

For Immediate Release

May 16, 2019

Ensuing Violence in Sri Lanka Puts Sri Lankans at Risk

Toronto - SLWB condemns the continuing violence against Sri Lankan Muslims by mobs made up of various vigilante and hardline religious groups in the recent weeks. Stories of innocent civilians' homes, mosques and businesses being boycotted and attacked in multiple cities throughout Sri Lanka have reached Canada via media outlets, Canadian Muslims who have spoken with members of their family in the country and videos depicting the brutality, which is circulating on social media.

Deeply troubling and saddening is the death of a Sri Lankan Muslim citizen, Fauzul Amir, who was killed by a mob. This father of four young children was slashed to death by sword in Negombo, a town 40 minutes away from the capital city of Colombo.

Just as concerning is information regarding political and police officers' involvement in the violence as a result of turning a blind eye and not fulfilling their duties to protect Sri Lankan civilians.

We urge the Government of Sri Lanka to take control of the situation and to restore faith in the security of the country. While we applaud some steps taken to quell the unrest, it is imperative to ensure that those who are responsible for the violence and those who fail to protect citizens are held liable for their actions. Just as the attackers of the recent bombings in Sri Lanka have damaged the lives of so many Sri Lankans, the current violence continues to do the same.

We urge President Sirisena, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and the Government of Sri Lanka to bring perpetrators of violence to justice in order to ensure vigilantism is not given power in Sri Lanka, to ensure the protection of Sri Lanka's minority community and as a safeguard from all forms of political and religious fundamentalism.

For more information on SLWB – Sri Lankans Without Borders please contact: contact@slwb.ca

NOTE: SLWB originally reported Buddhist hardline groups attacked homes and businesses. We have modified our press release to note that reports of violence from Buddhist and Catholic groups against Muslim homes and businesses occurred in Sri Lanka during this time.

ABOUT SLWB

Sri Lankans Without Borders (SLWB) is a registered not-for-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada that provides an independent, transparent, and inclusive platform for Canadians to connect, build, and lead initiatives that promote meaningful cross-community engagement and dialogue between Sri Lanka's diaspora communities. Building on universal values of pluralism and equality as enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we are also committed to a peaceful and democratic Sri Lanka for all its citizens on the basis of truth, accountability, and justice.