



Global Tamil Forum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GTF Welcomes UN's Advisory Panel on Sri Lanka War Crimes

London – April 08, 2010 – Global Tamil Forum welcomes the recent announcement by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on setting up the Advisory Panel on Sri Lanka on the accountability issues on the violations of the international laws during the war between the government forces and the Tamil Tigers last year. GTF believes this will start the process of justice for the Tamils in Sri Lanka, and calls upon the UN and the International Community to ensure that both sides of the conflict are consulted during the process.

The Tamil leaders, organizations and independent groups have been repeatedly requesting for war crime investigation in Sri Lanka to investigate possible war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed against the Tamils, particularly during the last stages of the war in 2009. According to Gordon Weiss who was the UN's Spokesperson in Sri Lanka at that time, up to 40,000 people could have been killed during the height of the war. In an interview to the Australia Broadcasting Corporation, he has claimed "the Sri Lankan government said many things which were either intentionally misleading, or were lies."

Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, have both repeatedly and persistently called for independent investigation into the war crime allegations in Sri Lanka. The Italy based internationally renowned Permanent People's Tribunal conducted a tribunal in Dublin, Ireland in January 2010, and concluded that war crimes were committed by the Sri Lankan government and its forces and it called for the appointment of a UN Special rapporteur to investigate the war crimes.

GTF, while welcoming the move by the Secretary General, calls on the UN and the International Community to setup the panel of experts with reputable backgrounds in consultation with both sides of the conflict but not just one side. This Panel should include highly reputable personalities such as Richard Goldstone, former South African Constitutional Court Judge, Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Chris Patten, former EU Commissioner, and Francis Boyle, Professor of International Law, University of Illinois.

GTF therefore calls upon the International Community to send out a clear message that the violation of international laws and crimes against humanity against the helpless Tamil people can't go unpunished and that only when these crimes are recognized and dealt with, true reconciliation leading to genuine peace can begin.

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About GTF:

Global Tamil Forum is a consortium of Tamil organizations around the world. It harnesses the skills and the knowledge of the members of the forum, well-wishers and others including mainstream decision makers in the international governments, institutions and organizations with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Tamil community in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self determination within a democratic framework under pinned by the international law, its covenants and conventions. The forum was set-up in 2009 with the support of many International Tamil community organizations. For more information and our mission and vision statements please contact info@globaltamilforum.org and/or visit: www.globaltamilforum.org