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Press Release

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Sri Lanka must live up to Commonwealth principles, Obhrai tells Parliament after leading the Canadian delegation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

(Ottawa) Hon. Deepak Obhrai, P.C., M.P. and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, today made the following statement in the House of Commons:

“Mr. Speaker, In keeping with our government’s principled stand on human rights, rule of law, freedom of religion, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka. I represented Canada.

Sri Lanka went through years of terrible civil war culminating in the defeat of the terrorist Tamil Tigers. Since then Canada has been calling on the Sri Lankan government to initiate steps towards reconciliation and accountability on human rights. My trip to Jaffna and Colombo unfortunately painted not only a lack of reconciliation, but an increasing disregard of Commonwealth principles of human rights, rule of law, and freedom of religion. I met with key players of Sri Lankan society, including the Chief Minister of Jaffna, all of whom reaffirmed this disturbing trend.

Canada will continue calling on the Sri Lankan government to uphold key Commonwealth principles.

While I was in the northern Jaffna peninsula I laid a wreath at Elephant Pass on behalf of Canadians in memory of all innocent Sri Lankans killed in the conflict.”

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