



May 17, 2022

Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day

Every year, on May 18, thousands of Tamil-Canadians commemorate the *Mullivaikkal Massacre*, the mass killing of tens of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils in 2009 during the closing days of the civil war.

This year marks the 13th anniversary of Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day. The Civil War in Sri Lanka began in 1983. For 26 years, the Sri Lankan state perpetuated mass murder against Tamils, which culminated in the indiscriminate killing of 70,000 Tamil civilians in the final months of the war, according to the United Nations.

Genocide is the deliberate and organized killing of a group or groups of people, with the intention of destroying their identity as an ethnic, cultural, or religious group. CUPW recognizes the Tamil Genocide, honours the lives that were lost and affirms and condemns the continued death, destruction and suffering of the Tamil people.

The Tamil community in Canada is one of the largest outside of South-East Asia and many still have families and friends suffering in their homeland. Tamils in Sri Lanka today report systematic discrimination in areas including government employment, university education, and access to justice.

Recognition and education are important tools to prevent tragedies like the Tamil genocide from happening again. Last year, the province of Ontario became

the first jurisdiction in the world to recognize a genocide against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The Ontario legislature also passed the Tamil Genocide Education Week Act, which establishes seven days each year, from May 11 to 18, where Ontarians are “encouraged to educate themselves about, and to maintain their awareness of, the Tamil genocide and other genocides that have occurred in world history.”

Solidarity with our Tamil-Canadians friends and co-workers requires an understanding of their struggle, and the empathy to make it our own. We must stand up for justice whenever we see the abuse of human rights, whether it is here at home, or anywhere else in the world.

To honour the victims of the Tamil Genocide, light a candle on May 18 at 8:18 pm.

In solidarity,



Jan Simpson
National President

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