



British  
Tamils  
Forum

Tamil House, Unit 1,  
Fountayne Business Centre,  
Broadlane, Tottenham,  
London, N15 4AG  
Tel: +44 (0)208 808 0465  
Email: admin@tamilsforum.com  
www.tamilsforum.com

International Indian Film Academy  
Wizcraft International Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.  
5th floor, Satyadev Plaza,  
Fun Republic lane, Near Bhagwati House,  
Mumbai 400 053  
India

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Dear Sirs,

### **A Request to Change Venue of Bollywood IIFA awards from Sri Lanka**

British Tamils Forum is deeply concerned that IIFA is to hold the International Indian Film Academy Awards 2010 in Colombo, Sri Lanka next month. This decision by IIFA to promote Sri Lanka is regrettable given the human rights record and war crimes.

The Indian Film industry has made great impact across the globe, establishing itself as the largest film industry and receiving recognition internationally at the Golden Globe, Oscars, and Cannes Film Festivals. The South Indian Film industry has also made great advances to support the momentum set by its Northern counterpart. This reputation will be tarnished beyond redemption if it continues with its agenda to stage this year's event in Sri Lanka.

In a joint statement, the Directors' Council of Tamil Nadu, the Producers' Council, the South Indian Nadigar Sangam, FEFSI, Film Distributors' Association, Theatre Owners' Association and all the affiliated associations have called on the Indian film industry not to participate in the IIFA ceremony to be held in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's war on Tamils that claimed the lives of an estimated 40,000 innocent civilians within the final few weeks is still afresh in the minds of the global Tamil community. Today, over 80,000 Tamil civilians remain interned in concentration camps, over 11,000 suspected youth remain in arbitrary detention and those who are outside continue to suffer gross human rights violations with impunity. Sri Lanka remains a country closed to international monitors, media and aid agencies.

Over the last year the Sri Lankan government has failed to undertake any meaningful steps to address allegations related to violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law despite calls from the international community. International Crisis Group (ICG), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have all renewed demands for an independent international investigation into "massive human rights violations" and "repeated violations of international law" in Sri Lanka, following the emergence of mounting credible evidence.

Louise Arbour, president of ICG and a former chief prosecutor in international war crimes trials, has referred to Sri Lanka as having committed "the most serious of body blows to international humanitarian law". It is widely reported that other countries facing insurgencies are keen to adopt the "Sri Lanka option".

At a time when the international community remained silent on Sri Lanka's final onslaught our brothers and sisters in South India appealed to end the brutality. The principled stand taken by the South Indian Film Industry to not participate in the IIFA awards in Sri Lanka is greatly valued by the global Tamil Diaspora. As the Tamil Diaspora reflects on the loss of their loved ones on the first anniversary of the massacre by the Sri Lankan state, the venue chosen for the IIFA awards ceremony is considered ill timed and insensitive.

British Tamils urge IIFA to reconsider its venue, as staging this event in Colombo at this juncture will cause immense feeling of hurt to the Tamil people who are still mourning their dead and waiting to know the whereabouts of their missing kith and kin. Changing the venue from Sri Lanka will send the right signal to the Sri Lankan government as well as save the Indian film industry from damaging its reputation by its alignment with a genocidal regime accused of war crimes and gross human rights violations.

Thank You

Yours faithfully

**S.Skanthatheva,**  
**On Behalf of British Tamils Forum**