

**Statement from Hon M.K.Shivajilingam, Member of Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka
Presented to the UN Diplomats in Geneva, Switzerland on March 10, 2014**

Your Excellencies, Honorable Members of the UN Human Rights Council, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am an elected Member of Northern Provincial Council in Sri Lanka, and I stand here today in front of you as a voice of the victimized Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all of you and the International Community for tirelessly working to bring justice to the Tamil people. I would like to thank specifically the U.S., other sponsors and supporting countries for bringing the resolutions on Sri Lanka at the UNHRC in 2012 and 2013 and their continued leadership in ensuring justice to the victims. Having gone through more than 65 years of injustice and violence by successive governments of Sri Lanka, Tamil people are fully aware that neither justice nor political-solution will reach us without the direct and active involvement of the International Community and the UN.

Hundreds of thousands of Tamil victims are seeking justice for their loved ones that were brutally and systematically killed. They want to know why a government that is supposed to protect their people bombed and killed them. Thousands of Tamil women and children desperately want to know what happened to their husbands and fathers that surrendered to the Sri Lankan military. Thousands of grieving mothers want to know where their children are. Thousands of anxious orphans wonder if their parents will ever be returning. They all are searching for answers. You can help them. Only you can help find the truth and give them justice and closure.

You gave Sri Lanka the last 5 years to do the investigation, find the truth, and give justice to the victims, but they have proven it to you that they will not be able to do any of those. Sri Lanka's lack of interest, and insincerity and above all the complete absence of political will is crystal clear. Instead of working on accountability and justice, Sri Lanka has chosen to hide behind the curtain of sovereignty and non-interference. But when a country fails its own people, the victims count on the International Community and the UN. The voiceless Tamils are counting on you. You are their only hope.

As a Member of Northern Provincial Council I proposed a resolution two months ago, reflecting the will of our people. As you may know the Northern Provincial Council adopted that resolution calling for an "Independent International Investigation for the war-crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic-cleansing, and the mass killings tantamount to Genocide" committed against the Tamil people.

The victims have spoken and their voice is clear. We have waited a long time for justice, and the forensic evidence is disappearing by the day. I plead with you to bring a Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity, Genocide, and all other violations and crimes against the Tamil people. Our Chief Minister Hon Judge C.V. Wigneswaran and the leader of my political party Tamil National Alliance Hon. R. Sampanthan along with Archbishop Tutu and many prominent global personalities have last week called for a Commission of Inquiry for the crimes against the Tamil people.

Thanks to the UNHRC, the Northern Provincial Council has been set up last year, but the Chief Minister is unable to appoint even a secretary to the Council. The Council is unable to properly function. Although the war has ended in Sri Lanka, the conflict continues and the root cause of the conflict has not been addressed or resolved. We request your help to find an internationally mediated political solution.

The Government of Sri Lanka often talks about reconciliation, but I would like to let you know that there is no reconciliation taking place in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has done nothing meaningful towards reconciliation, instead involved

in land grabs, settlements, demographic changes, military occupation, coercive contraceptive methods and ongoing human rights violations. All of these are aimed at breaking down the Tamil Nation. The government continues to systematically dismantle the social, cultural, economic and political space of the Tamil Nation in the North and East. The more time and space that Sri Lanka is given, the worse the situation becomes on the ground. We are facing threats to our own existence as Tamil people. We request your urgent help in setting up an International Mechanism to halt these activities that threaten our fundamental rights. Without justice and an equitable political solution, reconciliation can't begin.

- On behalf of my oppressed people I plead for an independent international investigative mechanism in the form of Commission of Inquiry in the resolution this time, to investigate all the violations and crimes committed against the Tamil people prior to, during, and after the war. Only a Commission of Inquiry can ensure the necessary mandate, resources and direction needed for this.
- I plead with you to include a call for finding a political solution as part of the resolution that addresses the root cause of the conflict and provides permanent relief to the Tamil people from the oppression of the Sri Lankan state.

Thank you.

*[*Note: Actual speech was a slightly briefer version of this full text]*