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"The unified voice of Canadian Tamils"

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U.S. State Department Report Highlights Need For Independent Inquiry Into War Crimes In Sri Lanka

In the wake of an U.S. Department of State report presented to Congress this week, Tamil Canadians urge the international community to undertake an independent inquiry into war crimes committed in Sri Lanka during the final stages of the war. This report – taken together with consecutive statements released by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Reporters without Borders — makes it clear the persecution faced by Tamils in Sri Lanka is real and continuing. The State Department detailed the reports of abuses that took place, including government shelling in the No Fire Zone, the abduction and murders of Tamil civilians and the forceful reduction of medical and food supplies to Tamil areas during the conflict. The report also referred to existing internment camps, which hold more than 250,000 Tamil civilians in violation of international law.

“From shelled hospitals to murdered civilians, the report is a chronicle of the horrors that Tamils faced during the latter stages of the war,” said David Poopalapilai, National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC). “Tamil civilians were caught in an impossibly difficult situation, from which tens of thousands did not emerge alive.”

This report is a clear indication that war crimes were committed during the final stages of the conflict in Sri Lanka. While the U.S. call for Sri Lanka to thoroughly investigate charges of war crimes is a step in the right direction, the international community must take decisive steps to hold violators accountable.

“This report underlines the strong need for an independent international inquiry into the final stages of the war,” said Mr. Poopalapillai. “If Sri Lanka is genuine about reconciliation, it will allow the international community to thoroughly conduct such an inquiry.”

Meanwhile, the world’s leading rights group, Human Rights Watch, has repeatedly urged the United Nations and member nations of the Security Council and Human Rights Council to undertake an independent international investigation into allegations of war crimes.

“The writing is on the wall,” said Mr. Poopalapillai. “With this new report providing extensive documentation of war crimes, the international community has a responsibility to hold violators to account.”

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