

# Need of the Hour is Decisive Action by International Powers on Sri Lanka to Mete Out Justice for Tamils: TGTE

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, March 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) calls on the international community to adopt a multi-pronged approach to bring about greater accountability for atrocity crimes committed by the Sinhala Buddhist state in Sri Lanka.

In her report Bachelet referred to “continuing trends towards militarization and ethno-religious nationalism that undermine democratic institutions”. The TGTE agrees that the Sri Lankan state, its institutions, and its polity, are in the clutches of religious fundamentalism similar to Myanmar and Iran. These structures fundamentally impede accountability and justice for Tamils. Further, as pointed out by the Tamil National Alliance leader and parliamentarian, Mr. Rajavarodayam Sampanthan, in his observations on the High Commissioner’s Report, impunity is ingrained in the culture of Sri Lanka and the role of Sinhala Buddhist racism is deep in its politics. Thus, the obstacle for accountability for atrocity crimes is neither the lack of political will nor ability, but it is Sinhala Buddhist religious fundamentalism. Thus, as Bachelet stated, the international community should focus on international justice for Tamils.



The High Commissioner in her report has also called for fundamental reforms to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) as well as a moratorium on its use. Human Rights Watch in their report of February 7, 2022 and Amnesty International in their oral statement made on March 4, 2022 stated that the PTA had been repeatedly used to facilitate torture and that it increased the risk of

enforced disappearance. UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Terrorism, Ben Emmerson, has stated that the PTA disproportionately impacted the Tamils. From the time the PTA became law in 1979, there have been calls by many human rights organizations for its repeal. Its continued existence, even in its reformed version, as proposed by the Sri Lankan Government, will perpetuate the stranglehold that Sinhala Buddhist religious fundamentalism has on the Sri Lankan political/military establishment.

In his statement Sampanthan further stated that the emergence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamils Eelam (LTTE) on behalf of the Tamils, was because of the pogroms perpetrated against the Tamils, and the abrogation by Sinhala leaders of agreements between the Sinhala and Tamil political heads for the settlement of the Tamil national question. Sinhala Buddhist religious fundamentalism was at the root of it.

The Sri Lankan government, as usual in their response to the High Commissioner's report, has attacked and threatened international institutions, notably the UNHRC, while hiding behind the notion of "state sovereignty." It is indeed opportunistic that Sri Lanka avails itself of all benefits of international organizations, from financing its economic development to vaccinating its population against the pandemic, but when called upon to account for crimes committed by it, it puts forward the idea of state sovereignty as its shield.

By engaging in international crimes and human rights violations, the Sri Lankan government has forfeited the defense based on sovereignty. The TGTE would like to point out here that Tamil people did neither participate in nor consent to the making of Sri Lanka's First Republican Constitution (1972) or the Second Republican Constitution (1978) (which is currently in operation). Those were imposed on Tamils over their loud objections. Therefore, it is moral hypocrisy for the Sri Lankan state to hide behind the notion of "state sovereignty" for atrocity crimes it committed against Tamils.

The Sri Lankan state is aggressively engaged at present in bringing demographic changes aimed at making the Tamil speaking people a "minority" in their traditional homelands (where they are a majority) in the northeastern part of the island. As documented by the San Francisco based Oakland Institute in their study published in March 2021, titled "Endless War", there have been forced establishment of Sinhalese settlements, victory monuments, archeological reservations, wildlife sanctuaries, forest reserves, and special economic zones in Tamil majority areas. All of these have been done without any consultation let alone the consent of Tamils or their political representatives with the clear objective of depriving the local Tamil populations of their land, diminish their political representation and wipe out their national identity. The Sri Lankan government is also engaged in a program of re-demarcation of divisional boundaries to link Sinhala-majority villages with Tamil districts, thereby increasing the proportion of Sinhala population in Tamil districts. This is facilitated by the overwhelming presence of an almost exclusively Sinhalese Sri Lankan military in Tamil areas. Needless to say, the deprivation of the homeland will result in the eradication of the distinctness of the Tamil People.

The TGTE also takes note of the letter sent by five Tamil political parties in Sri Lanka to High Commissioner Bachelet calling for a referendum to decide the political future of the Tamils. Given the historic nature of Sinhala Buddhist religious fundamentalism in the country, coupled with the reigning impunity of Sinhala leaders to commit atrocity crimes, the ongoing systemic and pervasive persecution of Tamils and aggressive efforts to destroy Tamil identity, Tamils as the victims in this instance should be allowed to decide their political future.

Therefore, the international community should heed the report by Bachelet and adopt different instruments to hold Sri Lanka to account and bring about justice, accountability and a political resolution for the Tamil People of the island of Sri Lanka.

#### ABOUT THE TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL EELAM (TGTE):

The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a democratically elected Government of over a million strong Tamils (from the island of Sri Lanka) living in several countries around the world.

TGTE was formed after the mass killing of Tamils by the Sri Lankan Government in 2009.

TGTE thrice held internationally supervised elections among Tamils around the world to elect 135 Members of Parliament. It has two chambers of Parliament: The House of Representatives and the Senate and also a Cabinet.

TGTE is leading a campaign to realize the political aspirations of Tamils through peaceful, democratic, and diplomatic means and its Constitution mandates that it should realize its political objectives only through peaceful means. It's based on the principles of nationhood, homeland and self-determination.

TGTE seeks that the international community hold the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Tamil people to account. TGTE calls for a referendum to decide the political future of Tamils.

The Prime Minister of TGTE is Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, a New York based lawyer.

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#### BACKGROUND

Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka faced repeated mass killings in 1958, 1977, and 1983 and the mass killings in 2009 prompted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a Panel of Experts to report on the scale of the killings.

According to UN internal review report on Sri Lanka, over 70 thousand Tamils were killed in six months in early 2009 and Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by the Sri Lankan Security forces.

International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) in February 2017 handed over details to UN of Sri Lankan Military run "Rape Camps", where Tamil women are being held as "sex slaves". Also, According to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report on April 2013, there are over 90 thousand Tamil war widows in Sri Lanka.

Thousands of Tamils disappeared, including babies and children. UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances stated in 2020 that the second highest number of enforced disappearance cases in the world is from Sri Lanka.

According to this UN report, the killings and other abuses that took place amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Independent experts believe that there are elements of these abuses that constitute an act of genocide.

Members of the Sri Lankan security forces are almost exclusively from the Sinhalese community and the victims are all from the Tamil community.

Tamils overwhelmingly voted in a Parliamentary election in 1977 to establish an independent and sovereign country called Tamil Eelam. This Parliamentary election was conducted by the Sri Lankan Government.

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