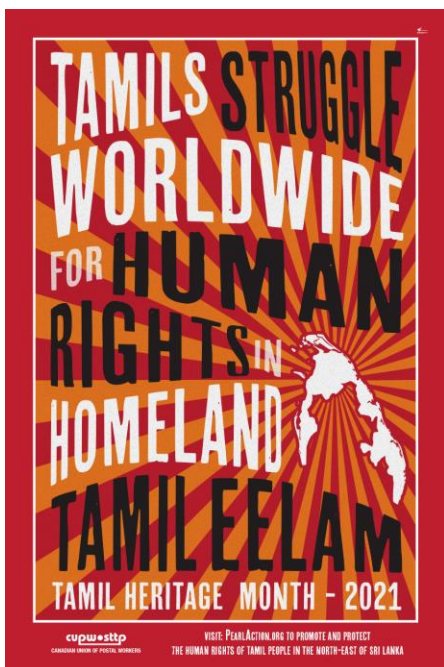




January 11, 2021

Tamil Heritage Month: Remembrance, Resilience, and Resistance



We celebrate Tamil heritage each January, as the federal government expressed it, “to recognize the contributions that Tamil-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the Tamil language and culture and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future generations.”

This year’s Tamil Heritage Month theme is Remembrance, Resilience and Resistance. Celebration must include an understanding of the struggle for human rights of Tamil people worldwide, but especially in their homeland Tamil Eelam (North East Sri Lanka).

Remembrance, resilience and resistance is about dignity and justice for the Tamil people. Thirty years ago, a devastating civil war killed thousands and forced more than 800,000 Tamil to leave their homeland.

Despite the end of the conflict in 2009, the human rights environment continued to deteriorate in a climate of impunity. Serious human rights violations, such as abductions, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and

sexual violence were still reported from the country’s former conflict zones. As a result, freedom of expression or assembly in the country’s north and east remained very limited, if not obsolete.

The continued military presence in many areas of the north and east means abuse towards Tamil people remains and adds another barrier to justice for the victims.

Tamil culture and freedom of expression have been marginalized, particularly after decades of repressive policies by the Sri Lankan government that saw religious practices prohibited and heritage destroyed.

These problems persist to this day.

Solidarity with our Tamil-Canadians friends and co-workers requires an understanding of their struggle, and the empathy to make it our own. We must stand up for justice whenever we see the abuse of human rights, whether it is here at home, or anywhere else in the world. The government of Canada must stand up for its values.

Toronto is home to the largest Sri Lankan Tamil population outside Sri Lanka, making our country home to one of the largest Sri Lankan diasporas in the world.

Together, we demand justice for the Tamil people.

In solidarity,

Jan Simpson
National President

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