



## **CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS ■ CONGRÈS TAMOUL CANADIEN**

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### **Sri Lanka Unlikely to Meet Commitment to Resettle Bulk of Nearly 300,000 Internally Displaced Persons Within 180 days: Situation Report**

In the aftermath of Sri Lanka's deadly war, Sri Lanka committed to resettling the "bulk" of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within 180 days. As the resettlement period approaches the 60-day mark, the Canadian Tamil Congress is releasing the first of its monthly situation reports tracking Sri Lanka's progress in freeing and resettling its nearly 300,000 IDPs.

The "Situation Report for July 2009" argues the likelihood of Sri Lanka meeting its 180-day commitment is "dim" and "unlikely" considering only 5,104 IDPs have been freed as of July 3, 2009. Continued scrutiny and reporting by the international community and press are critical at this juncture of Sri Lanka's future.

"Many internally displaced persons remain effectively as prisoners – cut off from the outside world and, in some cases, subjected to torture, summary execution and starvation," said Harini Sivalingam, a Toronto-based lawyer and policy director for the CTC. "About 1,400 people are believed to be dying every week, and some girls and women have become pregnant due to rape."

The report notes that Sri Lanka has failed to adhere to several of the 'Guiding Principles' for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as set out by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"It is time for Sri Lanka to show gestures of accommodation and reconciliation towards Tamils by working quickly towards releasing and resettling the IDPs," Ms. Sivalingam said. "Many view this resettlement process as a final chance for peace on the island. Failure to take advantage of this opportunity could send the country into a downward spiral of resumed suffering, from which there would be little hope for recovery."

Currently, nearly 300,000 civilians are confined in numerous camps in northern Sri Lanka with no freedom of movement to leave. Issues of overcrowding, poor sanitation, minimal healthcare and lack of basic necessities plague these camps where aid and media organizations are prevented from having full access. The CTC will release monthly reports until the nearly 300,000 IDPs are resettled.

For more information, please contact CTC at 416.240.0078

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