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**PRESS STATEMENT**

25 July 2015

Tamil people and all citizens of Sri Lanka need to consolidate  
the recent progressive changes in the country

Global Tamil Forum (GTF) strongly urges the Tamil people and all citizens of Sri Lanka to do their historic duty at the upcoming Parliamentary elections by carefully voting for the parties and candidates with the main objective of consolidating the progressive changes and gains made during the recent past.

The presidential election of the 8th January 2015 was a turning point in the recent political history of Sri Lanka where the voters overwhelmingly rejected the undemocratic, corrupt, intolerant and violent political culture practiced at that time. Undoubtedly that election outcome brought welcome changes that included the adoption of the progressive 19th amendment to the constitution, the expansion of the democratic space available for freedom of expression and rule of law, and the reduced fear for the minority communities from ethno-religious extremism. These changes were recognised and welcomed across the major capitals of the world, and it is the duty of all responsible Sri Lankan citizens to ensure that these tenuous beginnings are consolidated without giving any chance for their reversal.

For the Tamil people, though their day-to-day existential problems, human rights issues including the fate of the disappeared and their legitimate aspirations for political power sharing are yet to be addressed in a meaningful way, there were early signs of goodwill as reflected in actions such as - the appointment of civilian governors for the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the release of small parcels of lands to the rightful owners and the release of some prisoners detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. It is our belief that these positive developments, together with the new found political optimism and will, could be further strengthened after the August election, fortifying the hands of those who want to resolve the long standing Tamil national problem for the benefit of the entire country.

The resolution of the Tamil problem invariably will involve meaningful negotiations between the Government of Sri Lanka, the elected representatives of the Tamil people and other relevant stakeholders, and it is the expectation of the GTF that the International Community too will play a constructive role in this process. In this context, the Parliamentarians elected by the Tamil people will have multiple roles to play, and these include addressing their constituents' concerns at the electorate level and articulating and negotiating on behalf of the Tamil community as a whole – be it at the Sri Lankan Parliament, with various international governments or non-governmental organisations.

# உலகத் தமிழர் பேரவை Global Tamil Forum



The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has earned the recognition and respect of the Tamils, the representatives of other communities in Sri Lanka and the key international players including India, by carefully and consistently articulating the concerns, grievances and aspirations of the Tamil people and through their several, overwhelming election victories in the recent past. GTF works closely with TNA as the elected representatives of our people, and our partnership has been crucial in some of the diplomatic initiatives and achievements made in our adopted countries as well as at international institutions such as the UNHRC.

It is our collective view that a strong and tested representation of Tamil interests spanning across the entire Northern and Eastern provinces, together with victory for the progressive forces in the South that advocate democracy and good governance, will greatly enhance the chances of achieving a negotiated political resolution, accountability, justice and sustainable reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

**-ENDS-**

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## **Notes to Editors:**

Global Tamil Forum (GTF) was established in 2009 by a number of grass-roots Tamil groups following the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. It is the largest Tamil diaspora organisation with members drawn from five continents. GTF is absolutely committed to a non-violent agenda and it seeks a lasting peace in Sri Lanka, based on justice, reconciliation and a negotiated political settlement. For more information please contact [info@globaltamilforum.org](mailto:info@globaltamilforum.org) and/or visit: [www.globaltamilforum.org](http://www.globaltamilforum.org)