



Canadian Tamil Congress
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Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"The unified voice of Canadian Tamils"

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For Immediate Release

Ocean Lady Newcomers Deserve Due Process **-Canadian Tamil Congress Supports Government Efforts-**

Toronto, Ontario -The reported interception of 76 passengers, believed to be of Tamil origin, off the coast of British Columbia is a cause for concern to all Canadians.

The President of the Canadian Tamil Congress, Professor Sri Ranjan has written to Minister Peter Van Loan expressing support of the government in assisting the would be newcomers.

Minister Van Loan has identified the government's first priority as one of humanitarian. These steps are critical under these circumstances and the CTC supports the government on this very important priority.

"These individuals have put their lives at risk through their travels across the sea in difficult circumstances. However, given the grave and intolerable conditions in which Tamils in Sri Lanka face after cessation of hostilities, their decision to risk their life for safety is understandable" stated David Poopalapillai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress.

"As Canadians, it is important to ensure that these newcomers have an opportunity to be heard and assessed as to their suitability to stay in Canada – in effect we need to ensure that due process is adhered to and they are given a fair hearing" Poopalapillai added.

The Canadian Tamil Congress is a national organization with eleven Chapters in Canada, including Vancouver. The Canadian Tamil Congress is ready to extend its full resources to support and assist with the process undertaken by Canadian Border Services.

In particular, if the newcomers have immediate relatives in Canada, CTC will undertake to connect them with their families. "Many in Canada have family members they have not had contact with for several months as a result of the crisis in Sri Lanka. In the case that these newcomers have relatives here, we would certainly assist them in making that connection so that they may receive much needed support from families and friends" concluded Poopalapillai.

CTC will continue to monitor the situation as it unfolds and is committed to supporting both the newcomers and the Government of Canada under these difficult circumstances.

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

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