

## **EMAIL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THESIYAM AND CANADIAN TAMIL CONGRESS**

1) **THESIYAM:** Your organization calls itself the ‘Voice of Canadian Tamils,’ but some say it doesn’t fully represent the community’s diverse views. How do you respond to this criticism, and what are you doing to address it?

**CTC:** The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) has been serving the Tamil Canadian community since 2001, guided by our mission and vision. We welcome diverse viewpoints and continuously engage with the community through consultations, outreach initiatives, and collaborative efforts to ensure inclusivity.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** This response from the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) is quite general and does not directly address the criticism. While it emphasizes community engagement, outreach, and inclusivity, it does not specify how the organization ensures diverse views are represented or what steps are taken to address concerns about lack of representation. And if this is true, why are membership closed to anyone who has a diverse opinion? Why are members hand picked and board of directors hand picked?

**CTC REPLY:** CTC is a democratic, member-driven organization that serves the interests of Tamil Canadians through advocacy, cultural initiatives, and community programs. Our Board of Directors is elected according to our governance structure, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered. We continue to engage the broader community through consultations, partnerships, and advocacy efforts.

2) **THESIYAM:** There are number of issues that you were silent and continue to be silent on including but not limited to genocide acknowledgement, foreign interference, Raj Thavaratnasingham's email. Is there a reason why CTC remains or has remained strategically silent on these issues at varying periods?

**CTC:** CTC has publicly clarified its position on genocide acknowledgment in the past. More information can be found here:

<https://www.canadiantamilcongress.ca/press-releases/strength-in-unity/>

Regarding foreign interference, see our response to question 11. (Foreign interference falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. CTC respects Canadian laws and believes such matters should be addressed by the appropriate authorities).

Regarding Mr. Thavaratnasingham, see our response to question 5. (Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email represents his personal views, as explicitly stated in the communication).

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Genocide acknowledgement requires more than an acknowledgement. Have you taken any meaningful steps to advance this recognition in the form of genuine advocacy? Yes or no

**CTC REPLY:** CTC has been actively involved in advocating for human rights and genocide recognition for the past 15 years, including through engagements with the UN, policymakers, awareness campaigns, and community-driven initiatives. Our work in this area remains ongoing, and we continue to push for meaningful recognition and accountability.

3) **THESIYAM:** Could you specify what your relationship with the Sri Lankan government including but not limited to the Sri Lankan consulate in Toronto and Thusara Rodrigo. How often are you in communication? How closely are you working? Any reason the consulate general is using CTC's name to justify reconciliation to the government?

**CTC:** CTC does not have any relationships with the Sri Lankan government or its representatives.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Who invited Thusara Rodrigo the SCJ Chelvanayakam memorial lecture at U of T? I remind you that this was your event. Rodrigo is also pictured with members and representatives of your organization - taking part in refreshments together. What do you characterize this as?

**CTC REPLY:** CTC does not have any relationships with the Sri Lankan government or its representatives. Any events where individuals, including diplomatic representatives, may have been present do not constitute an endorsement or collaboration.

Engagement does not equate to agreement or alignment. Throughout history, and in modern international affairs, adversaries often engage in dialogue for various reasons, whether to negotiate, assert their positions, or manage disputes. Some notable examples include:

- The United States and China regularly hold diplomatic meetings despite tensions over trade, human rights, and geopolitical competition.
- Russia and Ukraine have engaged in negotiations, including prisoner exchanges and grain export agreements, despite the ongoing war.
- The United Nations and the Taliban have met to discuss humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, even though many member states do not recognize the Taliban government.

These instances illustrate that engagement does not imply endorsement, collaboration, or shared objectives—it is often a means to advocate for one's interests or ensure that critical issues are addressed.

CTC remains committed to advocating for Tamil rights, accountability, and justice. Our interactions are driven by the best interests of the Tamil Canadian community and our broader advocacy efforts.

4) **THESIYAM:** Why have you taken a step back in terms of advocacy for recognition of the atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan government and advancing human rights?

**CTC:** CTC remains committed to advocating for human rights and justice for the Tamil people. Our engagement in these matters is reflected in our ongoing efforts, including policy advocacy, community outreach, and collaboration with stakeholders at various levels.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Could you provide details of your advocacy work with the federal government including but not limited to all meetings and notes related to the advocacy? What has been the organizations position on Sri Lanka when engaging the federal government? I remind you, this is also characterized as a responsibility of the federal government.

5) **THESIYAM:** What are your thoughts on Raj Thavaratnasinghams email? Do you refute that the email is anti Tamil?

**CTC:** Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email represents his personal views, as explicitly stated in the communication.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Do you or do you not condemn Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email?

**CTC REPLY:** As stated previously, Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email reflects his personal views. He is not an official representative of CTC, and his opinions do not reflect the organization's stance. CTC remains focused on its mission of advocacy and community service.

6) **THESIYAM:** When did you become aware of this email?

**CTC:** See answer to question 5. (Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email represents his personal views, as explicitly stated in the communication).

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** This is non responsive. It is a straightforward question. When did you become aware of this email?

7) **THESIYAM:** Why have you been silent about this email?

**CTC:** See answer to question 5. (Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email represents his personal views, as explicitly stated in the communication).

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** It is a fact that you have been silent about this email for more than a month. This is further silence. Will you or will you not condemn this email and the views expressed in them?



8) **THESIYAM:** How does he separate CTC views from his given his tenure and various roles he's played?

**CTC:** Mr. Thavaratnasingham is no longer an official representative of CTC. See answer to question 5. (Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email represents his personal views, as explicitly stated in the communication).

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Please elaborate how your views differ or the organizations vision differs from Mr. Thavaratnasingham.

9) **THESIYAM:** Does CTC share these views?

**CTC:** See answer to question 5. (Mr. Thavaratnasingham's email represents his personal views, as explicitly stated in the communication).

10) **THESIYAM:** Why are invitations extended to Thusara Rodrigo and why does he extend them to you? What is the nature of this relationship?

**CTC:** See answer to question 3. (CTC does not have any relationships with the Sri Lankan government or its representatives).

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Pictures of CTC's engagements paint a different picture. Could you comment on the pictures?

11) **THESIYAM:** Why have you been silent on Sri Lanka for interference in Canada?

**CTC:** Foreign interference falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. CTC respects Canadian laws and believes such matters should be addressed by the appropriate authorities.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Human rights, foreign affairs', international affairs, development in Sri Lanka all fall under the responsibilities. In fact all of the CTC's mandate could fall under the auspices of the federal government. For instance, the arrival of Tamil refugees are the responsibility of the federal government. However, I am certain the CTC has a position all these issues. Foreign interference by the Sri Lankan government impacts Tamil Canadians, the same people you claim to be the voices of. I ask again, do you or do you not condemn the Sri Lankan government for foreign interference?

12) **THESIYAM:** How do you distance yourself from the Himalayan declaration when Ms.Raveena Rajasingam confirms that you were engaged with Raj Thavaratnamsinham throughout the entire process and he was providing email updates? Who authorized Raj Thavaratnamsinham to do this?

**CTC:** CTC has already clarified its position on this matter. Repeatedly asking the same question will not change the facts.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** You have not responded to the question. Who made the decisions? Who participated? Who was consulted? To date, you have not provided any direct responses. Your answers don't respond to the question at hand.

13) **THESIYAM:** Why have you neglected to take any meaningful steps since Tamil Fest 2024? Vendors were met by the Toronto police services when they made inquiries about a refund. There were many issues that CTC remained silent on. Could you provide an update as to what if any steps have been taken to remedy the concerns of the community arising from the Tamil Fest debacle?

**CTC:** CTC values its relationship with Tamil Fest vendors and has taken necessary steps to meet all contractual obligations.

**THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP:** Has CTC provided any vendors a refund? Yes or no. Contractual obligations are one thing but you are a community organization. Vendors did not anticipate the failure of this event. Were contracts not signed in bad faith if provisions fail to include any remedies for the vendors in such circumstances?

**CTC REPLY:** CTC has addressed vendor concerns in accordance with contractual obligations.

14) **THESIYAM:** Could you please provide the findings of your consultation on reform?

**CTC:** The consultation process has been completed. Findings have been shared with CTC members for feedback and will be communicated to the wider Tamil Canadian community by the end of March 2025.

15) **THESIYAM:** There was a deadline February 2025, - yet the organization has remained silent on this matter. Could you clarify the status?

**CTC:** See answer to question 14. (The consultation process has been completed. Findings have been shared with CTC members for feedback and will be communicated to the wider Tamil Canadian community by the end of March 2025).



**In addition to these questions, could you please answer the following?**

**THESIYAM:** Who is covering the expenses for trips by CTC Executive Director and other board members to Sri Lanka?

Is this covered out of pocket, is there sponsorship or is this funding provide by a government entity?

**CTC REPLY:** CTC board members and representatives cover their travel expenses personally. There is no government or external funding supporting these trips.

**THESIYAM:** Will you condemn Sri Lanka's foreign interference in Canada? Yes or no?

Your response does not address this issue.

In fact, it is non-responsive.

**CTC REPLY:** CTC takes any threat to Canadian democracy seriously. Foreign interference is a matter under federal jurisdiction, and we trust the Canadian government to handle such issues appropriately. We remain committed to advocating for the interests of Tamil Canadians within the framework of Canadian law and policy.

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**1<sup>st</sup> Email sent – FROM THESIYAM on Monday, Mar 10, 2025, 9:55 AM EST**

**Reply received - FROM CTC - on Monday, Mar 10, 2025, 7:19 PM EST**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Email sent - THESIYAM FOLLOW-UP - on Monday, Mar 10, 9:38 PM EST**

**Reply received - CTC REPLY - on Tuesday Mar 11, 2025, 9:41 PM EST**

**3<sup>rd</sup> set of questions, sent ot CTC by Thesiyam on (answers, if received will be updated here)**