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Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"The unified voice of Canadian Tamils"

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Tamil Canadians Call for War Crimes Inquiry into Last Phase of Sri Lankan Conflict

General Sarath Fonseka's recent interview in a leading Sri Lankan newspaper adds to the mounting evidence that war crimes were committed during the last phase of the country's civil war. Fonseka's statements in the *Sunday Leader* this week reveal that the ruling leaders deliberately orchestrated war crimes, in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions.

His interview, together with several independent investigations and reports, highlight the need for an international inquiry into war crimes as suggested by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

"Crimes against humanity were committed during the last phase of the war in Sri Lanka, and the international community and world leaders need to step up to hold the perpetrators responsible," said David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. "No nation has violated the Geneva Conventions as flagrantly as Sri Lanka."

In late May, the *Times of London* revealed that more than 20,000 Tamil civilians were killed in the latter stages of the war mostly due to government shelling. The paper's finding was in stark contradiction to statements from government officials, who had repeatedly claimed no civilian had been killed.

A few months later, a Channel 4 video surfaced showing summary executions of Tamils by government soldiers. Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka, an independent group which obtained the material, said the video was filmed in January - when the international media were prevented by the Sri Lankan government from covering the conflict zone.

In October, the U.S. State Department detailed reports of abuses that took place, including government shelling in the No Fire Zone, the abduction and murders of Tamil civilians and the forceful reduction of medical and food supplies to Tamil areas during the conflict. Mr. Poopalapillai said the international community should deal with the Sri Lankan state "in a similar way it dealt with Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein."

To read the interview, please visit www.thesundayleader.lk. For more information, please contact 416.240.0078

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