



Hon. Deepak Obhrai, P.C., M.P.
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of
Foreign Affairs and for International Human
Rights

Media Release

For Immediate Release

November 12, 2013

Obhrai to Represent Canada at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka

The Honourable Deepak Obhrai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, will visit Sri Lanka from November 11 to 18, 2013. As [announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper on October 7](#), Mr. Obhrai will represent Canada at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from November 15 to 17. While in Sri Lanka, he will reiterate Canadian support for inclusive post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation to enable all Sri Lankans to live in freedom and security.

“Canada believes that if the Commonwealth is to remain relevant it must defend democracy, human rights, freedom of expression and the rule of law,” said Mr. Obhrai. The Prime Minister’s decision not to attend the meeting in Colombo came after Canada repeatedly voiced concerns over Sri Lanka’s failure to demonstrate its commitment to the Commonwealth’s core values and principles.

On the margins of the Commonwealth meeting, Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai will visit Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka on November 12, where he will meet with Chief Minister Canagasabapathy Visuvalingam Wigneswaran to demonstrate Canada’s support for peaceful political development in Sri Lanka. Mr. Obhrai will also take this opportunity to visit a community displaced during the nearly 30 years of fighting and the site of the battle that ended the conflict in May 2009. The visit to the battle site is in memory of innocent civilians who lost their lives.

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On November 11, Mr. Obhrai participated in round-table discussions on the rule of law and human rights. He also attended the Commonwealth People's Forum to engage civil society on reconciliation and global development issues.

During his visit, Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai will meet with other expert observers to discuss the state of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Sri Lanka.

“Canada will continue to work with its partners to uphold the Commonwealth’s core values, which are cherished by Canadians, and to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to implement fully the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law,” said Mr. Obhrai.

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