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## **Laurier hosts panel discussion on Sri Lankan Tamil refugees**

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University is hosting a panel to discuss the mass arrival of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Canada this past August. The event takes place Monday, Oct. 18, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Senate & Board Chamber.

The panel, titled “Mass Arrivals: External Causes and Canadian Responses,” brings together academics, professionals and activists to explore the experiences of asylum seekers from post-conflict countries such as Sri Lanka, the resulting media response and policy implications.

The mass arrival of Sri Lankan Tamils aboard the Sun Sea in August led to intense debate and discussion in the media and the general public.

“The event led to concerns about national security, the crime of human smuggling and implications for immigration and refugee policy,” said event coordinator Amali Philips. “However, little light has been shed on the external factors behind the ‘mass arrival,’ such as the continuing instability in post-war Sri Lanka and the uncertainty facing Sri Lankan Tamils who are temporarily settled in neighbouring countries such as India, Malaysia and Thailand.”

Five panelists will present on different aspects of the issue:

- Canadian refugee policy and changes: Chris Anderson, assistant professor, political science, Laurier
- Canadian media responses: Amarnath Amarasingam, PhD candidate, religious studies, Laurier
- The Sri Lankan Tamil refugees: Gary Anandasangaree, lawyer and member of the Canadian Tamil Congress
- The post-war situation in Sri Lanka: Aparna Sunder, assistant professor, political science, Ryerson University
- Post-conflict situations in general: Alistair Edgar, associate professor and director of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, Laurier

Freelance journalist Rajan Philips will moderate the event, pose questions to the panelists for discussion, and invite questions from the audience.

This event is part of Laurier’s International Migration Research Centre (IMRC) speaker series addressing internal migration, policy and migrant rights, and is jointly sponsored by the IMRC and Laurier’s department of Anthropology. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact: [aphilips@wlu.ca](mailto:aphilips@wlu.ca).