

Australian Tamil Congress

A Unified Voice for All Tamils



Australian Tamils saddened by untimely death of a courageous journalist: Marie Colvin

For Immediate Release

It is with profound sadness that we share the untimely passing of one of the most courageous and outstanding journalists of our time, Marie Colvin. Marie Colvin, 56, died alongside French photojournalist, Remi Ochlick, in the besieged Syrian city of Homs on February 22, 2012. Ms. Colvin's unbounded courage took her behind the front lines of the world's deadliest conflicts to write about the sufferings of individuals trapped in the war.

It was fortunate for the Tamils of Sri Lanka that Marie Colvin had maintained a special interest in the brutal civil war that raged in that country and took so many civilian lives. She unfortunately lost the sight in her left eye when coming under Sri Lankan Army RPG fire on 16 April 2001; thereafter she wore an eye-patch. She was attacked even after calling out "journalist, journalist!" while reporting on the Sri Lankan Civil War. It was reported that she later suffered post traumatic stress disorder and required hospitalisation. Marie Colvin was also a witness and an intermediary for the failed attempt at arranging surrenders of the Tamil Tiger leaders during the final days of the war in Sri Lanka (the 'white flag' case) and reported on war crimes against Tamils that were committed during this phase.

Marie Colvin epitomized a true journalist by going to the ends of the earth to cover a story and get the truth out to a discerning public. She stood for a free press and every time that right was challenged she continued to fight in her own way by writing stories of those whose voices would never be heard otherwise. Marie Colvin died in that spirit - by working to bring out the true conditions of oppression for the people of Syria. While her voice may have been muted, her steadfast thirst for the truth is deeply embedded in her work - including her uncompromising coverage of the war in Sri Lanka which still stands as one of the most compelling pieces of journalism of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

On behalf of Australian Tamils, we offer our heartfelt condolences to her mother, siblings, family members, and indeed to all her friends and colleagues who were blessed to have been associated with such a remarkable person.