



CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS ■ CONGRÈS TAMOUL CANADIEN

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Press Release

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Sri Lanka: Complete Collapse of the Rule of Law.

The international community is only now finding out what Tamils have known all along, that the Sri Lankan government is notorious for disappearances, abductions and extra judicial killings. Tamil Canadians are all too familiar with the findings that have been released in a report today by Human Rights Watch. The report by Human Rights Watch confirms what international non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International and the Asian Human Rights Commission have raised as serious concerns about the Sri Lankan government's ability and willingness to investigate killings and forced disappearances.

The report describes the alarming state of disappearances as a 'national crisis', however, Tamil Canadians believe the situation is an 'international crisis'. "As an organization, we have had many individuals raise concerns over the safety and well being of family and friends in Sri Lanka. We have heard countless stories of abductions, disappearances, and killings by agents of the Sri Lankan government," states David Poopalapillai national spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress.

These disappearances, abductions and killings by the Sri Lankan government are evidence of the collapse of the rule of law taking place in Sri Lanka. "Sri Lanka has turned into a lawless state and the situation will only get worse now that the ceasefire agreement has been broken by the Sri Lankan government and peace monitors have left" says Poopalapillai.

In fact, the state of impunity is so dire in Sri Lanka the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons, invited to monitor a government commission investigating human rights abuses, announced this week that it was resigning in frustration over the government's lack of support. The Canadian appointee to the panel was Prof. Bruce Mathews. The panel stated, "there has been and continues to be a lack of political and institutional will to investigate and inquire into the cases before the (government) commission."

Within the last 24 hours another Tamil parliamentarian representing Jaffna District, Mr.K.Sivanesan has been killed by suspected Government operatives while he was returning to his constituency after attending the Parliamentary session in Colombo. Mr. Sivanesan has become one among the many Tamil MP's assassinated for voicing the plight of Tamil people to the world.

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The Sri Lankan government must be held accountable for these killings, disappearances and other serious human rights abuses occurring under its nose and in many cases with its complicity. As Tamil Canadians, we are deeply concerned for the safety and security of loved ones in Sri Lanka who live in constant fear. The Canadian Tamil Congress looks to the Canadian government to provide leadership in the international community to pressure Sri Lanka to conform to international human rights standards and consider a United Nations Special Envoy to monitor the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the Canadian government should consider the recommendation from the HRW report and impose trade and aid restrictions on the Sri Lankan government if its human rights record does not improve.

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