



CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS ■ CONGRÈS TAMOUL CANADIEN

31 Progress Avenue, Suite #202, Scarborough M1P 4S6 T: 416-240-0078 F:416-240-1601 e-mail:info@ctconline.ca

For Immediate Release

May 18, 2009

Press Conference: Tamil Canadians' Next Move

SPEAKERS : Prof. Sri R Ranjan, President, Canadian Tamil Congress
David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson, Canadian Tamil Congress
Manjula Selvarajah, Media Coordinator, Canadian Tamil Congress

WHEN : Tuesday 12 noon, May 19, 2009.

WHERE : Canadian Tamil Congress, 31 Progress Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON.

CONTACT : David Poopalapillai – (905) 781 7034
Manjula Selvarajah - (905) 409 9473

Prime Minister Harper Must Act on Sri Lanka

Tamil Canadians are urgently requesting that Prime Minister Harper send a strong clear message to Sri Lanka to allow aid groups, media and independent monitors unfettered access to the conflict zone to aid and report on the horrendous conditions faced by thousands of Tamil civilians.

“The President of Sri Lanka has declared a military victory, however what is transpiring in Sri Lanka is by no means a moral victory,” says David Poopalaipillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. “Now more than ever, Tamil Canadians need to hear from our Prime Minister that human rights and justice are universal standards that all democratic nations must abide by.”

Despite the message from the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) that the war with the LTTE is over, the GOSL's war on Tamil civilians continues. Reports indicate that basic aid is still being withheld from Tamil civilians. The current humanitarian situation in the Northeast is at its most urgent and critical state according to international humanitarian workers. In the last five months, over 15,000 Tamil civilians have been killed, 50,000 injured and 200,000 in internment camps. In addition, Canadian Tamils are receiving information from Tamil friends and family in Sri Lanka about rising incidents of intimidation and an atmosphere of fear.

• Toronto (416) 240-0078 • Ottawa (613) 789-9371 • Montreal (514) 995-7483 • Vancouver (778) 231-0074 • Edmonton (780) 498-1070 • Winnipeg (204) 290-4686 • Halifax (902) 229-5482



CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS ■ CONGRÈS TAMOUL CANADIEN

31 Progress Avenue, Suite #202, Scarborough M1P 4S6 T: 416-240-0078 F:416-240-1601 e-mail:info@ctconline.ca

“Tamil Canadians are looking towards our government to stand up, speak out, and take action,” says Prof. Sri Ranjan, President of the Canadian Tamil Congress. “As the country with the largest Tamil Diaspora outside of South Asia, it is imperative that Canada take a leadership role by denouncing the Government of Sri Lanka’s ongoing genocide against the Tamil people and adopt a concrete humanitarian strategy for Sri Lanka.”

The Canadian Tamil Congress calls upon the Canadian Government to deploy a DART team to assist in humanitarian efforts in the conflict affected areas. Canada must push the GOSL to immediately disband the internment camps and allow in aid groups, media and international human rights monitoring teams to report on the human rights situation, and aid the victims. We ask that the Canadian government join recent calls by the UNHCR and the European Union for a commission of inquiry to investigate war crimes in the recent conflict. In addition, it is important that any immediate aid Canada decides to provide be directed to reputable aid organizations, as opposed to the GOSL, so it can directly reach the victims.

If these requests are rejected by the GOSL, we support the recommendations of Canada’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. The Committee’s report on Canada’s role in the Sri Lankan crisis recommends, should efforts to engage the Government of Sri Lanka fail, then “the Government of Canada should consider financial and diplomatic sanctions, including, but not limited to, advocating for Sri Lanka’s suspension from the Commonwealth, as well as incentives.”

For more information: Canadian Tamil Congress (416) 240-0078