



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

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### **Outrage over Rae Deportation from Sri Lanka; Congress calls for Sanctions**

Tamil Canadians are outraged and shocked that the Hon. Bob Rae, Member of Parliament for Toronto Centre and a distinguished Canadian politician, was deported from Sri Lanka last night. Mr. Rae was detained in Colombo upon his arrival because Sri Lankan intelligence services deemed his visit was “not suitable,” said Sri Lankan Immigration Commissioner P.B. Abeykoon.

Mr. Rae has been critical of both the Government of Sri Lanka and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and has advocated for a long-term political solution to the Sri Lankan conflict. As a former chairman of the Forum of Federations, he is considered an expert on Sri Lankan issues due to his extensive travels across the country and meetings with political leaders of all parties.

“It’s a slap on Canada’s face to treat a well-respected veteran Canadian politician this way,” said David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. “Denying Mr. Rae’s entry clearly shows how undemocratic Sri Lanka has become. Since Mr. Rae is outspoken on many world issues, his deportation shows Sri Lanka has a lot to hide from the international community.”

Currently, about 300,000 Tamil civilians are in internment camps across Sri Lanka and many are separated from their families. Sri Lanka continues to deny full access to aid organizations despite civilians’ desperate need for water, medicines and food. Media was also barred from affected zones during the war.

“Mr. Rae is not the first foreign official to be denied entry into Sri Lanka, nor will he be the last,” says Professor Sri Ranjan, President of the Canadian Tamil Congress. “If a distinguished Canadian like Mr. Rae is treated in this manner, imagine how an ordinary Tamil is treated by the Government of Sri Lanka.”

This is only the latest anti-Canadian sentiment to come from Sri Lanka. On May 27, protestors vandalized the Canadian High Commission in Colombo. Canada denounced the protestors’ actions and called for an investigation. Canada, like other Western nations, has called for unfettered access for aid organizations, UN bodies, and media organizations, advocated freedom of movement for the internally displaced people, and called for a war crimes inquiry.

But since Canada’s calls have been falling on deaf ears, we urge Canada to undertake diplomatic and economic sanctions against Sri Lanka. “History shows brutal regimes like Sri Lanka will only act when diplomatic and economic sanctions are put in place,” said Mr. Poopalapillai.

For more information, contact the Canadian Tamil Congress at 416-240-0078

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