

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Colleague,

Following the anti-Muslim pogrom in Sri Lanka in early March that destroyed considerable property and led to at least one death, we will be exploring the role of religion in the ethnic violence that plagues Sri Lanka. Violent incidents or 'riots' have taken place in Sri Lanka throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The most destructive of which was in 1983 against Tamils, and was the trigger for a 26-year civil war that decimated the Tamil areas, impoverished the entire island, and weakened democracy. With prospects for accountability and reforms waning, is this cycle beginning again?

Tamil, Muslim, and Christian communities, which together comprise about one quarter of the population, feel threatened by discrimination and violence, largely perpetrated by the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community within Sri Lanka. Without acknowledgement of Sri Lanka as a pluralist, secular country that contains diverse populations, the island will not be able to achieve the progress it otherwise could. What can the US do to help form a stable society, in which all communities live in peace, while expressing their cultural and national identities?

We invite you to a panel discussion to explore the root causes of continued conflict on the island, and to identify ways for US policy to have a positive impact on sustainable peace in Sri Lanka.

For reference: <https://www.economist.com/news/asia/21740416-no-conspiracy-theory-about-minorities-too-implausible-cause-outrage-why-south-asias-majorities>.

Religion and Violence in Sri Lanka

Thursday, April 26, 2018

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

2322 Rayburn House Office Building

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Dr. Michael Jerryson, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Youngtown State University

Dr. Robert Oberst, Professor of Political Science, Nebraska Wesleyan University

Mario Arulthas, Advocacy Director, PEARL

If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for the event, please contact Laura Wilson with Rep. Bill Johnson (Laura.Wilson@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress