

Update on OHCHR Sri Lanka Accountability Project Report and Universal Jurisdiction

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WASHINGTON DC, DC, UNITED STATES,
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"The latest update (March, 2025) of the [Sri Lanka Accountability Project \(OSLAP\) report](#) released by the UN

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is a clarion call for the adoption of Universal

Jurisdiction for the prosecution of individuals cited in the report for gross violations of human rights and serious crimes under international law". So stated the President of US Tamil Action Group (USTAG), Ms. Pushparany Williams. Clearly, the unequivocal statement by the President of

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Report of the Office of Sri Lanka Accountability Project(OSLAP)



Mullivaikkal war crimes

USTAG implies that it is now the responsibility of countries adhering to international humanitarian laws to make use of the incontrovertible evidence available in the repository of OSLAP to pursue prosecutions under the mandate of Universal Jurisdiction as advised by more than one UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Substantiating such a claim is the statement in the report update, namely, “OSLAP aims to support competent jurisdictions with timely and relevant information, analysis, and evidence to support investigations, prosecutions, and other accountability processes”.

The above all encompassing undertaking for the provision of damning evidence by OSLAP implies that Sri Lanka can be referred by the UN Security Council to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for prosecution, irrespective of its

refusal to sign the Rome Treaty.

The following statement in the report update, namely; “The repository now contains over 101,000 items sourced from more than 530 entities, including contributions from over 300 witnesses and 230 organizations”, indicates the comprehensive nature of this work and the rigour being exerted towards collecting compelling evidence.

The evidence is not only from all relevant UN agencies and NGO's but also from “a large volume of materials from previous missions and inquiry mechanisms, including the Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka (2010-2011), established by the then Secretary-General Ban KiMoon, and the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (2014-2015), mandated by the Human Rights Council”.



Thousands of Tamils gathered across the Tamil homeland to mark Maaveerar Naal - or Great Heroes Day - and remember those who sacrificed their lives in the Tamil struggle for liberation. Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

[Canada has already imposed sanctions](#) on former Sri Lankan Presidents Mahinda Rajapaksa and his brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa, for “gross and systematic violations of human rights”. The US has sanctioned the former Head of Sri Lankan Armed Forces Shavendra Silva, and former Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda. It is also significant that the most recent UK sanctions are on none other than the above two former military commanders and another former Commander of the Sri Lankan Army, Jagath Jayasuriya. The fourth individual sanctioned by the UK is Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan who led the paramilitary Karuna Group allied to the Sri Lankan Army. All of these sanctions are the clear indication of the culpability and credible accusations of gross human rights violations at the highest echelons of power in Sri Lanka.

Successive Sri Lankan governments who have dismissed the above strictures in their entirety are now succeeded by the radically new NPP/JVP government who cannot afford to dismiss the baggage of the gross human rights violations of the past. There is no gainsaying that the JVP segment themselves of the government suffered massacres in the 1972-73 and 1987-89 uprisings they carried out against the governments at the time.

At a recent media conference, Brito Fernando, a human rights activist and chairman of the families of the disappeared in the South, made a clear call for the new government to initiate prosecutions for accountability. He shared harrowing details of allegations of torture and abuse committed by the very same retired Sri Lankan Army Commander and accused war criminal Major General Shavendra Silva during his tenure at the Matale Vijaya torture camp. Brito Fernando detailed the testimony of a one of the Matale torture camp detainees who alleged that Shavendra Silva had forced the detainee's comrade and another detainee to duel with

weapons. They refused and were both beaten for not following the order to use the weapons. "At the end, other person had been beheaded and he [comrade] was told to drink the other's blood," Fernando recounted.

Adding further controversy in the South were the revelations swirling around the [Batalanda Commission Report](#), initiated by the then President Chandrika Kumaratunga. Similar to the Matale Vijaya torture camp, the Batalanda unofficial detention site was used for torture, disappearances, and assassinations during the JVP uprising of 1987-89.

"Unlike the amnesia with respect to human rights in the South suddenly awakening having been dormant for many decades, the mothers and families of the forcibly disappeared and victims of the Tamil genocide in the Tamil Homeland of the North-East have engaged in continuous vigil and fast for truth, accountability, and justice for over 8 years on behalf of their loved ones."

"If the Sinhala-Buddhist Sri Lankan polity of the South cannot stomach an internal prosecution of its so-called war heroes, the NPP/JVP government should have no compunction in calling upon prosecutions under Universal Jurisdiction as called for by the North-East Tamil Homeland polity and the Global Tamil Diaspora for the past 15 years since the Tamil genocide in 2009." The OSLAP repository of evidence not only covers the JVP massacres, but also provides the evidence for prosecutions for the Tamil genocide of 2009.

Krish Illungkoo, President of Australian Tamil Congress, said, "Irrespective of any movement on the part of the current regime along the above lines as it has been with all prior Sri Lankan regimes, it is the avowed position of the Tamil Homeland of the North-East and the Global Tamil Diaspora to pursue Universal Jurisdiction for truth, justice, accountability, and reparations for the Tamil genocide with the absolute conviction of its centrality to the cause of human rights".

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Organizations which endorse this Press Release:

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2. Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA); contact@fetna.org
3. Ilankai Tamil Sangam, USA; president@sangam.org
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5. Minister for Human Rights and Prevention and Accountability for Crime of Genocide, TGTE, USA; pmo@tgte.org
6. National Council of Canadian Tamils, Canada: info@ncctcanada.ca
7. People for Equality And Relief in Lanka; contact@pearlaction.org
8. Tamil Rights Group (TRG), Canada; info@tamilrightsgroup.org
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