

**Subject: Sri Lanka**

**Moved By:** The Rt. Rev. Sue Moxley, Diocese of Nova Scotia & PEI

**Seconded By:** The Rt. Rev. Fred Hiltz, Diocese of Nova Scotia & PEI

**Note:** The mover and the seconder must be members of the General Synod and be present in the House when the resolution is before the synod for debate.

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

**That this General Synod:**

1. Request the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada to write to the Bishop of the Diocese of Colombo, the Bishop of the Diocese of Kurunegala, Church of Ceylon, and the Church's Metropolitan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to express:

- Affirmation of the bonds of fellowship we share as Anglicans with the clergy and people of Sri Lanka;
- Solidarity with Anglicans, other Christians and peoples of other faiths in Sri Lanka in their struggle for peace with justice and true reconciliation;
- Commitment to active prayer, education, and advocacy concerning the escalating violence and impunity in Sri Lanka, and the worsening humanitarian crisis in the North and East.

2. Request the Government of Canada to:

- Lead the international community toward permanent cease-fire, authentic mediation and a negotiated political settlement between the Government of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and the TMVP (Karuna Faction in the East);
- Urge all parties in the conflict to respect the human rights of those made most vulnerable by the conflict, especially children and women, and to participate fully in efforts of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Alleged Serious Violations of Human Rights (September 2006), and the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP) ensuring that "international standards" of discovery and jurisprudence are met
- Advocate immediate international intervention into the humanitarian crises in the North and East.

3. Appeal to Canadian Anglicans to stand in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka through prayer, writing to their respective Members of Parliament, and engaging in activities that raise awareness about the situation of Sri Lanka, especially in the North and East.

4. Request the Partners in Mission Committee and the EcoJustice Committee (or

their successor) and the PWRDF Board to:

- develop resources for the above action
- organize a solidarity visit by Canadian Anglican church leaders to Sri Lanka, as timely and acceptable for the Church of Ceylon, to learn about the situation of clergy and laity in the Church of Ceylon, and of humanitarian crises, especially in the north and east, and of faith-based efforts towards lasting peace with justice.

### **EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The 2002 Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) came to an all but official end on the eve of its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, early in 2007. Since January, the escalation of vicious violence and increased intimidation by both Government Forces and the LTTE, and the emergent Karuna Faction in the Eastern Province, has made even more vulnerable an increasing number of internally displaced people.

Youth, children, and women are particularly affected by the intimidating re-emergence of civil war; increased abductions, bombings, extrajudicial killings, the conscription of children by rebel forces, rising numbers of internally displaced peoples and camps, and serious humanitarian crises in the north and east regions.

Church partners tell us “a sense of helplessness and frustration prevails in the north and east. There is a feeling that political-military agendas are far more important than people, and little will be done to avert the hardship of the masses. People are at the mercy of a lawlessness that spreads with suffocating impunity”.

In a press release from November 2006, Allan Rock, the Special Advisor to the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict on Sri Lanka, “observed the deteriorating humanitarian situations in certain areas of the North and East. During his visits to Vaharai and Jaffna, Mr. Rock saw first hand the fear, isolation, and critical unmet needs of IDP children there.” Since land-based entry to Jaffna was cut off in August 2006 with the closure of the main highway, 500,000 civilians in the peninsula have not had access to basic food, fuel, medicines and other essential commodities. In recent weeks (February 2007) a reported 20,000 people have fled Vaharai due to a surge in violence; 15,000 people remain trapped in this region and are on the verge of death due to starvation. Conservative estimates put the death of civilians since August 2006 at 3,000. Two decades of conflict has resulted in the death of close to 70,000.

In November 2006, President M. Rajapaksa appointed a Presidential Commission of Inquiry into serious violations of human rights since August 2005, and subsequently issued Terms of Reference (TOR) for an International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP) to hold the Inquiry to international standards of discovery and jurisprudence. Though not the external Inquiry first promised, this is an important development and worthy of support by the international community. The Rev. Bruce Matthews, Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and Professor Emeritus, Acadia University, is a member of the

IIGEP.

The Church of Ceylon, National Christian Council in Sri Lanka, Sathkorale Sadaham Kendraya, and other partners continue steadfastly day to day in efforts towards peace, relief, and dignity for those living where check points, continuous shelling, death, malnutrition, and violence with impunity have become part of life.

Source: PIMC, ECJC, PWRDF Board

Submitted by: Partners in Mission Committee

**A) Does this motion contain within it any financial implications?**

Yes   X   No       

**B) If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications?**

Yes        No       

The costs of an Anglican Church leaders delegation to Sri Lanka will be met by the 2008 Partnerships and other program budgets