
National Post editorial board: Sympathy for Tamils, but not Tigers

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Posted: April 16, 2009, by NP Editor The ongoing Parliament Hill protests and hunger strikes by Tamil Canadians are meant to stir our lawmakers into action against Sri Lanka, whose government is waging a successful military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), better known as the Tamil Tigers. If anything, however, the protests have had the opposite effect: Just as radical Canadian Muslims attract disgust when they raise the flags of Hezbollah or Hamas, so too do Tamils who fly the flag of the LTTE, a terrorist insurgency that once controlled much of Sri Lanka. What's worse, the protesters have flown the LTTE flag alongside the Canadian flag — an insult to our own country.

As we have written several times before, we are not without sympathy for the cause of the Tamil people, many of whom have been treated as second-class citizens by the Sinhalese-dominated government in Colombo. Indeed, the Tamils would have had a rightful claim to the world's sympathy — if the LTTE, which fights for an independent Tamil homeland, hadn't itself adopted such inhumane tactics since its formation in the 1980s. The Tigers perfected the tactic of suicide bombing, deploying explosive-wrapped killers by the dozens even before the practice had caught on in the Arab world. The LTTE has also press-ganged children as young as 10 into military service and, following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, they cleared out orphanages for foot soldiers and interdicted relief supplies to feed their adult insurgents and fund terror campaign against the Sri Lankan government. The sight of this group's flags flying in Canada is nothing short of revolting. Canada is home to the largest expatriate Tamil community in the world. Despite the Conservative government's decision to declare the LTTE a terrorist organization in 2006, many of the most prominent Tamil groups in Canada remain fronts for the Tigers. Much of the money for the LTTE's terror campaign has been extorted from Tamil Canadians, who have faced harassment if they show insufficient enthusiasm for the Tigers. Family members back home in Sri Lanka have even been held hostage until Tamils here pay hefty donations. The reason that Tiger supporters seem so desperate now is that, after nearly 17 months of bloody fighting, Sri Lankan troops have the few hundred remaining Tiger fighters pinned down inside a few square kilometres in northeast Sri Lanka — including, possibly, the group's sociopathic leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. The only thing preventing Sri Lankan troops from finishing off the Tigers is the presence of thousands of Tamil civilians, whom the Tigers are using as human shields. Like Hamas in Gaza, cowardly LTTE fighters are hiding behind the women and children they claim to be protecting. (In fact, the Tigers are actually killing civilians who try to flee the combat area — something even Hamas never did on a large scale during the Gaza combat.) The Tigers' goal appears to be saving itself — and we would not be surprised if Pirapaharan staged his own massacre of Tamils as a means to discredit Colombo and force a ceasefire that allowed him to escape. The Ottawa protesters — and others in Sydney, Australia — insist the Colombo government is readying a "genocide" against Tamils. Many journalists are even getting e-mails from Tiger supporters claiming that the Sri Lankan army is preparing to use chemical weapons. This is preposterous: If government troops truly wanted to stage a genocide, they could have done so weeks ago. The only reason that the siege has drawn out this long is that Sri Lanka's army wishes to avoid unnecessary slaughter. Indeed, the Tamils who have managed to escape the Tiger area report being treated better by Sri Lankan troops than they were by the LTTE. If the Tiger supporters in Ottawa truly had the best interests of innocent Tamils at heart, they would be pleading with the Tigers themselves to release their human shields, not declaring their undying support for a terror organization. Our advice to the Ottawa hunger strikers is: Eat up. To the extent anyone is listening to your message, it only serves to disgrace your members. National Post Courtesy: Nationalpost.com