

# TAMIL AMERICAN PEACE INITIATIVE

USTAPI2010@gmail.com • P.O. Box 33936 Washington, DC • 20033-3936 • 202.595.3123

MEDIA ADVISORY AND STATEMENT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 13, 2010

## **Tamil American Peace Initiative criticizes slow progress in Sri Lanka** *Will honor war dead in a May 15 candlelight vigil in Washington*

As the first anniversary of the end of the War in Sri Lanka approaches on May 19, the Tamil American Peace Initiative (TAPI) said the occasion spotlights how little has been accomplished in the last year that contributes to a lasting peace. The group called on the international community to ramp up its efforts to bring development, aid and investment to the island, and to push the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to end its apathetic approach to reconciliation and pursue a robust agenda for change.

"We continue to hope that common sense will prevail, and that Rajapaksa's government will embrace democracy and the rule of law, move aggressively to stop discrimination against Tamils and other groups, and start allowing greater regional autonomy and power-sharing with the central government," said Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, a spokesman for TAPI. "These steps are vital for a lasting peace." In the year since the war ended, few jobs and development programs benefiting local inhabitants have been launched in the Tamil areas in the north and east of the island; there is an urgent need for the construction of new homes, hospitals and schools. The rehabilitation of roads and ports, factories and farmlands has been neglected.

"There are still more than 90,000 people – most of them Tamils, including many women and children – who remain in detention and transit centers, unable to return to their homes. A year after the war's end, this is appalling," Karunyan said. "The lack of progress is contributing to regional instability that threatens US and other western interests. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community take a more active role in pushing to resolve these issues."

**Tamil American Peace Initiative (TAPI) will participate in a global candlelight vigil on Saturday, May 15, in which Tamil supporters worldwide will light 40,000 candles to commemorate the 40,000 civilians killed last spring as the war ended. In Washington, TAPI members, other Tamils and friends will light 4,000 candles at the Reflecting Pool, near the Lincoln Memorial, at about 8 pm. The press is invited.**

### ***About TAPI***

The Tamil American Peace Initiative was formed by a group of Tamil Americans to help bring lasting peace, justice, democracy, good governance and economic development to Sri Lanka; to focus attention on the destruction of Tamil communities and culture caused by almost three decades of war; and to demand an end to the continuing oppression of Tamils on the island.

Contact L. Kaufman at [info@tamilamerican.org](mailto:info@tamilamerican.org) or +1.202.448.5238 for additional information or to arrange an interview with Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham.