

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 17.10.2013 addressed by Selvi J Jayalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:

"This is with reference to the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and the Leaders' Retreat scheduled to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in November, 2013, and the question of India's participation in the meeting. You may recall that, in my letter of 25th March, 2013, on the subject, I had urged you that as part of a strong diplomatic initiative in favour of restoration of rights of the long-suffering Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, India must stay away from the CHOGM to be held in Colombo.

As I have emphasized in my earlier letters, the present Sri Lankan regime stands accused of committing genocide, war crimes and ongoing human rights abuses against the Sri Lankan Tamil minority and continues to deny them equality and democratic freedom and thereby clearly violates the central credo of the Commonwealth. Against this background, the participation of India in this event will amount to an endorsement of these excesses. Such participation will not only embolden the Sri Lankan regime but will also incense public opinion and sentiment in Tamil Nadu on this very sensitive issue even further. It will also have adverse implications on the internal security situation in Tamil Nadu. Political parties, students and civil Society are staging protests, rallies and public agitations. The participation of India in the forthcoming CHOGM at Colombo will further aggravate the situation in Tamil Nadu.

The Prime Minister of Canada has already issued a Statement in which he has categorically stated that the Sri Lankan Government has failed to uphold the Commonwealth's core values, which are cherished by Canadians and that he will not attend the 2013, CHOGM in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Mr Prime Minister, against this overall background of continuing human rights violations and discrimination against the long suffering Tamil minority in Sri Lanka by the Sri Lankan Government, I strongly exhort you to ensure that the Government of India stays away from the CHOGM in Colombo. This will exert diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka to adopt a more reasonable approach towards its Tamil

minority population. It will also emphatically demonstrate India's commitment to upholding the values of democracy and respect for human rights globally and, in particular, in our neighbourhood. It will also be an expression of India's empathy and solidarity with Tamils, not only in Tamil Nadu but elsewhere.

I learn from media reports that you have conveyed that you will keep in mind the sentiments of the Tamil people in deciding on your **personal** participation at the CHOGM in Sri Lanka. **I wish to reiterate Tamil Nadu's view that India should not participate in the CHOGM hosted by Sri Lanka at any level whether titular, ministerial or official.** Only such an action will convey India's unequivocal stand that it will not tolerate the violation of human rights of the Sri Lankan Tamil minority. I hope you will respect the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu and unanimous view across party lines and convey India's decision to stay away from the forthcoming CHOGM at Colombo in November 2013."

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