



British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

30 August 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VICTIMS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES – LIST OF NAMES SHOULD BE RELEASED

Based on various sources, the estimated number of victims of enforced disappearances who were arrested or surrendered during the last phase of the war is over 18,000. As exhumed skeletons of the victims continue to pile up, the immediate release of a list of victims of enforced disappearances is vital for carrying out scientific processes, such as DNA matching with biological relatives, to identify each set of remains. This process will be the first step toward exploring the circumstances that led to these crimes, identifying the perpetrators, initiating judicial proceedings, and allowing relatives to pay their final respects in a dignified manner.

The documents provided below indicate that the number of victims exceeds 18,000:

- ICRC

'Over 15,000 missing in Sri Lanka': Report reveals

More than fifteen thousand people were reported missing in Sri Lanka by the end of 2011, according to figures released by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The annual report unveiled in Geneva by ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger stated that "thousands remained unaccounted for, leaving relatives without definitive information about their fate" in Sri Lanka.

In its report describing the harm that armed conflicts inflict on populations around the world, [the ICRC noted](#) that it had been trying to trace **15,780** people in Sri Lanka as of 31 December 2011. The vast majority were men, while tracing cases for **1,494** children and **754** women were also being handled by the ICRC. Only as few as 136 people had been traced to their families. Additionally, the ICRC had visited **17,741 detainees** during the preceding year.

- AHRC

SRI LANKA: 15,780 persons have disappeared under the Rajapaksa regime – Asian Human Rights Commission, 06 July 2012

Among those **15,780** persons who went missing, the majority were males, while **1,494** children and **754** females were also included in these reports. <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/forwarded-news/AHRC-FAT-021-2012/>



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- **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

Sri Lanka: Provide families of those subject to enforced disappearance with complete lists.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa37/8444/2018/en/>

Sri Lanka has one of the world's highest number of disappearances, with a backlog of between 60,000 and 100,000 alleged disappearances since the late 1980s. Given the lack of accountability for these cases, Amnesty International has noted that there is no shortage of examples of thwarted justice in Sri Lanka.

- **Missing Persons Commission receives over 18,000 complaints (06 June 2014)**

A Sri Lankan panel probing the disappearance of people during the country's nearly three-decade long civil war has received nearly 18,600 complaints from the public, a senior official has said.

<https://adaderana.lk/news/26965>

- **OMP**

Sri Lanka Has 17,000 Active Missing Persons Cases, Many Connected to LTTE Conflict – Sri Lanka's Office of Missing Persons (OMP)

"We are dealing with 23,352 cases in our database," the Chairman Mahesh Katulanda said on Thursday while addressing an event to mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, observed on August 30. He added that there are **16,966** active case files of disappearances after weeding out duplicates and those missing in action. According to an official estimate, around 20,000 people are believed to be missing after the end of the war with the LTTE, which killed over 100,000 people.

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/sri-lanka-missing-persons-office-has-nearly-17000-active-cases-1979127>

- **BTF**

For over a decade, based on credible documentary evidence, the British Tamils Forum (BTF) has consistently called for the release of information and clarification regarding the fate of **more than 18,000 Tamil victims who were arrested or surrendered during the final phase of the war.**

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

Release of Information: The international community should exert leverage on Sri Lanka and other stakeholders to **release a comprehensive list containing names, dates of disappearance, and the contact details of biological relatives.** Relatives of the victims of enforced disappearance need to work with relevant UN institutions to compare lists and **ensure all victims are recorded in a single comprehensive database.**



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DNA Matching: A centralised database will enable the rapid identification of exhumed skeletons—such as the 583 found in Chemmani and others discovered elsewhere—using a DNA databank. Without this list, the chances of identifying these remains will be minimized.

International DNA Databank: Establish an internationally supervised DNA databank, collect reference samples in Sri Lanka and across the global Tamil diaspora, and carry out the matching process in the United Kingdom or an EU member state.

Access for DNA Collection: Sri Lanka must permit the UK or an EU member state to collect DNA samples and match them with skeletons and other physical remains preserved from crime scenes.

Forensic Experts Deployment: Immediately deploy accredited forensic anthropologists, pathologists, and legal experts to all identified mass grave sites to ensure full compliance with the Minnesota Protocol and international criminal law standards.

Geospatial & Satellite Analysis: Conduct satellite imagery and geospatial analysis across all known and suspected mass grave locations from the conflict and post-conflict periods.

Immediate Excavations: Begin immediate excavations at identified sites, including Mandaitivu and other locations highlighted through witness testimonies and forensic evidence.

Evidence Protection: Protect and preserve all forensic evidence and crime scenes.

Victim Family Involvement: Guarantee the full participation of victims' families throughout all investigative processes.

Unrestricted Oversight: Allow international forensic experts and technical specialists full, unrestricted access to oversee the identification process in compliance with recognised international standards.

Transparent Reporting: Issue periodic publications to ensure transparent reporting on victim identification progress, crime execution details, identified perpetrators, and the chain of command.

Accountability Investigations: Investigate command responsibility, institutional responsibility, and state responsibility.

Remedies & Non-Recurrence: Provide guarantees of non-recurrence and offer effective remedies to affected families.

Prompt Return of Remains: Ensure exhumed remains are returned promptly to biological relatives, allowing families to pay their last respects and perform final funeral rites in a dignified manner.

Time is critical. The Sri Lankan state's calculated strategy across successive governments has been to delay actionable items related to justice and accountability. This delay is intended to eventually diffuse pressure from victims' communities and international bodies, including UN mechanisms, through



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temporary commissions of inquiry and empty assurances to member states, regional frameworks (such as the EU), and global institutions like the World Bank and IMF.

The international community must establish a clear set of actionable items with a **time-bound implementation plan** to ensure Sri Lanka demonstrates tangible results.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: Ensure Sri Lanka cooperates with the international community on accountability and justice processes (including OSLAP) and agrees to an international criminal justice mechanism.

NON-RECURRENCE: Secure a political solution featuring substantial power-sharing, official recognition of the Tamil nation, and the recognition of the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people.

REPARATIONS: Take immediate steps to resettle and repatriate Tamils who fled their traditional homeland, reconstruct the war-torn region, and bring the North-East region up to par with the rest of the island.

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Notes to Editors:

British Tamils Forum exists to harness the skills and the knowledge of the members of the forum, well-wishers and significant others including mainstream decision makers in the UK with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Tamils community in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self-determination within a democratic frame work under pinned by international law, its covenants and conventions. For more information info@britishtamilsforum.org and/or visit: www.britishtamilsforum.org