

People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka Press Release

The **Permanent People's Tribunal** (successor to the Bertrand Russell Tribunal) will be conducting a People's Tribunal on the war in Sri Lanka and its aftermath in Dublin in January 2010. The People's Tribunal will investigate the allegations that the Government of Sri Lanka and its armed forces committed *war crimes* and *crimes against humanity* during its final phase of the war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The Tribunal will also examine the local and international factors that led to the collapse of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement.

The People's Permanent Tribunal has a long history of carrying out independent investigations of human rights abuses ranging from Vietnam to Guatemala. The People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka will be conducted by a panel of eleven eminent persons with vast experience in the field of human rights and in matters of justice, chosen from the Global South and North. The Tribunal will be co-hosted by the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin and the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland. The event is being organised by the Irish Forum for Peace in Sri Lanka. The Tribunal will take place at Trinity College Dublin on January 14 and 15, 2010, and its provisional findings will be announced at a public meeting on January 16.

8th December 2009

For more information please contact:

The Co-ordinators of the People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka
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Members of the Panel of Judges of the People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka:

1. **Francois Houtart** (UNESCO awardee for non-violence and tolerance, Chairperson of the UN Committee on Economic Recession., Prof. Emeritus, University of Louvain, Belgium. Founding Member of the World Social Forum, Honorary Member of the Academy of Sciences of Vietnam and Cuba, Laureate of the Camilo Torres Prize of the National University of Colombia, Bogota)

We have tried to list the panel according to age (Asian custom for respecting age)

2. **Rajinder Sachar** (Former High Court Judge of Delhi, headed the Sachar Committee appointed by the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India)

3. **Nawal al Saadawi** (Egyptian writer, trained as a medical doctor, known for her outstanding work for women's rights in Egypt and in the region. She has been imprisoned for her activities and writings in Egypt. She has been United Nation's Advisor for the Women's Programme in Africa (ECA) and Middle East (ECWA) from 1979 to 1980. She is a prolific author.)

4. **Sulak Sivaraksa** (Thai Buddhist peace campaigner and writer, initiator of a number of social, humanitarian, ecological and spiritual movements and organizations in Thailand. He was awarded the Alternative Nobel Prize, Right Livelihood Award)

5. **Denis Halliday** (Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations)

6. **Gianni Tognoni** (Secretary General, People's Permanent Tribunal, Milan)

7. **Daniel Feierstein** (Director of the Centre for Genocide Studies at the 'Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero', and Professor in the Faculty of Genocide at the University of Buenos Aires)

8. **Mary Lawlor** (Director, Frontline, International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Dublin)

9. **Oystein Tveter** (A Scholar in International law and member of the People's Tribunal on extra-judicial killings and violations of human rights in the Philippines)

10. **Eren Keskin** (Kurdish-born lawyer and a human rights activist in Turkey, Vice President of the Human Rights Association, Istanbul. She co-founded the project "Legal Aid For Women Who Were Raped Or Otherwise Sexually Abused by National Security Forces", to expose the abuses happening to women in Turkish prisons. In 1995, she was imprisoned for her human rights activities and was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International)

11. **Francesco Martone** (An ex-Senator in Italy, a leading activist in the non-governmental sector and an Ecologist)

Among those who cannot be on the Panel for various reasons but have agreed to publicise and interpret the findings of the Tribunal:

1. **Arundhati Roy** (Writer and Journalist and Booker prizewinner)

2. **Krishna Iyer** (Former Judge of the Indian Supreme Court, former Minister in the Kerala Parliament and a figure of considerable prominence in India)

3. **Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann** (Senior Advisor on Foreign Affairs in Nicaragua, the outgoing President of the UN General Assembly, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs in Nicaragua, a liberation theologian and laureate of the Lenin Peace Prize and winner of the Thomas Merton Award)

4. **Irene Fernandez** (A leading Malaysian Trade Unionist and a human rights campaigner)

5. **Adolfo Perez Esquivel** (Argentinian human rights campaigner, and a Nobel Peace Prize winner)

The jury has been chosen from across the global south and north in order to transcend geopolitical barriers and to ensure that its findings will be both credible and ethically binding.

Ireland has been chosen because of its historical status as a post-colonial nation, the success of the Northern Ireland peace process, and its traditional policy of neutrality.