



கனடியத் தமிழர் தேசிய அவை
National Council of Canadian Tamils
Conseil National de Tamouls Canadien

November 1, 2020

Hon. Minister François-Philippe Champagne
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Hon. Minister François-Philippe Champagne,

Re: Request Canada to reject Air Marshal Sumangala Dias as Ambassador

The Sri Lankan Government is now headed by President Gotabaya Rajapakse and his brother Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, both credibly accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity in their genocidal war against the Tamil people on the island. They were both elected to power based on their virulent anti-Tamil rhetoric and promise to protect the soldiers who committed war crimes from any investigation. Since assuming office, they have been appointing former senior military personnel to top government positions and diplomatic posting abroad to take advantage of the diplomatic immunity. It is a deliberate attempt to "whitewash" their crimes by hoodwinking the international community.

Now, the Sri Lankan Government is trying to send Air Marshal Sumangala Dias as Sri Lankan Ambassador to Canada. Air Marshal Sumangala Dias has held high positions in the chain of command of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), which is credibly accused of committing war crimes by indiscriminately bombing Tamil civilian targets including hospitals, churches, and schools during the long war against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

We enumerate the culpability of Air Marshal Sumangala Dias in committing war crimes here. He was appointed as Base Commander at SLAF Hingurakgoda Base, Sri Lanka, on June 1, 2005, from which many of the indiscriminate bombing missions against civilian targets originated. In 2008, he was appointed Senior Air Coordinator for the final stages of war in 2009, coordinating SLAF operations with the ground operations of the 57, 58 and 59 Divisions of the Sri Lanka Army, which has been credibly accused of war crimes. These Sri Lankan army divisions are from the Gajaba regiment of the then Defence Secretary, Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Thousands of Canadians of Tamil origin lost family members and friends due to these genocidal attacks under Sumangala Dias's command. "Trophy



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footage" taken by army personal themselves show the killing and maiming of innocent civilians by aerial bombardments of hospitals and government announced "No Fire Zones" where Tamils were urged to take refuge by the Government of Sri Lanka. Many of the relatives of victims who survived these genocidal attacks are Canadian Citizens. They are working extremely hard to move forward from their traumatic experience.

A similar attempt to hoodwink the Brazilian Government with the appointment of another war criminal as an Ambassador ended up in a fiasco when the appointee had to flee the country to escape from facing criminal charges just prior to his acceptance.

We strongly urge our government to thoroughly vet the credentials of appointees before accepting them. Our government should not fall prey to the machinations of the Government of Sri Lanka. Please reject the appointment of credibly accused war criminals as ambassadors.

Thank you for the kind consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Hon. Minister Bill Blair