



National Council of Canadian Tamils

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Tamil Canadians convene in Ottawa to call for targeted sanctions against Sri Lanka

Ottawa –The National Council of Canadian Tamils calls upon the Canadian government to implement targeted sanctions against Sri Lanka through the implementation of the Special Economic Measures Act (SEMA). Tamil Canadians convened in Ottawa from Monday May 26-Thursdays May 29, 2014, for the first annual Tamil Freedom Lobby Week. Tamil community organizers, activists and student leaders from across the country met with parliamentarians to press for targeted sanctions against Sri Lanka, guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

“Sri Lanka operates with complete impunity in both its past and current violations of international humanitarian law. Five years after 2009, Sri Lanka made no meaningful effort to end violence against the island’s Tamil population in the North-East” said Professor Sri Ranjan, chairperson of the National Council of Canadian Tamils, “We need strong international pressure to isolate Sri Lanka until it stops the systemic human rights violations amounting to genocide against the Tamils”.

In November 2013 the Canadian Prime Minister boycotted the Commonwealth meeting held in Sri Lanka in protest of its human rights violations. The current Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, holds the Chairship of the Commonwealth Council. Subsequently, in April 2014, the Canadian government suspended its \$10 million per year voluntary fund to the Commonwealth.

“Like Canada’s leadership in using sanctions against oppressive states like apartheid era South Africa and recently against Burma in 2007, only strong economic and diplomatic isolation will pressure Sri Lanka to end its genocide against the Eelam Tamil Nation,” said Krisna Saravanamuttu, a spokesperson of the National Council of Canadian Tamils. “Sanctions are the logical consequence of Canada’s bold action against Sri Lanka during the Commonwealth meeting to isolate Sri Lanka in the international community”

In April 2014, over 80 Tamil Civil Society organizations convened at the Tamil Community General Assembly in Toronto City Hall and democratically adopted policy positions. Consequently, this week Tamil Canadians met with parliamentarians from all three major federal parties to raise awareness about the ongoing oppression of the Tamil People. The military occupation, state sponsored land grabs, and the structural genocide of the Eelam Tamil nation in the island of Sri Lanka were identified as the major barriers to a negotiated political settlement to the conflict.

The National Council of Canadian Tamils is a grassroots organization, composed of elected representatives from



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across Canada that serve to organize Tamil-Canadians on a democratic and cooperative basis.

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