

# MOOURNING THE LOSS OF FRANCIS XAVIER, A PIONEER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND LAWYER

TORONTO, CANADA, June 18, 2016  
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It is with much sadness we received the news of the passing away of Mr. Francis Xavier, a Human Rights activist, Tamil nationalist and above all a wonderful human being.

I am fortunate to have known him personally for over four decades. In the 1970s, when Tamil youth were being arbitrarily arrested, detained and tortured in Sri Lanka, Mr. Xavier was one of the pioneers who challenged those detentions through Habeas Corpus appeals on behalf of the Tamil detainees, doing so on a pro bono basis.

He continued his noble service in furtherance of human rights in Canada. Mr. Xavier represented many Tamil refugees, including individuals who were accused of supporting "terrorism". He founded the Home for Human Rights in Jaffna in 1977 along with two others,

following the anti-Tamil pogrom of that year, and he remained on the Board of Trustees of the Home until his death.

It is very unfortunate that Mr. Xavier departed from us at a time when conditions are becoming favorable to vindicate the Tamils' human rights in the international arena, as well as in domestic forums in various countries. This is a moment when the Tamil nation is in need of lawyers and activists of the caliber of Mr. Xavier who are not only knowledgeable, but also committed and passionate about justice and human rights.

While we shall miss Mr. Xavier, his legacy of dedication, steadfastness and determination, and his simple ways will continue to inspire us. Personally, and on behalf of the Transnational Government of Tamil EElam (TGTE), I offer our condolences to his family, relatives, friends and clients at this time of grief. We mourn the loss along with all those who aspire to a world in which the dignity and human rights of all are valued and respected.

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, Esq.  
Prime Minister



Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

TGTE

+12122902925

email us here

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