

**CALD Statement on the violence in Sri Lanka
(January 28, 2009)**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) expresses deep concern over the increasing civilian casualties as a result of the ongoing conflict between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE have struggled for over 30 years for independence on behalf of the country's ethnic Tamil minority, and were the only such group to reject the Accord negotiated between the Indian and Sri Lankan governments in 1987 that introduced devolution. The civil war has left more than 70,000 people dead, including from the Indian Peace Keeping Force which tried to enforce the Accord.

CALD echoes the United Nations' call on the Tamil Tigers to meet their international responsibilities and guarantee free movement and appropriate assistance for the large civilian population trapped within the war zone area. CALD also calls on the Sri Lankan Government to continue to provide food and social services for these civilians, while advancing a political solution that will lead to pluralistic and democratic Sri Lanka.