



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES

Mark Holland
Member of Parliament - Ajax-Pickering

July 9, 2007

Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister
Langevin Block
80 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

I am writing to you to express my deepest concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in Sri Lanka, and also to urge the Government of Canada to take necessary measures to serve those in the northeast who cannot easily access the Canadian High Commission in Colombo.

Last month's expulsion of about 400 Tamils from Colombo has been soundly condemned by reputable human rights organizations and by the international community. I have seen statements by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence claiming that only those who could not provide a valid reason for being in the capital were evicted. Such statements only confirm that Sri Lankans of Tamil origin do not have freedom of movement in Sri Lanka, or free access to the capital.

My constituency office staff as well as constituents of Tamil origin have told me of the great difficulties experienced by those in the northeast who need to travel to the High Commission in Colombo, especially on immigration matters. In one case, a family member of a constituent died during the long delays attempting unsuccessfully to send paperwork and subsequently to travel to the capital. For many, travel to Colombo is impossible.

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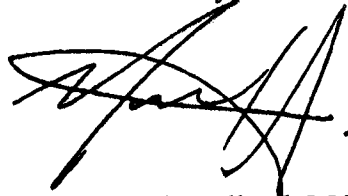
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My colleague, Hon. Dan McTeague, has written to you to ask that Canada consider opening a consulate in Jaffna that is capable of providing immigration services. I strongly support this suggestion, if it can be done securely and without undue risk to personnel.

I urge your government to take immediate steps to address this situation, and I would appreciate being kept informed of how your government is responding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Holland', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Mark Holland, M.P.
Ajax-Pickering

cc: Hon. Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration