percent of the population. Both groups are Muslim and speak related Cushitic languages. About 94 percent of Djibouti's citizens are Muslim, and six percent are Christian. Arabic and French are the official languages.

The Constitution of Djibouti was adopted through a national referendum in September 1992. Executive power is vested in the President, who is directly elected by popular vote for a term of five years. Legislative power is exercised by the National Assembly, which is composed of 65 members elected by popular vote for a term of five years. Out of the 65 seats in the National Assembly, seven are held by women. Constitutional amendments adopted in 2010 provided for a bicameral parliament comprising the existing National Assembly and a new Senate, which has yet to be established. The Council of Ministers is chaired by the Prime Minister and reports to the President.

Djibouti's economy is based on the international port of Djibouti, and on its service sector, which accounted for 79.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013. Djibouti has few natural resources and little industry or agriculture. Industry and agriculture accounted for 17.3 percent and three percent of GDP respectively in 2013. With less than 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> of arable land (0.09 percent of 23,180 km<sup>2</sup>) and an average annual rainfall of 220 mm, Djibouti has a chronic food deficit and is dependent on imports to meet its food needs. Djibouti is heavily dependent on foreign assistance and foreign direct investment (FDI) to help support its balance of payments and to finance development projects.

Djibouti ranks 160th out of 189 countries on the World Bank's Doing Business Report for 2013. Djibouti advanced 12 spots on its 2012 ranking as a result of improvements with respect to starting a business, getting credit and resolving insolvency. However, Djibouti continues to rank poorly in terms of registering property, protecting investors, supplying electricity, enforcing contracts and dealing with construction permits. Djibouti ranked 94th out of 177 countries on Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index.

In terms of socio-economic development, Djibouti is listed by the United Nations as a "least developed country". In 2013, GDP per capita was US\$2,700 (adjusted for purchasing power). Approximately 18.8 percent of the population lives below US\$1.25 per day at purchasing power parity. Despite recent increases in primary school enrolment and decreases mortality, most social indicators remain low. Djibouti ranks 170th out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, and is not likely to meet many of its Millennium Development Goals. The unemployment rate in Djibouti was 60 percent in 2007 in urban areas (the last year for which data is available), but is estimated to be over 80 percent in rural areas.



Given its strategic location in the Horn of Africa and at the entrance to the Red Sea, Djibouti leases military bases to a number of countries. Djibouti is host to France's largest military base in Africa, with approximately 2,000 military personnel stationed in the country. Djibouti also hosts approximately 4,000 United States military and civilian personnel and U.S. Department of Defence contractors at Camp Lemonnier, the only permanent U.S. military base in Sub Saharan Africa. In May 2014, the United States signed a ten-year lease with Djibouti for US\$63 million a year for its military base in the country. Djibouti also hosts Japan's only overseas military base, the European Union's anti-piracy forces, as well as an International Maritime Organization (IMO) regional training centre to combat piracy.

Diplomatic relations between Canada and Djibouti are limited but positive, with interaction occurring primarily through La Francophonie and on regional issues (anti-piracy and counter-terrorism efforts).

## **B. Meetings**

### **1. Meeting with the Mr. David Usher, Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia and Djibouti, Dr. Nicolas Georgalis, Honourary Consul of Canada in Djibouti and embassy staff**

A meeting was held with Ambassador David Usher, Honourary Consul of Canada in Djibouti Dr. Nicolas Georgalis, and embassy staff, who are based in Addis Ababa and Nairobi.

The delegation was briefed on the current political situation in Djibouti and the country's role in the region. Bilateral relations between Canada and Djibouti are limited, but cooperative and positive. The Honourary Consul is clearly an active and positive interlocutor for Canada in the country.

The importance of Djibouti's relationship with Ethiopia was also discussed. As a landlocked country, Ethiopia relies heavily on Djibouti for the transit of goods to and from maritime channels.

### **2. Meeting with His Excellency Idriss Arnaoud Ali, President of the National Assembly**

H.E. Idriss Arnaoud Ali, President of the National Assembly, outlined the history of the National Assembly and its present state, including the recent incorporation of opposition members.

The strategic position of the Port of Djibouti, especially for the transit of goods to and from Ethiopia, was discussed. Plans for the future expansion of the port were outlined.

Food and agricultural issues, including challenges relating to sustaining a population in a country almost entirely dependent on imports, were raised.

A discussion was held on security issues in the region and other related matters. The expansion of Camp Lemonnier and the logistics hub of the EU's EUNAVFOR Atlanta joint naval anti-piracy operation were highlighted.

### **3. Meeting with the His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssef, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**

H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssef, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation shared his perspectives on a range of local and international issues.

It was noted that the Minister has been chosen to mediate between the government and opposition members of the national assembly, towards a consensus for a workable Assembly.

Mr. Ali Youssef discussed issues of security, and the need to fight terrorist organizations in the region and elsewhere.

The delegation asked the Minister for his opinion on the functioning of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The Minister noted that although regional challenges had delayed IGAD's efforts to implement its mandate, it nevertheless remained an invaluable institution for regional cooperation on key development priorities.

Mr. Ali Youssef noted that he was supportive of Michaëlle Jean's candidature to become Secretary-General of la Francophonie. He indicated that La Francophonie is a useful organization in which Canada and Djibouti enjoy a positive, ongoing relationship on a number of issues.

### **4. Tour of World Food Programme Logistics Hub**

In 2010, the Government of Djibouti and the World Food Programme signed an agreement for the establishment of a Humanitarian Logistics Base, which entailed a 30-year concession deal for 40,000 square meters of land.

The Djibouti complex will consist of silo storage for bulk food commodities, warehousing for the storage of bulk items, including non-food items, as well as an area to store containers and for offices and training facilities. The hub will enable the World Food Programme to move food more efficiently and effectively to its operations in Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, northern Kenya and Yemen, improving the whole regional humanitarian response and strengthening logistics systems capacities.

Canada has taken a leading role in supporting the construction of the new humanitarian logistics hub, having invested C\$19.2 million into the project. Completion of the hub is planned for June 2015.

### **5. Visit to Camp Lemonnier**

Camp Lemonnier, leased from the government of Djibouti, is the primary base of operations for the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and the U.S. sole permanent base on the African continent. The delegation was allowed to visit parts of the camp, where a recent expansion has been made. Captain Michael S. Newman, Captain Shawn E. Duane and Lieutenant Colonel Fred Moore briefed the delegation on the role and scope of Joint Task Force's mission and regional activities. Lieutenant Colonel Fred Moore coordinates Canada's contribution to the Joint Task Force.

East Africa risks instability – not only through terrorism and sectarian violence in the Central African Republic, ethnic violence, and tribal conflict – but also due to humanitarian crises such as drought, food insecurity, weak governance, marred electoral functions, and widespread corruption. The Horn of Africa is a strategically critical, but volatile region, with an active Al Qaeda affiliate extremist threat. Gains have been made in containing Al Shabaab by cutting off its revenues. An act of commercial piracy has not occurred in two years.

Recently, a portion of the U.S. Seabee forces were deployed to Monrovia, Liberia, in support of Operation United Assistance in West Africa, which provided engineering support infrastructure projects used by healthcare workers fighting the Ebola outbreak.

## **6. Meeting with members of the diplomatic corps**

The delegation met with various members of the diplomatic corps:

- His Excellency Thomas P. Kelly, Ambassador of the United States to Djibouti;
- His Excellency Serge Mucetti, Ambassador of France to Djibouti;
- Mr. Christophe Forax, First Counsellor and chargé d'affaires, Delegation of the European Union to Djibouti;
- Mr. Helmut Doman, First Secretary, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ethiopia and Djibouti;
- Mr. Hidekazu Nagasawa, Counsellor, Embassy of Japan to Djibouti.

Each representative indicated their bilateral relations and responsibilities in Djibouti. A lively and informative roundtable discussion was held on the strategic position of Djibouti in the security of the Indian Ocean and the region.

## **7. Meeting with international organizations**

The delegation met with representatives of various international organizations:

- Dr. Aden Warsama, Migration Health Officer, International Organization for Migration;
- Liyunet Demsis, Senior Program Assistant, International Organization for Migration;
- Ifrah Abas, Communications Specialist, International Organization for Migration;
- Fathia Omar Hassan, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF;
- Frederic Van Hamme, External Relations Officer, UNHCR;
- Honorine Sommet Lange, Representative, UNHCR;
- Aicha Abdallah, UNHCR;
- Abdoukader Daher Ainan, ONARS;

- Joshua E. Friedman, Regional Mixed Migration Manager, Danish Refugee Council;
- Giulia Spagna, Danish Refugee Council;
- Abdallah Hamadou, Danish Refugee Council.

Each representative explained their organization's role in Djibouti and the surrounding area. Many of the organizations carry out similar roles throughout Africa.

Of particular interest to the delegation were patterns of migration through Djibouti. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are over 25,000 "people of concern," in Djibouti, including 21,000 refugees and more than 4,200 asylum-seekers. This population is composed mostly of Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans, the majority of whom fled as a result of conflict in their countries of origin. Women and children represent over 70 percent of the refugee population.

## **8. Tour of Port of Djibouti**

The Port of Djibouti is located at the intersection of major shipping lanes connecting Asia, Africa and Europe. This, combined with Djibouti's established and secure ports, makes the country an essential international partner in efforts to address key security challenges.

The Port of Djibouti also provides the sole maritime access for the transit of goods to and from Ethiopia. This is set to increase with the development of new highway and railway lines between Djibouti and Ethiopia.

The port itself is undergoing substantial expansion, with a view towards increasing the service it provides to the COMESA market, which represents 19 countries and 380 million people.

## **9. Wreath Laying Ceremony**

The delegation held a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of two fallen soldiers with links to Canada.

Harold Lewis Sneath and Lawrence Robert Maguire fought together during the World War II and died in the line of duty in 1942, when their plane was shot down near Djibouti. Both were 23 years old.

A wreath was laid on the grave of Harold Sneath, a Canadian citizen, and poppies were placed on the grave of Mr. Maguire, an American citizen. The delegation was the first to officially honour the fallen soldiers at this gravesite.

## **10. Visit to Lac Assal**

Members of the delegation also visited Lac Assal, a crater lake 120 kilometres or two hours west of the city of Djibouti. Sitting 155 meters below sea level, Lac Assal is the lowest point of land in Africa.

Because of massive evaporation, a large portion of the lake is crystallized salt surface of about 68 km<sup>2</sup>, parts of which one can walk on. The rest of the lake, 54km<sup>2</sup>, is composed of high saline liquid brine.

Given Lac Assal's unique properties, the government of Djibouti is taking steps to develop the area as a tourist attraction, as well as a source of raw materials for use in a variety of salt-based products.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **A. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

This was the Association's first bilateral mission to the Middle East since being mandated to cover the region by the Joint Interparliamentary Council (JIC). It should be noted that the Association has previously met with many delegations and dealt with numerous Middle Eastern issues in Canada.

With the ongoing conflict in Syria now expanding even further into Iraq, the destabilization of the surrounding countries was graphically illustrated for the members of the delegation. There was also a growing apprehension about ISIS or ISIL and its role within Jordan. Some of the concerns expressed to the delegation have since come to pass.

The burden of accommodating high volumes of refugees, in both an official and non-official capacity, is stretching Jordan to the limit. Although Jordan has hosted refugees in modern times, the sheer number of refugees now relying on its resources is unprecedented. Every interlocutor met by the delegation expressed an overwhelming concern for the future security and stability of Jordan.

The delegation noted Canada's support for refugees in Jordan through UNHCR. It encourages the Government of Canada to continue this support, and to engage with Jordanian officials on the best means to address the situation of non-registered refugees, with a view to ensuring the ongoing stability of the country.

While the plight of the refugees is being documented internationally, the pressures on many disadvantaged Jordanians must also be addressed. Housing shortages and stretched educational resources were noted in particular. The delegation commends the Jordanian Government, United Nations organizations such as UNICEF and UNHCR, and NGOs for their efforts to address the needs of local Jordanians who are either being displaced or finding resources inadequate.

The delegation noted several characteristics that make this conflict unique in relation to previous and other existing conflicts, including the vast number of refugees and the desire shared by many of them for an eventual return to Syria. These features should continue to inform the Government of Canada's engagement with UN agencies and other organizations seeking to address the needs of the refugees and of neighbouring countries.

On the economic front, Jordanian officials and businesses with linkages to Canada welcomed the Canada-Jordan Free Trade Agreement. It will be critical to maintain a focus on trade promotion initiatives to foster greater awareness of the opportunities for increased trade and investment among businesses in Canada and Jordan.

Recent changes to Jordan's constitution stand to facilitate a greater diversity of opinions and more pluralistic governance. Implementation has, however, not yet succeeded in bringing about the changes that Jordanian citizens expect. Of particular importance will be the success of a constitutional devolution of powers to a more local level. There may be opportunities for Canada to assist in this regard.

The delegation notes that the dual continental focus of our mandate provided a unique perspective as to how the Middle East interacts with African countries. This relationship is increasingly important, as are the steps the Association has taken to bring this information to Parliament.

## **B. Republic of Djibouti**

The Association's mission to Djibouti provided an excellent opportunity to update parliamentarians on the country's role in relation to several important foreign policy issues.

As a transition site for migrants and refugees, Djibouti continues to experience an influx of thousands of Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans – some 70% of which are women and children, and many of whom have fled conflict in their countries of origin

Djibouti's strategic position on the Gulf of Aden and at the mouth of the Red Sea has made it a hub for international cooperation in the fight against piracy and terrorism.

Djibouti also continues to grow in importance as a shipping hub; for landlocked Ethiopia in particular, but also for the broader COMESA market. Infrastructure developments currently underway will support continued growth in this sector.

Canada's links with Djibouti through La Francophonie and our work in Africa showed that our relationship, although modest, can be improved with further interaction such as that exemplified by the Association's visit.

The delegation also welcomed the opportunity to honour the service and sacrifice of fallen World War II soldiers Harold Lewis Sneath and Lawrence Robert Maguire at their gravesite in Djibouti.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Saccomani and his staff at the Canadian embassy in Amman for their cooperation in coordinating and assisting the mission. The delegation also wished to thank the Parliament and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, and all those who took the time to meet with the delegation amid ongoing difficulties facing the country

The delegation also wishes to express its gratitude to Mr. David Usher, Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia and Djibouti, and Representative to the African Union, for his special accommodation. The delegation's appreciation is also extended to Dr. Nicolas Georgalis, Honourary Consul of Canada in Djibouti, who accompanied the delegation throughout the meetings and activities, and to all those who graciously accepted to meet with and assist the Association in its mission.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Raynell Andreychuk,  
Senator, Co-Chair  
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

Hon. Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P.  
Co-Chair  
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

## Travel Costs

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>ASSOCIATION</b>      | Canada-Africa Parliamentary Associations  |
| <b>ACTIVITY</b>         | Bilateral Mission to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Djibouti       |
| <b>DESTINATION</b>      | Amman, Jordan and Djibouti, Djibouti  |
| <b>DATES</b>            | October 13 to 17, 2014  |
| <b>DELEGATION</b>       |   |
| <b>SENATE</b>           | The Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, Senator, Co-Chair  |
| <b>HOUSE OF COMMONS</b> | The Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair; Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P., Member |
| <b>STAFF</b>            | Mr. David Gagnon, Secretary of the Delegation   |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>   | \$ 52,367.64  |
| <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>    | \$ 6,527.87   |
| <b>HOSPITALITY</b>      | \$ 817.04   |
| <b>PER DIEMS</b>        | \$ 2,217.28   |
| <b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>   | \$ 742.64   |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>    | \$ 591.71   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>\$ 63,264.18</b>   |



