

# **AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION OF TAMIL ASSOCIATIONS**

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## **AFTA STATEMENT ON THE REPORT BY HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ON 'INTIMIDATION & EXTORTION'**

The recent report by Human Rights Watch titled "Funding the Final War: LTTE Intimidation and Extortion in the Tamil Diaspora" implies that the 800,000<sup>1</sup> strong Eelam Tamil Diaspora is under siege and a climate of fear pervades as the LTTE coerces the Diaspora to contribute to the war effort.

We find this claim to be politically motivated, biased and vindictive. We are deeply disappointed that HRW has wittingly or unwittingly allowed itself to be part of the Sri Lankan regime's political agenda.

It is our considered view that the report is made of half truths, outright lies, selective reporting and innuendos. The methodology used is woefully inadequate and designed to impress the uninitiated that the report is the product of detailed research. It is blindingly obvious that the report comprises selective reporting of isolated events, unsubstantiated allegations of disgruntled individuals and accounts by Tamil collaborators.

Through an adroit mixture of uncorroborated allegations and a deliberate omission of the overwhelming support to the Tamil cause by the Diaspora, the report seeks to imply that support to the Tamil cause is through coercion and therefore criminal.

It is obvious that the report is designed to marginalize the role of the Tamil Diaspora.

In effect, in a perverse reversal of its role as guardians of Human Rights, HWR has in the name of Human Rights, attempted to suppress the human rights of the Tamil Diaspora and its right to help its brethren in the land of their birth.

We draw attention to the undeniable truth that if not for the immense contribution in physical and material terms by the Tamil Diaspora, the Tamil people in the North East of the Island would have succumbed to Sri Lanka's police of beating them into submission.

The behaviour of the Sri Lankan Government in its treatment of the Tamil survivors of the tsunami alone ought to have brought this truth home...

We are deeply hurt, disappointed and saddened that Human Right Watch had violated our human rights and sincerely hope that other Human Rights organisations take it upon themselves to expose HWR's deplorable act of turning on an entire people.

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<sup>1</sup> 650,000 according to HRW and 800,000 according to Tamil estimates which includes 2nd generation Tamils.