



## **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**

#### **ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS IN SRI LANKA ALARMING**

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Since the Sri Lankan government unilaterally withdrew from the six year old ceasefire earlier this year, there has been an escalation of violence against civilians across the island nation. Last week, two bus bombings targeting the transportation system in the South resulted in several casualties. Meanwhile, Tamils in Colombo continue to be abducted and disappeared. The situation in the North East of the island is especially dire as the Sri Lanka Air Force routinely targets civilian areas for Ariel bombardment. As result, thousands more Tamils have become internally displaced.

“The deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka, is clearly a result of the Sri Lankan government’s refusal to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the armed conflict in Sri Lanka,” said David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. “It is clear that the present Sri Lankan regime is bent on pursuing a military solution to this armed conflict.”

During a United Nations Security Council debate on “Civilians in Armed Conflict” held on May 27, John Holmes, the Under-Secretary- General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator stated that “in Sri Lanka, hundreds of civilians had been killed or injured this year.” In that same debate, the Canadian representative to the Security Council, John McNee likened Sri Lanka with some of the world’s worst human rights abusers, including Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Burundi, stating that in these countries “civilians were part of the calculus of conflict”.

Sri Lanka suffered a significant international blow last month, as the United Nations General Assembly rejected Sri Lanka’s bid to become re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council, the worlds preeminent international human rights body. A campaign led by international non-governmental organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, the Democracy Coalition Project and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative urged member states of the UN not to re-elect Sri Lanka stating that Sri Lanka’s worsening human rights record and failed promises for improvement undermine its claim for a place on the UN Human Rights Council.

The Canadian Tamil Congress expresses great sadness over the loss of all innocent civilian lives across the island of Sri Lanka and urges the international community to take a more proactive role in brining a peaceful and just resolution to the armed conflict in Sri Lanka.

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For further information contact:  
Canadian Tamil Congress  
416 240 0078  
info@canadiantamilcongress.ca

• Toronto  
(416) 240-0078

• Ottawa  
(613) 789-9371

• Montreal  
(514) 898-8019

• Vancouver  
(778) 231-0074