



CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS ■ CONGRÈS TAMOUL CANADIEN

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Tamil Canadians Call for Strong and Immediate Action on Sri Lanka

The ongoing civilian carnage in the Northeast of Sri Lanka requires immediate and strong action on the part of the Canadian government. The Canadian government must take concrete action to end the unprecedented loss of civilian lives taking place in the Northeast of Sri Lanka.

Tamil Canadians were distraught to hear that on May 10, 2009 over 2000 civilians were reportedly killed in an all night artillery offensive launched by the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka has shown callous disregard for the safety of civilians by deliberately targeting civilian areas in direct violation of international humanitarian law. Most recently, the Sri Lankan military attacked a makeshift hospital on May 12, instantly killing 47 civilians, including a civil Administrative Officer, and injuring at least 55 patients.

Canada is home to the largest Tamil Diaspora outside of Sri Lanka, many of whom have lost loved ones due to the conflict. Tamil Canadians are deeply distraught by the current humanitarian crisis and are concerned about the welfare of their loved ones still in the conflict zone.

“For months, Tamil Canadians have been waiting for action from our government,” says David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC). “There is a deep sense of disappointment and frustration that Canada has not taken a leadership role to bring an end to this fresh wave of violence.”

The Government of Sri Lanka has rejected repeated calls by international actors, including Canada, to undertake an immediate ceasefire. It is clear that the Government of Sri Lanka intends to continue a military approach to the conflict in reckless disregard to civilian casualties.

“It is time for Canada to take firm action against Sri Lanka,” says Dr. Sri Ranjan, President of the Canadian Tamil Congress. “The only way to end this humanitarian catastrophe is for influential countries like Canada to compel the Government of Sri Lanka to engage in negotiations for a political resolution to the conflict that respects the legitimate rights of the Tamil people to self determination.”

The Canadian Tamil Congress strongly urges the Canadian government to take firm action against Sri Lanka immediately. As a signatory to the Geneva Convention IV, Canada is duty bound to ensure that Sri Lanka abides by international humanitarian law and international human rights standards. CTC reiterates its call for the Canadian government to cut all diplomatic and economic relations with Sri Lanka.

For more information: Canadian Tamil Congress (416) 240-0078

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