



**Canadian Tamil Congress**  
**கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை**  
**Congrès Tamoul Canadien**  
*"The unified voice of Canadian Tamils"*

**Head Office:**  
**Toronto**  
216-31 Progress Ave.  
Toronto, On. M1P 4S6 Canada  
Tel: **416 240 0078**  
Fax: 416 240 1601

**Branch Office:**  
**Montreal**  
378-6830, Parc Ave.  
Montreal, Qc H3N 1W3  
Tel: **514 394 7727**  
Fax: 514 227 5477

www.canadiantamilcongress.ca info@canadiantamilcongress.ca

September 17, 2009

# Sri Lanka Holds Canadian In Prison Without Charges

Prisoners at two Sri Lankan jails, where a Canadian is currently in detention, have begun a fast-until-death Thursday morning (Sri Lankan time) to protest being detained without any charges and being denied due process. They are asking for due process to be followed with a judiciary system or to be released. Many prisoners housed in these jails have not been formally charged. The Canadian in the Sri Lankan prison has not been previously named by media in Canada.

“Canada should intervene to ensure that no harm comes to this Canadian as torture is very common in the Sri Lankan prison system,” said David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. “Our government should be active in making sure due process is followed in this case instead of this Canadian being held indefinitely in limbo.”

In a September 2009 statement, Amnesty International noted Sri Lanka has a long history of torture and ill treatment of prisoners. The protests will be taking place at the Colombo Remand Prison and Magazine Prison, which contain several hundred detainees. Some prisoners have been held from 3 months to 10 years. Reporters Without Borders has noted Colombo Magazine Prison is notorious for physical mistreatment of Tamil detainees.

“It should be noted in the past, that Sri Lanka was notorious for housing thousands of Tamils as detainees without any charges and releasing them years later after severe torture,” Poopalapillai said.

---

**Chapters:**

• **Ottawa**

613 789 9371

• **Vancouver**

778 231 0074

• **Edmonton**

780 660 1211

• **Winnipeg**

204 219 2018

• **Halifax**

902 229 5482

• **Waterloo**

519 404 6707



**Canadian Tamil Congress**  
**கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை**  
**Congrès Tamoul Canadien**  
*"The unified voice of Canadian Tamils"*

**Head Office:**  
**Toronto**  
216-31 Progress Ave.  
Toronto, On. M1P 4S6 Canada  
Tel: **416 240 0078**  
Fax: 416 240 1601

**Branch Office:**  
**Montreal**  
378-6830, Parc Ave.  
Montreal, Qc H3N 1W3  
Tel: **514 394 7727**  
Fax: 514 227 5477

[www.canadiantamilcongress.ca](http://www.canadiantamilcongress.ca) [info@canadiantamilcongress.ca](mailto:info@canadiantamilcongress.ca)

The prisoners are believed to be mostly held under emergency regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Amnesty has called the PTA 'draconian' and noted that it is incompatible with international human rights law and standards. The organization notes the act has been used against political opponents.

The case of reporter J.S. Tissainayagam, where the PTA was applied, was pointed out by Amnesty as illustrating a pattern by the government to silence human rights defenders in Sri Lanka through detention without charge or trial.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has also called the PTA 'draconian' and noted the Sri Lankan government has rejected calls from opposition politicians to end Sri Lanka's state of emergency and to repeal the PTA. HRW noted the Sri Lankan government uses emergency regulations to arrest and detain political opponents, journalists, human rights defenders, and members of the Tamil minority community.

For more information, contact 416.240.0078

-30-

**Chapters:**

• **Ottawa**

613 789 9371

• **Vancouver**

778 231 0074

• **Edmonton**

780 660 1211

• **Winnipeg**

204 219 2018

• **Halifax**

902 229 5482

• **Waterloo**

519 404 6707