

30, Martin Road, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

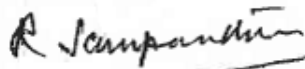
STATEMENT BY TNA LEADER MR. R. SAMPANTHAN AND NORTHERN PROVINCE CHIEF
MINISTER JUSTICE C. V. WIGNESWARAN

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has given careful consideration to the draft resolution on Sri Lanka proposed at the 25th sessions of the Human Rights Council by the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Mauritius. The TNA is committed to the achievement of permanent peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, which will enable all Peoples in Sri Lanka to live with dignity, equality and justice. We believe that tangible progress on accountability and genuine reconciliation are necessary ingredients to the achievement of a peaceful, united Sri Lanka. To this end, it is paramount that the truth should be ascertained, an acceptable political solution evolved and swift action taken to terminate and reverse the harmful trajectory on which the government has set the country.

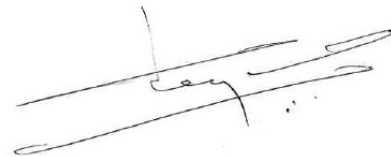
Of particular concern to the Tamil people is the mass scale appropriation of land by the military, the overbearing presence of the military in civilian life, and the increasing reports of sexual violence targeting Tamil women in the North and East. The Sri Lankan government is also aggressively engaged in changing the demographic composition of the Northern and Eastern provinces and debasing the cultural and linguistic identities of these areas. These actions do not create a conducive atmosphere for reconciliation and do not inspire the confidence of the Tamil people in the state. Further, the government has colluded in and presided over an appalling increase in religious violence and intimidation of religious minorities. The breakdown of the rule of law and independence of the judiciary has exacerbated these problems by depriving victims of the protection of the law.

We therefore welcome the fact that the draft resolution envisages the establishment of an international investigation led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, both in respect of war-time abuses committed by both sides and violations of human rights throughout the country since the end of the war. We look forward to the co-sponsors effecting revisions to the draft over the following weeks that will clarify and strengthen the scope of the forthcoming investigation. We will remain engaged with the international community to this end, and also to ensure that the outcome of the resolution will be overwhelmingly positive for all Sri Lankans, particularly for victims of grave abuses committed during and after the war.

The passage of a resolution on the lines of the draft under consideration will be a significant next step by the Human Rights Council toward reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka. The TNA will continue to urge the international community to move expeditiously towards mandating an international commission of inquiry in respect of past violations committed by both sides as well as ongoing violations throughout the country.



R. Sampanthan
Leader, Tamil National Alliance



Justice C. V. Wigneswaran
Chief Minister, Northern Province