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**US Tamil Political Action Council**

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**For Immediate Release**

**September 20, 2009**

**Rally in New York in front of the UN to Unlock the concentration camps in Sri Lanka  
On September 22, 11am to 3pm**

Human rights advocates will rally in front of the UN to bring attention to the 282,000 Tamils held in concentration camps in Sri Lanka. USTPAC, endorses and supports this rally by the grass root citizenry concerned about **human rights. Sri Lanka is attempting to destroy the Tamil community on the island and this crime is NOT being effectively stopped by the UN.**

In May, 2009, the Sri Lankan armed forces **killed over 20,000** Tamil civilians with indiscriminate attacks and starvation on an offensive the press called "blood bath on the beach". Over 125,000 Tamils have been killed in total by shelling, disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and anti-Tamil pogroms in an effort to destroy the Tamil community. Currently 282,000 Tamil civilians are being held **indefinitely** in military-controlled internment camps in unsanitary conditions without adequate food and water. **Malnutrition-related complications have resulted in increased deaths, while doctors in the camps have warned of "impending disaster if conditions do not improve." Humanitarian workers recently criticized "persistent water shortages," and precarious inhumane health conditions as "heavy rain sent rivers of sewage cascading through tents and tin sheds."** Manik Farm, the largest IDP camp in the world, continues to claim an estimated **1400 lives a week**, a number that is similar to the total number of people killed in Darfur and the Congo, combined for the whole of this year.

While Western nations call for an investigation of war crimes, the Sri Lankan government continues to deny independent investigators and journalists' access to war-torn areas. Sri Lankan government continues to expel aid workers who dare to speak up. The UN is unable to free its own staff members from the camp.

When UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon was taken to the camps on a conducted tour last May where he said, "I was so sad, and so humbled by what I have seen. I have traveled all around the world and visited similar places, but this by far the most appalling scenes I have seen." Yet, the UN, under the leadership of Ban Ki Moon, has done preciously little to unlock the internment camps and hold the Sri Lankan government accountable for war crimes.

The situation has gotten even more appalling now with no effective response from the UN. Protesters are calling for the UN **to reclaim its responsibility to protect (R2P) and intervene immediately to save the innocent Tamil civilians locked up in the internment camps**, and return them to their homeland.

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