



CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS ■ CONGRÈS TAMOUL CANADIEN

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For Immediate Release

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Cricket World Urged to Pressure Sri Lanka to Free Civilians

Tamil Canadians will hold vigils in multiple Canadian cities to urge the International Cricket Council (ICC), all cricket associations and teams to boycott Sri Lanka due to the confinement of nearly 300,000 civilians in barbed-wire camps. The initiative will also urge politicians from all cricketing nations to take a lead in upholding human rights by pressing for this boycott.

The vigils will happen outside the New Zealand High Commission and consulate offices in Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver on Wednesday, August 5, 2009 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The New Zealand offices were selected for the vigils as the New Zealand Black Caps are set to arrive shortly in Sri Lanka for a cricket tour.

“Sri Lanka has not played by the rules when it comes to nearly 300,000 civilians who have been illegally confined in internment camps with no freedom of movement to leave,” said David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. “Sri Lanka has violated international law with its actions and, its behavior should not be endorsed or ignored with the presence of nations which follow international rules not only for sporting events but in all walks of life.”

Human Rights Watch has called the internment of the nearly 300,000 civilians illegal and Amnesty International has reports of camp detainees facing torture, disappearances, and sexual violence. Aid and media organizations continue to face restrictions on their access to these camps. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka was ranked 165 out of 173 countries in the world for its crackdown on free press in 2008 by Reporters Without Borders.

“As Canadians, we believe in the upholding of human rights around the world,” said David Poopalapillai, national spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. “Many Tamil Canadians have brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, mothers and fathers in these camps, and the world must make the case to Sri Lanka that it will not watch silently while Sri Lanka not only detains these people but curtails access to aid workers at a time when water, medicines and other relief supplies are desperately needed.”

Since Sri Lanka has continued to ignore calls from western nations to free these detainees, Tamil Canadians urge cricketers to follow similar actions taken to successfully protest against apartheid in South Africa. “Tamil Canadians believe a boycott of the Sri Lankan cricket team will send the message to Sri Lanka that it is morally wrong to run modern-day internment camps, restrict aid organizations and repress the media,” Mr. Poopalapillai said.



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Event Details

WHAT: Vigils to urge cricketing bodies and nations to boycott Sri Lanka

WHERE:

**New Zealand Honorary Consul
Toronto
965 Bay Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5S 2A3**

**New Zealand High Commission
99 Bank Street, Suite 727
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G3**

**New Zealand Consulate-General
Vancouver
Suite 1200, 888 Dunsmuir Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3K4**

WHEN: August 5, 2009

For more information, contact Canadian Tamil Congress at 416.240.0078