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## For Immediate Release

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# International Crisis Group Report Holds Sri Lanka to Account for Deaths

Tamil Canadians are calling for an international independent investigation into war crimes in the wake of an International Crisis Group report, which states that the Sri Lankan security forces intentionally and repeatedly shelled civilians, hospitals and humanitarian operations. The investigative report, released today, notes that the Sri Lankan government bombed relentlessly in areas where it knew unarmed people were present. These actions occurred, the ICG notes, despite promises from the government to protect civilians and aid workers. All but a small portion of these deaths were due to government shelling, the report said.

"In the wake of the ICG report, what more do world leaders need to launch an independent international investigation into war crimes committed during the final stages of the war?" said David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. "As we mark the one year anniversary of the slaughter of tens of thousands of Tamils, we urge world leaders to hold those who commit war crimes and repeatedly violate international law accountable."

The ICG reached its findings after the use of witness testimony, satellite images, documents and other evidence. The ICG investigation is the most significant in a long line of reports that indicated war crimes were committed in Sri Lanka. Earlier this year, the United Nations verified the authenticity of a video showing the summary execution of naked blindfolded Tamils. The video was aired by Britain's Channel 4 video. 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.

In May, the Times of London revealed more than 20,000 Tamil civilians were killed in the latter stages of the war mostly due to government shelling. Furthermore, former UN Spokesperson Gordon Weiss stated that he believed the real death toll was between 30,000 and 40,000. All these findings are in stark contrast to Sri Lankan government claims that no civilian had been killed.

The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) is a non-profit organization which serves as the voice of Tamil Canadians. Headquartered in Toronto, the CTC has chapters across the country and an elected board of directors. The non-partisan organization works as the community's spokesperson on the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels.

**For more information, contact 416.240.0078**

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