



THE HON STEPHEN SMITH MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

4 JUN 2009

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Federal Member for Fowler  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Madam Chair

Thank you for your letter of 8 May 2009 on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, referring to me a petition on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

As you would be aware, Australia remains deeply concerned about the situation in northern Sri Lanka, especially for the safety and security civilians affected by the recent fighting.

Australia has consistently made it clear that the protection of civilians should continue to be the absolute priority for all sides.

Australia has also urged the Sri Lankan community in Australia to add its weight to help ensure that civilians are protected in Sri Lanka.

Australia believes that the long-term security and prosperity of Sri Lanka will only be achieved through a political solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of all Sri Lankans. Australia will continue to make this point directly to the Sri Lankan Government.

Australia remains committed to providing substantial humanitarian assistance to civilians adversely affected by the conflict. Australia has provided \$23.5 million to support these relief efforts since December 2008. These funds have been provided through UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Australian NGOs to ensure the assistance reaches those in need.

I have also made it clear that Australia expects full access for International Committee of the Red Cross and UN officials to relief operations.

The Australian Government will continue to take an active interest in events in Sri Lanka and work to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the ongoing conflict.

As you would also be aware, the Australia Government also strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms, including terrorist acts perpetrated by the LTTE.

The petition specifically requests the proscription of the LTTE as a terrorist group under Australia's Criminal Code Act (1995). I note that the Attorney-General has responsibility for this matter, and I thank you for also referring the petition to him.

Thank you again for referring the petition for my attention.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Smith