



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Votes and Proceedings

Hansard

THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2008

CORRECTIONS

This is a **PROOF ISSUE**. Suggested corrections for the Official Hansard and Bound Volumes should be lodged in writing with the Director, Chambers, Department of Parliamentary Services **as soon as possible but not later than:**

Thursday, 3 July 2008

Facsimile:	Senate	(02) 6277 2977
	House of Representatives	(02) 6277 2944
	Main Committee	(02) 6277 2944

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

approving such mistreatment of them. That faith was indispensable not only to our survival, but to our attempts to return home with honor. For without our honor, our homecoming would have had little value to us.

The Labor Party has a long and proud history of support for human rights in Australia and the international law of human rights. It was a Labor foreign minister and later Labor leader, Doc Evatt, who helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Hawke Labor government signed and ratified the convention against torture, which I referred to earlier, in 1985 and 1989.

It is perhaps worth concluding by bearing in mind the words of the Chief Justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, Aharon Barak, who wrote in an historic judgement outlawing all coercive methods by the security forces of Israel: We are aware that this decision does not make it easier to deal with that reality. This is the destiny of a democracy—she does not see all means as acceptable, and the ways of her enemies are not always open before her. A democracy must sometimes fight with one arm tied behind her back. Even so, a democracy has the upper hand. The rule of law and individual liberties constitute an important aspect of her security stance. At the end of the day, they strengthen her spirit and this strength allows her to overcome her difficulties.

We are very fortunate to live in this country free from torture. We should support the victims of torture and strive to continue to work with the international community to eliminate torture for all in the future.

Sri Lanka

Mr MURPHY (Lowe—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Trade) (11.59 pm)—On many occasions over the past 10 years I have raised on behalf of the people that I represent in this place the issue of the conflict in Sri Lanka. Today I again voice my concerns in the parliament about the ongoing war in Sri Lanka, particularly the killing of innocent victims, including the most innocent of all—the children. It is incumbent on all sides of politics to seek a peaceful resolution to the dispute that has engulfed the island of Sri Lanka and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. This intractable conflict has been going on for some three decades, and the time has arrived for all governments of the world to unite and to call on all parties to cease the bloodshed and work towards a peaceful solution and the resettlement and rehabilitation of Tamils in the war-torn region of north-east Sri Lanka.

I again call for the proper implementation of the 2002 ceasefire agreement, which was negotiated in good faith by all parties to the conflict. This ceasefire brought optimism for all Sri Lankans—and, indeed, citizens around the world—that there would be an end to the needless death and displacement of innocent people. All reasonable people, be they Tamil, Singhalese or Muslim, are demanding a peaceful solution from their government and the support of all governments around the world. Following the deaths of over 60,000 people, this is not much to expect.

All people of Sri Lanka deserve peace. They all recognise that no political, cultural or religious cause, conflict or dispute can be worth so many wasted lives. I have a document which I seek leave to table. It is in the form of a petition but it is not within the form outlined in *House of Representatives Practice*. Needless to say, it represents the voices of some 4,169 Australians, who on behalf of the people of Sri Lanka request that our government appeal to the government of Sri Lanka to do everything in its power to get a peaceful resolution to this dreadful conflict. I seek leave to table that document.

Leave granted.

Mr MURPHY—Thank you.

Main Committee adjourned at 12.03 pm, until Wednesday, 27 August 2008 at 9.30 am, unless in accordance with standing order 186 an alternative date or time is fixed.