

## **I-Tran calls for an end to anti-Tamil persecution in Sri Lanka**

July 24th, 2014 marks the thirty first anniversary of massive racist attacks on the Tamil community of Sri Lanka. The attacks began on July 24th, 1983. After one week, the attacks left an estimated 3,000 dead, 8,000 homes and 5,000 shops destroyed and 150,000 people forcibly displaced.

The attacks are not just history. The pervasive anti-Tamil hostility in Sri Lanka which generated those attacks remains alive today. Tamils today are discriminated against, arbitrarily detained, tortured and killed on account of their ethnicity.

The root cause of Tamil refugee outflow from Sri Lanka since July 1983 was not the civil war itself but the anti-Tamil racist persecution which sparked and fed the civil war. The end of the war has not ended that persecution and refugee outflows continue.

In some quarters, there is a false assumption that Tamils in Sri Lanka are safe because of the end of the civil war. Yet, the end of the civil war, in some respects, has made matters worse for the Tamil population because there is now no enclave within Sri Lanka to which Tamils at risk from violent anti-Tamil prejudice can flee, be safe and be treated as equals.

The International Tamil Refugee Advocacy Network, on the anniversary of the July 1983 massacres, calls on the global community to protect Tamil refugees wherever they are and work to end the complicity of the Government of Sri Lanka in the infliction of human rights abuses on the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. That effort should include efforts to discontinue impunity for all past gross violations, including the mass killings of tens of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians which marked the final days of the civil war.

For further information

David Matas

Honorary Counsel

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Telephone: 1 204 944 1831

E-mail: [dmatas@mts.net](mailto:dmatas@mts.net)