



தமிழ் இளைஞர் அமைப்பு Tamil Youth Organisation

Empowering youth to excel as leaders and architects of our nation

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20/05/2020

Dear Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP,

Re: Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day

On behalf of the Tamil Youth Organisation – United Kingdom, we are writing to you in relation to your tweet dated May 18th 2020 regarding Sri Lanka and the end of the civil war. We firstly want to thank you for having our community in your thoughts and taking your time to voice this. However, whilst 11 years have passed since the genocide, there has still been little progress made in terms of justice, and accountability for the Tamil victims in Sri Lanka. In fact, you will be aware of the United Kingdom's concern regarding Sri Lanka's withdrawal from the UN Resolution 30/1 which promotes reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka. As such, your tweet regarding UK's close relationship with the Sri Lankan government, is bittersweet to the Tamil Community.

Historically, Tamils had administered their traditional homeland in the North-East of the island, before the amalgamation by the British colonial rulers in 1833 for administrative convenience under the Colebrooke – Cameron Commission. The unitary state had been created using the territorial boundaries that the British had drawn up. Britain, as the former colonial ruler, has the moral obligation to safeguard the victims – Tamils, from the state-sponsored genocide in Sri Lanka.

Since Sri Lanka's independence, Tamils have been subject to systematic attacks orchestrated by the Sri Lankan state and the structural genocide of Tamils continue to date. There has been no justice nor a political solution for the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. Recently, the British Tamil community sought their own justice by trying Brigadier Priyanka Fernando in court for gesturing death threats to Tamil protestors outside the High Commission of Sri Lanka in the UK. Although the case was found in our favour, Brigadier Fernando fled to Sri Lanka where on our Remembrance Day of May 18th 2020, he was promoted to Major General. This is merely one example of how elusive reconciliation has been in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the government continues to praise and protect the war criminals who were key figures in orchestrating our genocide, as demonstrated by their withdrawal of the UN Resolution following the travel restrictions imposed by the United States of America on Army Chief Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva over allegations of gross violations of human rights during the final phase of the war in 2009.

The Tamil homeland comprising of the North and East of the island is militarised by Sri Lankan military personnel who continue to infiltrate, occupy and intrude the civil life. Although, the armed conflict ended over a decade ago, the successive Sri Lankan governments continue this disturbing trend of militarising and surveillance citizens without cause. "Random" stop and

searches and interrogations persist. Tamils are living in a climate of fear created by the constant watchful eyes of Sri Lanka's intelligence apparatus within key civilian departments.

Tamil peoples' acts of commemoration and remembrance in Sri Lanka on May 18th is met with harassment and disruption annually. This year, Sri Lankan soldiers were roaming around desecrating the remembrance



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lights that were lit by the people in Jaffna city. Sri Lankan military intelligence increased its presence to interfere and intrude on remembrance events. Tamil journalists were harassed at seven different checkpoints on their way to these events from Jaffna.

Tamils have witnessed the painful history of deceit by successive Sri Lankan governments over the course of our struggle for freedom for over a century. We urge, the United Kingdom, to take a principled stance based on evidence and facts to bring forth a just solution to the Tamil people.

The Tamil Youth Organisation – UK urges:

1. The United Kingdom to fulfill the promise of accountability and justice for Tamils by supporting an independent and international investigation into allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.
2. The United Kingdom to demand that all political prisoners be released immediately by the Sri Lankan state.
3. The United Kingdom to take meaningful steps to end Sri Lankan military's occupation of the Tamil homeland and demand the withdrawal of the Sri Lankan occupational military.
4. The United Kingdom to recognize: the Tamils as a Nation, the historical Tamil homeland, and the right to self-determination of the Tamils as inalienable rights of the Tamils.
5. The United Kingdom to support a referendum where Tamils in the homeland and Diaspora can vote freely on their political aspirations.

We too like all people of the world want to live an honourable life in peace and dignity in our homeland.

Sincerely,

Tamil Youth Organisation– United Kingdom

City University Tamil Society

Essex University Tamil Society

Imperial International Tamil Society

Keele Tamil Society

Kent Tamil Society

Kings College London Tamil Society

Liverpool Tamil Society

Loughborough Tamil Society

London School of Economics Tamil Society

Southampton Tamil Society

Surrey Tamil Society

University College London Tamil Society

University of Birmingham Tamil Society

University of Hertfordshire Tamil Society

