

Sri Lanka - Colombo Press Meet: UN's Zero Draft Resolution and Tamil Community Response: Wednesday (24th) - 5:00 PM

Speakers: Tamil Political Party Leaders, Victim groups, Religious Groups and Tamil Civil Society Leaders

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, February 23, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Tamil community leaders will hold a press meet to respond to the Zero Draft Resolution on Sri Lanka presented at the UN Human Rights Council by members of the Core-Group on Sri Lanka consisting of United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

Venue : Center for Society and Religion
281, Dean's Road, Maradana, Colombo 10

Date : 24/02/2021

Time : 1700 IST

Participants : Tamil National political parties leaders, Tamil victim groups, Tamil religious leaders and Tamil Civil societies

Subject : UN zero draft resolution and Tamil community response.

The Tamil community have been campaigning tirelessly to seek justice for thousands of Tamils who were killed and Tamil women who were sexually assaulted and raped by the Sri Lanka Security forces.

The Community urged Sri Lanka to be Referred to International Criminal Court (ICC) for war



Tamil Mothers of the Disappeared

crimes, crimes against humanity committed against Tamil people by the Sri Lankan State.

Tamils unitedly sent a letter to Core - Group countries urging them to refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court and held a massive rally urging the same.

** The current High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet in her Report dated 27th January 2021 urged UN Human Rights Council Member States to take steps toward the referral of the situation in Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

** Also, twenty former senior UN officials, including four former UN High commissioners of human rights, nine independent UN experts and all members of the UN Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Sri Lanka jointly issued a statement on February 18, 2021 titled "Sowing the Seeds of Conflict" have called on Sri Lanka to be Referred to International Criminal Court (ICC).

"...the fact is that Sri Lanka has made its justice institutions unavailable to its own victims. We therefore echo the High Commissioner's recommendations to work with victims and their representatives to pursue justice through universal or extraterritorial jurisdiction. Existing international avenues for accountability such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) should be considered" said the report.

SOME EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST TAMIL PEOPLE BY THE SRI LANKAN STATE:

- 1) According to the March 2011 Report of the UN Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka stated that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed during the final stages of the armed conflict and around 40,000 Tamil civilians were killed in the final six months of the war that ended in May 2009.
- 2) According to the November 2012 Report of the UN Secretary-General's Internal Review Panel on UN Action in Sri Lanka, over seventy thousand (70,000) Tamils were unaccounted for during the final six months of the war that ended in May 2009.
- 3) Several were killed when Sri Lankan forces repeatedly bombed and shelled an area designated by the Government as No Fire Zones (Safe zones). Even hospitals and food distribution centers were bombed. Several also died of starvation and bled to death due to lack of medical treatment.
- 4) International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) in February 2017 handed over details to UN of Sri Lankan Military run "Rape Camps", where Tamil women are being held as "sex slaves."
- 5) According to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report on April 2013, there are over 90,000 Tamil war widows in Sri Lanka.

6) Thousands of Tamils disappeared including babies and children. UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances stated that the second-highest number of enforced disappearance cases in the world is from Sri Lanka.

HISTORY OF FALSE PROMISES BY SUCESSIVE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT ON ACCOUNTABILITY TO INTERNATIONAL CRIMES:

1) Successive Sri Lankan Governments have failed to implement any of the UNHRC Resolutions, including the ones they voluntarily co-sponsored.

2) The previous Government not only failed to take any meaningful steps to implement the Resolution that it co-sponsored, on the contrary the President, Prime Minister and senior members of the Government have repeatedly and categorically stated that they will not implement the UNHRC Resolution.

3) The current new Government went one step further and officially withdrew from the co-sponsorship of the Resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1 and walked away from the UNHRC accountability process.

4) Furthermore, as a snub to UNHRC, only soldier who was ever punished and sentenced to death for killing civilians including children were pardoned by the current President.

5) Several senior military officials who were credibly accused of committing war crimes have been given promotions and treated as "war heroes." One officer who was named in UN reports as a suspected war criminal was promoted as a four-star General.

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