



Sangam

ILANKAI TAMIL SANGAM, USA, INC.
ASSOCIATION OF TAMILS OF SRI LANKA IN THE USA

July 10, 2009

URGENT CRISIS: 1400 Tamils dying daily¹ as conditions in concentration camps deteriorate in Sri Lanka

Professor Elie Wiesel Releases Statement on the Tamil People

Prof. Elie Wiesel's Foundation for Humanity released a statement on the persecution of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka on June 30, 2009 that was posted on the Foundation's website. The statement comes in response to the continued discrimination and violence against the Tamils since the massacre of more than 25,000 Tamil civilians by the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2009. Over 60 years of persecution of the Tamils by the Sinhalese-dominated state and military, have included ethnic cleansing, long term displacement and colonization of Tamil areas, along with extrajudicial executions, disappearances and other serious human rights abuses.

Today, 300,000 Tamils are held hostage in detention camps, while the Tamil homeland is occupied by the Sinhalese military, and Tamils throughout the island face discrimination, insecurity and lack of political representation.

The conditions in these camps are reported as horrific, as food is scarce, medicine is being denied and hepatitis and other preventable communicable diseases are spreading in the population. There are few toilet facilities and human waste is left untreated, so concern for epidemics is growing. Aid agencies and journalists continue to be denied adequate access. Kidnapping and rape by the military forces who control the camps is reported routinely, and the abductions of youth accused of being rebel members continues unabated.

Prof. Wiesel's 'Tamil People Statement' reads:

Wherever minorities are being persecuted we must raise our voices to protest. According to reliable sources, the Tamil people are being disenfranchised and victimized by the Sri Lanka authorities. This injustice must stop. The Tamil people must be allowed to live in peace and flourish in their homeland.

"We are very grateful that he [Prof. Wiesel] has responded to our request to support the Tamil people. Now that it is official on his website, we are certain that other institutions that are involved in holocaust and war crime research will take up the Sri Lanka case," said Dr. Ellyn Shander of Tamils Against Genocide, a group working to indict those responsible for crimes against humanity in Sri Lanka.

In 1986 Prof. Wiesel won the Nobel Prize for Peace, and soon after, Marion and Elie Wiesel established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

For his literary and human rights activities, Prof. Wiesel has received numerous awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Liberty Award, and the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor.

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¹ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6676792.ece>