



communiqué

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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
ON THE SITUATION IN AND AROUND SRI LANKA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark today expressed deep concern at the recent developments in and around Sri Lanka. Mr. Clark stated that he was "distressed at the continuing level of violence". "The destruction and death that this situation has created for all the people of Sri Lanka is to be deplored and deeply regretted", he said.

Mr. Clark urged all parties to the dispute to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from taking any action that would further inflame the situation. "The situation is most grave" Mr. Clark said, "and I call on Sri Lanka and India to resolve their differences through negotiations and compromise". He went on to say that both sides should avoid taking actions that will exacerbate the situation.

Mr. Clark urged full respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. He stated that all countries "share in the concern for the well being of the victims of this tragedy". However, at the same time, he stressed "care must be exercised so that the expression of such concern does not lead to an escalation and widening of the conflict".

Canada has suggested that appropriate international organizations should be invited to exercise humanitarian relief activities in accordance with their mandates. In particular, Mr. Clark urged the Sri Lankan Government to request the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide appropriate assistance on an urgent basis.

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Mr. Clark urged all parties to the communal conflict to resume negotiations immediately. Canada believes that the proposals made by the Sri Lankan Government last December are equitable and reasonable. It is the view of the Canadian Government, Mr. Clark stated that "these proposals can form the basis for a political solution". "Canada stands ready to assist in any way appropriate should the parties to the conflict so wish", he reported.