



British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

Tuesday, 24 December 2013

BTF calls on the international community to denounce Sri Lanka's “reconciliation” deception

The war in Sri Lanka came to an end in May 2009. There remain 146,679 people unaccounted for since the end of the war. Mounting evidence points to a need for an international independent investigation into the conduct of the Sri Lankan state during the war. However, calls for accountability by the international community have been met by continuing denials by the Sri Lankan state of any wrongdoing.

As the call for an international independent investigation gains momentum the Sri Lankan regime is engaged in a game of deception. As part of this, the regime has recently announced that it seeks the assistance of South Africa to set up a commission modelled on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

British Tamils Forum denounces the Sri Lankan state's attempt to deceive the international community by setting up yet another commission to deflect calls for accountability and to delay addressing the root cause of the conflict.

Sri Lanka is well known for its sham commissions and committees, which have not delivered a single meaningful outcome over the past 50 years. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be used as a cover by the authoritarian Sri Lankan regime to continue its structural genocide against the Tamil Nation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been proposed by Sri Lanka with the clear motive of saving the Sri Lankan state from the UN Human Rights Council's resolutions for an international investigation into crimes committed during the conflict.

‘Reconciliation’ and ‘peace building’ cannot be achieved while the conflict remains unresolved. Unlike South Africa, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has only become more acute since the end of the war. Although the bilateral military conflict came to an end in May 2009, the root cause of the conflict remains intact. The ethnic polarization has worsened since the end of the war. The genocidal onslaught on the Tamil nation by the Sinhala nation, followed by occupation of the Tamil homeland by the Sinhala military, has added to the polarization. Rape, murder, disappearances, enforced birth control, destruction of Tamils' schools and land grabs by the Sri Lankan state – which continue at an alarming pace – are issues that need to be addressed immediately by the international community. While these acts of genocide continue in the Tamil people's homeland there is little prospect of reconciliation.

In the international arena, there are also moves for a regime change in Sri Lanka under the pretext that this would foster peace and reconciliation. However, the Sri Lankan constitution and the founding principles of the state's structure are at the root of this conflict. A mere regime change will not foster peace and reconciliation in the island of Sri Lanka.

020 8808 0465 | media@tamilsforum.com

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The root cause of the conflict – the continuing denial of the democratic wish of the Tamil people for self-governance – needs to be addressed without further delay. Reconciliation between the Tamil and the Sinhala nations and peace on that island will materialize only when domination by the Sinhala nation over the Tamil nation ends.

Justice and accountability is vital for any long-term solution in a conflict, particularly one with ethnic and genocidal dimensions. Hence we call on the UN to reject the proposed truth and reconciliation commission and to instead set up an international tribunal to investigate all parties to the conflict in the island of Sri Lanka for war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide, without further delay.

Contact: Shan Sutha Tel: +44 (0) 7927 023 912
Email: media@tamilsforum.com

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 framework underpinned by international law, its covenants and conventions. For more information admin@tamilsforum.com and/or visit: www.tamilsforum.com