



University of Toronto Tamil Students' Association – St. George Campus  
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In response to the intolerable heights the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka has escalated to, the Tamil community world-wide has launched a number of non-stop protest campaigns that will continue to push the issue until world governments decide to take a stand. Canada, home to the world's largest diaspora of Sri Lankan Tamils, and world renown for its efforts and expertise in peacekeeping and international justice, should be the first to respond to the sincere efforts of Canadian citizens, currently continuing their appeal for justice in front of parliament.

The Canadian government's earlier call for an immediate ceasefire and its condemnation of the Sri Lankan government's lack of adherence to UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, have been blatantly ignored. As hundreds continue to be killed, the response from the Sri Lankan government to Canada's appeal for a political solution remains a resounding no. The Sri Lankan government's high commission to Canada, has pushed instead, for a crack down on the peaceful protesters in Ottawa who are exercising their democratic rights to expression. The high commission has stated, "there is a limit; the freedom of expression has to stop somewhere". The Sri Lankan government has eliminated the notion of free speech within its own borders, with numerous abductions, wrongful arrests and assassinations of journalists. However, in a nation such as Canada, that respects the international declaration of human rights and not only permits, but encourages people's freedom of expression, it is an insult and an outrage that the government of Sri Lanka is tolerated in making claims such as these.

While Canada continues to engage the Sri Lankan government politically and economically, the actions of the Sri Lankan government and its envoy in Ottawa, Daya Perera, continue to disregard and disrespect the government of Canada and its foreign policy. Sri Lanka's ongoing disregard for human life and for foreign diplomacy is irrefutable and therefore, should not be tolerated by any international government.

In this crucial time, when the fate of thousands of civilian lives lay on the line, concerned citizens across the globe have engaged in on-going protests including fasts unto death. In the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the fast in Ottawa, many of participants have been given mere days to live. As the hours pass by, the lives of these Canadians are further slipping away as our government remains inactive. Without pressure from the international community towards a political solution to this conflict, there will be no room to re-build the lives of the Sri Lankan people, who have suffered both physically and psychologically under an unremitting and barbaric government.

As students who value life, liberty, the freedom of expression and the right to autonomy, we urge the government of Canada to remove its embassy in Sri Lanka and expel the Sri Lankan High Commission from Ottawa. Given the Sri Lankan government's history of gross human rights violations, failed foreign policy and continued disregard towards its international partners, it is clear that continuing to engage this nation in political discourse is destructive and contradictory towards the interests and values of Canada. As concerned Canadian citizens, we urge the government of Canada to take a stand in favour of justice, democracy and a lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

Sincerely,

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