

TAMIL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - TCHR/CTDH
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Massacre of civilians and Peace Emissaries

When Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was granted Independence by the British in 1948, the humiliation, intimidation and killing of Tamils started against one or two, then a few, then hundreds. This gradually increased to the killing of thousands.

As thirty-five years of the Tamils' non-violent struggle was continuously repressed by military means, militancy was eventually born in the island. This paved the way for an armed struggle. The Tamils in the North and East voted overwhelmingly in the 1977 General Elections in favour of exercising their Right to Self-Determination – and this mandate was taken forward by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – LTTE.

The war has had many ups and downs for both sides, and Sri Lanka systematically sought the help of the International Community. The struggle in exercise of the Tamil people's Right to Self-Determination was branded as "terrorism" by the government and the international actors endorsed this. They supported the Sri Lanka government's position in seeking a military solution to the Tamil national question, completely ignoring the terrorism of the state.

Today, genocide has taken place against the Tamils, with direct and indirect help of the International Community. Of course within the last few months **some** international actors have opposed the military solution, and have raised their objections with the Sri Lanka government. But Sri Lanka rejected their requests outright and continued their brutal genocide against the Tamils.

This year alone, nearly ten thousand have been killed, many are missing and nearly three hundred thousand have been incarcerated in concentration camps.

While genocide has been taking place, many crimes against humanity and war crimes have been committed by the Sri Lanka government. Two days ago, unarmed Peace Emissaries – the Head of the Political Division of the LTTE, Mr B Nadesan; and the Head of the Peace Secretariat, Mr S. Puleedevan – were executed in cold blood as they approached the Sri Lanka armed forces holding white flags, surrounded by many civilians.

Both these men had untiringly dedicated themselves to work towards a just peace in the island and had taken part in the recent peace negotiations between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

There are still thousands of bodies all over the roads and terrain in the Mullaitivu district, and thousands of injured people. In the IDP camps (concentration camps) people have no water nor food – the situation is beyond desperate.

But government-sponsored celebrations of military victory are taking place in Colombo and the South – ***without a single word being mentioned about the agony and suffering of the Tamil people.***

This fact has to be taken seriously by the International actors who encouraged the Government of Sri Lanka to pursue a military solution to the Tamil national question. All the atrocities have to be seriously investigated and the culprits who committed this genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, must be punished.

What political solution does the International Community have, to offer the Tamils at this very moment - a people who remain without any political rights for nearly six decades, **whose language ranks the 15th position in the world?** There are already more than six hundred thousand Tamil refugees in countries world-wide.

We take this opportunity to predict a few important points at this juncture:

1. Very soon, there will be serious and widespread communal riots against the Tamils in Colombo. We have already seen initial attacks within the last few days. This will be the government agenda, as it is stated continuously in their international propaganda that there are more Tamils than Sinhalese in Colombo!
2. The government which has claimed a successful military solution for the country's ethnic crisis, is now preparing to target the Tamil diaspora! This has already been openly stated from top to bottom by government representatives
3. The government which has successfully carried out Sinhalisation and planted statues of Buddha in Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mannar and Jaffna, now will do the same in the Vanni district.
4. The Sri Lankan government will not find **ANY** political solution to the six-decades-old Tamil ethnic problem. On 28 September 2007, President Mahinda Rajapaksa said in his speech to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council that, ".....***There is no ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka - as some media mistakenly highlight. Sri Lanka's security forces are fighting a terrorist group, not a particular community.***"
5. It is high time that the international community realise how quickly the Sri Lanka government will abandon all Tamils who were used in their fight against so-called terrorism.

In conclusion, the time is ripe for the International Community to realise how the propaganda mechanisms of the Sri Lanka government were working against the legitimate Right to self-determination of the Tamils.

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