Beat: Miscellaneous

Canada closes embassy in Cairo over security concerns

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USPA News - The Canadian government on Tuesday ordered its embassy in the Egyptian capital of Cairo to close immediately due to security concerns stemming from Egypt`s escalating civil unrest that has killed at least 16 people and injured hundreds more. Rick Roth, a spokesman for Canadian foreign affairs minister John Baird, said its embassy in Cairo had been closed as a security precaution to ensure the protection of its staff members.

"We don`t comment publicly on security precaution specifics at our missions," he said. Egypt has been rocked by escalating civil unrest in recent days, resulting in huge rallies and deadly clashes between supporters and opponents of President Mohammed Morsi, who was elected last year after the 2011 revolution that ousted Hosni Mubarak. The army on Monday issued a 48-hour ultimatum to resolve the crisis or it will step in to restore order. "Canada is deeply concerned by reports of violence in Egypt that has claimed a number of lives and left many more persons injured," Roth said on Tuesday. "Dangerous divisions within Egypt threaten its stability and damage its long-term economic prospects. We call on all parties to remain calm and participate in the political process." Roth gave no indication as to how long its Cairo mission could be closed, but the embassy`s website said it would remain closed until further notice. "We take the safety of our personnel and our mission overseas very seriously. We are monitoring events closely and taking appropriate security measures," the spokesman added. The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development warned Canadians last week to avoid demonstrations in Egypt and to remain vigilant. It has now urged Canadians in Egypt to register with its Canadians Abroad service, which allows Canadians to access consular services and alerts them in the event of an emergency. Egypt`s civil unrest, which began last week, has claimed at least 16 lives and injured nearly 800 others. Among those killed was Egyptian journalist Salah al-Din Hassan who died on Saturday when he picked up a homemade bomb that was thrown during an anti-Morsi demonstration in the city of Port Said.

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