



For Immediate Release
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Conservatives Insult Indo-Canadian Canadian Community with Muffled Apology

Ottawa, ON- The Conservative Government has insulted the Indo-Canadian community with a haphazard apology for the Komagata Maru incident.

While many Indo-Canadians waited for an official apology for the Komagata Maru incident in the House of Commons, they were shocked to hear Prime Minister Stephen Harper make an apology while speaking to a crowd of Indo-Canadians in Surrey, B.C. at a cultural event on Sunday.

“The actions taken by the Conservative government are shameful and disrespectful to the Indo-Canadian community and the families impacted by the Komagata Maru injustice. Why is the Indo-Canadian community any less deserving of an official and respectful apology delivered in the House of Commons?” asked Dr. Ruby Dhalla, Member of Parliament for Brampton Springdale.

On May 15th 2008, the historic Private Members motion put forward by Dr. Dhalla asking the Government to apologize for the 1914 Komagata Maru tragedy was unanimously passed in the House of Commons. Upon the passing of the motion many community activists and Canadians who had worked tirelessly on this issue awaited for an official apology to be made in the House of Commons. Many members of the Indo-Canadian community gathered at the event in Surrey immediately denounced the Prime Minister’s apology and requested the apology be made in the House of Commons.

This latest move by the Conservatives is just one of many examples of their questionable support for the apology. When Dr. Dhalla’s Private Members Motion requesting the Government to apologize was originally introduced on April 2 2008, the Conservative Government was opposed to the motion. After extensive community outcry and pressure, the Conservative Government was forced to change its original position.

“At first the Conservative Government was opposed to supporting my motion requesting an apology, then after community pressure they were forced to change their position. Now, the Government has once again disrespected the Indo-Canadian community by making an apology at a cultural event for a tragedy that was a grave injustice and a black mark on our nation’s history,” said Dr. Dhalla.

"The Komagata Maru injustice will forever serve as a reminder of the struggles and challenges that so many immigrants have encountered in their hope for a better future in Canada. The Prime Minister should have done the right thing by making an apology to the Indo-Canadian community in the House of Commons in a respectful and dignified manner. The Indo-Canadian community deserves far more respect than what the Conservative Government has demonstrated," said Dr. Dhalla.

Dr. Dhalla joins many Canadians in requesting the Prime Minister and the Conservative Government to make an official apology for the Komagata Maru injustice in the House of Commons.

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