

News Release

July 10, 1995

No. 122

CANADA RENEWS CALL FOR PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today renewed Canada's call for peace in Sri Lanka, following the launch of a major military offensive by the Government of Sri Lanka against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on July 9.

"Canada is deeply disappointed with the continuation of hostilities in Sri Lanka and the further loss of life. War offers no solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. We urge both the Government and the LTTE to move toward finding a peaceful, negotiated political solution in the interests of all Sri Lankans and the security of the region," said Mr. Ouellet.

The latest phase of the civil conflict in Sri Lanka began on April 19 when the LTTE unilaterally broke the peace. The LTTE has indicated that the door to a resumption of peace remains open and the Government of Sri Lanka also has renewed its commitment to finding a permanent political solution. However, the fighting has continued and escalated.

Mr. Ouellet noted that Canada remains committed to peace in Sri Lanka and is willing to assist with the peace process if requested to do so by the parties to the conflict. He said that Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) Raymond Chan stressed this point during his recent visit to Sri Lanka, May 31 to June 2. Mr. Chan publicly voiced Canada's support for a peace settlement during his meetings with senior government leaders, including Sri Lankan Prime Minister Bandaranaike. Upon returning to Canada, Mr. Chan urged the many Canadians of Sri Lankan Tamil origin to support a resumption of the peace process.

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