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Canada Continues Silence as Refugees are Killed by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces

The shelling of refugees sheltered in a school in Kathirveli by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces has claimed at least 50 lives and is the latest in a continuing campaign that has terrorized the civilian Tamil population.

It has been over two months since Swedish retired General Ulf Henricsson, then head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, ruled that the Sri Lankan military were responsible for the murders of 17 aid workers of the French group "Action Contre La Faim". He called the mass murder of these aid workers, who were all shot in the head at close range: "one of the most serious recent crimes against humanitarian aid workers worldwide".

While the EU condemned the killings, there has been continued silence from Canada . Not a word of condemnation has been heard for this mass murder or a targeted bombing that killed 61 schoolgirls, nor has there been any comment on the use of land mines by the Sri Lankan military.

Emboldened by the silence of friends like the current Canadian Government, the government of Sri Lanka continues to act with utter disregard for civilian lives. A crucial highway has been closed to Jaffna cutting off supplies and confining thousands to a growing humanitarian crisis. Bombing attacks continue to hit civilian targets, damaging schools and hospitals. As well, the International Committee of the Red Cross has received no less than 350 reports of targeted abductions and murders of Tamil civilians in the last ten months, many in the capital of Colombo .

The Harper Government's continuation of aid and trade support for the Sri Lankan government and its absolute silence about continuing atrocities are bound to encourage a regime that is now clearly responsible for human rights abuses of horrific and historic proportions. It is time for the Canadian Government to remember our nation's commitment to human rights and call for an end to military atrocities in Sri Lanka .

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