



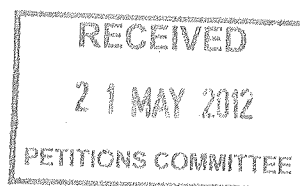
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SENATOR THE HON BOB CARR

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

10 MAY 2012

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Murphy

I refer to your letter of 21 March 2012 regarding the petition on the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Australia welcomed the constructive recommendations of Sri Lanka's own Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to advance reconciliation and reconstruction in the country, including through devolution, reducing the presence of security forces in the North, care of internally displaced persons and ensuring media freedoms. The Australian Government has called upon the Government of Sri Lanka to implement the LLRC's recommendations within firm timeframes. Australia nonetheless remains deeply concerned that the LLRC report fails to address fully alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by both sides to the conflict. Reconciliation cannot be achieved without full accountability for these alleged violations.

Australia co-sponsored the resolution on Sri Lanka adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 22 March 2012, which promotes reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka. We support the international community in this process as it is consistent with Australia's policy on Sri Lanka. The Australian Government has urged the Government of Sri Lanka to investigate all allegations of crimes committed by both sides to the conflict in a transparent and independent manner, most recently on 12 March 2012 in our statement on situations that require the Human Rights Council's attention.

Australia's long-term goal is to assist Sri Lanka to become a stable, economically resilient and peaceful nation. Australia provides practical support for Sri Lanka to meet this goal through our development assistance (\$43.5 million in 2011-12) in conflict-affected areas. Since 2009, Australia has supported the clearance of land mines and unexploded ordnance from 74 square kilometres of land and the reconstruction of 4,600 homes and 20 schools in northern Sri Lanka.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr