



Jan Logie MP

18 October, 2013

Hon Murray McCully
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Minister McCully

CHOGM and Human Rights Abuses in Sri Lanka

I am writing to you, to ask you to support Canada's political lead and publicly condemn Sri Lanka's persistent failure to ensure justice for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, and to stop its attacks on civil society activists and make a strong stand at CHOGM and call for another chair to replace Rajapaksa when it comes time to appoint the Commonwealth Chairperson-in -Office.

The human rights abuses by the Sri Lankan Government during the time of acknowledged conflict, are well understood. We also know Sri Lanka has refused to allow independent investigators into the country even in the face of UN pressure and has have made no meaningful moves towards reconciliation. Most worryingly perhaps has been a growing trend towards increased authoritarianism. Amnesty International's report from April this year noted

“there is a real climate of fear in Sri Lanka, with those brave enough to speak out against the government often having to suffer badly for it”.

Allowing Sri Lanka's President to become the chair of the commonwealth would undermine our efforts to strengthen human rights in the Asia Pacific. It would undermine the UN efforts to get a proper investigation of the war crimes and it would also seriously undermine the charter just developed by the Commonwealth committing Commonwealth leaders to democracy, human rights, tolerance, freedom of expression, good governance and the rule of law – none of which are respected by the Rajapaksa government.

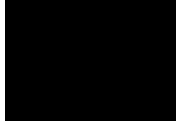
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New Zealand has taken many Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka and we have made strong stands against the loss of democracy in Fiji and in protection of peace and human rights globally. To stay silent and then go to Sri Lanka and accept their President, even symbolically, as leader of the Commonwealth for two years would be inappropriate, inconsistent and counter to our regional interests.

Yours sincerely



Jan Logie

Green Party of Aotearoa MP

Green Party Spokesperson on Women, Income Support, Immigration, Pacific Island Affairs, Ethnic Affairs, Human Rights, Rainbow and Overseas Development Aid