
Terrorism double-standard

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National Post As members of this editorial board watched tens of thousands of Tamil Canadians throng downtown Toronto on Monday, we couldn't help but be struck by a curious double-standard that afflicts Canadian ethnopolitics. To wit: Why are Canadian Tamils permitted to express support for terrorism in a manner that would be considered outrageous if the demonstrators were Arab or Muslim?

The rally that took place in Toronto on Monday was not just, as organizers claimed, an expression of support for Tamil civilians in war-torn Sri Lanka. Many of the participants carried flags of the Tamil Tigers, a terrorist group that practices suicide bombings and abducts children to use as soldiers. (In 2006, Canada's federal government officially designated the Tamil Tigers a terrorist group, a move that criminalized the group's fundraising efforts in this country.) Some of the banners displayed on Monday also depicted Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, a wanted mass murderer who personally authorizes the acts of terrorism the group has committed over the last three decades. Yet there was little outrage. To our knowledge, no politicians at any level of government have come forward to denounce this open demonstration of support for a banned terrorist group. In fact, Liberal MP Gurbax Singh Malhi recently appeared personally at a similar rally in Ottawa, and another Liberal MP, Derek Lee, has urged other MPs to join in, too. Imagine for a moment, if the protestors had instead been Arab or Muslim. Would Stephen Harper, Michael Ignatieff, Dalton McGuinty and David Miller be silent if 120,000 supporters of Hamas and Hezbollah paralyzed downtown Toronto as they chanted slogans and waved flags praising groups that slaughter Jews? To his great credit, Mr. Ignatieff recently denounced "Israel Apartheid Week" when he saw that it was being used as a cover for poisonous attacks against the Jewish state. Jason Kenney, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, has lashed out against the Canadian Arab Federation for its leader's unhinged attacks in the same vein. This zero-tolerance attitude toward terror-apologism is praiseworthy -- but we would like to see it applied across the board. The Sinhalese Sri Lankan victims of Tamil Tiger terrorism are no less deserving of support than the Jewish residents of Ashkelon or Sderot. The reason for this double standard is obvious: There are more than 200,000 Canadians of Sri Lankan Tamil descent in Canada, enough to comprise a swing vote in suburban Toronto-area ridings. This is the reason that the Liberals were too scared to ban the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organization when they were in power -- even with an (otherwise) principled anti-terror activist, Irwin Cotler, ensconced as Justice Minister. It was only when the Conservatives took power that the Tamils were added to the list of banned terrorist groups. That move was a welcome one: Tamil bagmen can now no longer operate with impunity, extorting "contributions" from Tamil-owned businesses to fund the war back in Sri Lanka. And the police have since busted up a number of fundraising fronts tied to the Tigers. But public figures must also speak out when supporters of the Tigers make a spectacle of themselves, as they did in Toronto. The message must be: Terrorism is a criminal affront to Canadian values, wherever it is practiced. Just because Canadians don't pay as much attention to Sri Lanka as they do to Israel doesn't change that fact. Courtesy: Nationalpost.com