

Toronto police arrest 15 Tamil protesters

by UPI

TORONTO -- Toronto police arrested 15 Tamil demonstrators outside the U.S. consulate in their fourth day of rallying for international help in Sri Lanka.

The crowd numbered about 1,000 Wednesday when a group of male demonstrators broke through barricades and grappled with police officers, Constable Tony Vella told the Toronto Sun. Nine people were charged with mischief and six with breach of the peace, Vella said.

Riot police and mounted officers restored the barricades at the intersection, the Toronto Star said.

The Tamils have blocked University Avenue, a major north-south, eight-lane city thoroughfare, since Sunday night. They have since been chanting and banging on drums 24 hours a day, calling for more support from Canada, the United States and the United Nations in securing an independent Tamil country in Sri Lanka.

Wednesday, Police Chief Bill Blair said he had no intention of breaking up the demonstration, the Star said.

"It's a matter of striking a balance between the citizens of Canada's ability to voice their concerns on an issue and the inconvenience that that sometimes has to others," Blair said. "And I think we're striking that balance."

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