

03 May 2010

Dear friend,

The past year has seen untold anguish for Sri Lankan Tamils. Many in East Ham have suffered loss. I extend my deepest sympathy to all those affected. Gordon Brown was the first world leader to call for a ceasefire in the conflict.

Last July, as a Treasury Minister, I met the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils to discuss the proposed \$2.6 billion IMF loan for Sri Lanka. We discussed the vast number being held in camps. After the meeting, I advised the Chancellor of the Exchequer that Britain should not support the loan. He accepted my advice.

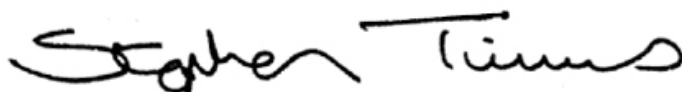
In February, after a year examining human rights, the European Union announced Sri Lanka's suspension from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP+) from August. Supporting this to the Global Tamil Forum, Labour's Foreign Secretary David Miliband set out UK Government worries on: "civil and political rights ... violence and allegations of malpractice in the election campaign and ... media freedom". Since September 2008, Britain has contributed £13.5 million to impartial humanitarian organisations such as the UN and Red Cross working in Sri Lanka.

Labour's election manifesto commits Labour to continuing to press for "*a full and fair investigation into war crimes committed in the final months of the civil war*". The Conservative manifesto, by contrast, says nothing. Tory defence spokesman Liam Fox visited Sri Lanka three times last year. He went to President Rajapaksa's party conference. Last month he admitted breaking Parliament's rules by failing to declare on time that two of his visits were paid for by the Sri Lankan Government.

I kept closely in touch with the Tamil community during the conflict, attending meetings locally and in Parliament. If re-elected, I will continue to work hard for Tamils in East Ham, for example at my regular surgeries, and to work closely with local Tamil organisations like London Tamil Sangam and Tamil Welfare Association (Newham) whose New Year celebrations I have been attending since they started over twenty years ago. I shall be there again on 15 May.

Please use five votes for Labour at this election – one for me as MP, another for Sir Robin Wales as Mayor, and three for your local Labour council candidates. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

STEPHEN TIMMS

Labour Parliamentary Candidate for East Ham