



House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

5 February 2018

Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Our ref: JR11212

Dear Foreign Secretary,

We write to express our serious concerns regarding the conduct of Sri Lanka's Defence Attaché, Brigadier Priyanka Fernando.

On Sunday 4 February, Sri Lanka marked the 70th anniversary of independence from British rule. Members from the Tamil community observed the occasion by congregating peacefully outside the Sri Lankan High Commission in London, to protest the on-going persecution of Tamils on the island.

The Defence Attaché was filmed standing outside the High Commission, opposite the protestors, repeatedly running a finger across his throat – signalling the slitting of one's neck – in an obvious attempt to intimidate the Tamil people who were present¹. This is inappropriate, unacceptable and threatening behaviour, from someone who is serving in an official capacity as a guest of this country.

We urge you to make immediate representations to Sri Lanka's High Commissioner about this matter and we request that you withdraw Brigadier Priyanka Fernando's diplomatic papers and expel him.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

We look forward to hearing from you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Rt. Hon Joan Ryan MP
Member of Parliament for Enfield North
Vice Chair, APPG for Tamils

Siobhain McDonagh MP
Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden
Senior Vice Chair, APPG for Tamils

¹ Video of the incident, 4 February 2018: <https://goo.gl/kKydbJ>. A report and further pictures of the incident, from *Tamil Guardian*: <https://goo.gl/VxRx2u>.