

## NEWS

# Transnational Government conducts London awareness event



**The Advisory Group of the Provisional Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (top) met with selected representatives of Tamil political organisations and media in Harrow to convey information about the organisation, its goals and its plans for polls in all countries with a Tamil Diaspora**

THE Advisory Committee for formation of the Provisional Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (PTGTE) held an awareness day in London on Sunday December 4 to meet with the Tamil media and Tamil community organisations in the UK.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the progress made by the committee in defining the organisational structure and interact with British Tamil organisations.

The London event followed two similar public events held by the organisers of the PTGTE in Oslo, Norway and Zurich, Switzerland.

The awareness day consisted of a press meet held at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel in Heathrow followed by an interactive session with the British Tamil organisations.

Advisory Committee members Professor Rev A. J. C. Chandrakanthan from Canada, Professor Nadaraja Sriskandarajah from Sweden, Ms Karen Parker from USA, Professor Peter Schalk from Sweden, Dr N Jeyalingam from USA, Dr A. L. Vasanthakumar from UK and Professor M Sornarajah from UK were in London for consultation sessions and attended the awareness event whilst the Coordinator of the Advisory Committee, Mr. Visuwanathan Rudrakumar, participated in the press meet through a video link.

The PTGTE is being formed to give voice to the Eelam Tamils who have been made voiceless, said Prof. Sriskandarajah, welcoming the guests to the event.

Since its formation, the Advisory Committee has made significant progress and are on target for presenting their proposals to Mr. Rudrakumar in the first week of January 2010, Prof. Sriskandarajah added.

Prof. Chandrakanthan introduced the committee members and said whilst the war is over the struggle continues. He further said the PTGTE is the need of the hour and is based on the principles of 1976 Vaddukoddai Resolution.

Commenting on the strength of the Diaspora community, Prof. Chandrakanthan said in 1976 there wasn't a large Tamil Diaspora community but today the Tamil Diaspora spread across the globe is one million strong.

As host countries of the Diaspora community uphold and respect democracy, we the Tamils also should follow this norm, he said.

Prof. Chandrakanthan concluded his introductory speech declaring PTGTE as an effort by the people for the people to form a secular state of Tamil Eelam.

Prof. Sornarajah in his speech said the PTGTE has precedence and cited the British East India Company as an example of a transnational organisation ruling over territory.

He also cited the Jewish, Kurd, and Palestine Diasporas as examples of communities in exile striving to establish a state from outside.

Prof. Sornarajah then provided an overview of the guiding principles of the PTGTE that the Advisory Committee is in the process of drafting.

The PTGTE will have two chambers, a Senate and an Assembly with elected members, he said.

The Assembly members from the Tamil Diaspora spread across the globe will be elected through a proportional representation system, with the country hosting the largest Diaspora Community sending the highest number of Assembly members.

The Senate will be tasked with upholding the guiding principles of the PTGTE, including those set out in the Vaddukoddai Resolution. The guiding principles he set out include: equality for all people; welfare of the Eelam Tamils, Diaspora Tamils and global Tamils; provision of health facilities for Tamils in Eelam; promotion of Tamil Eelam economy and development of industry and infrastructure through transnational organisations; forming and promoting foreign relations between Tamils and other nations to build a climate that is conducive to Tamil

Eelam; setting up a think tank to develop strategies to assist in the formation of Tamil Eelam; prosecution of war crimes; prosecution of any persons or organisations transgressing Tamil Eelam people; and empowerment and betterment of Tamil Eelam women.

Prof. Sornarajah also stated a permanent secretariat will be set up to coordinate all activities of the PTGTE.

According to Ms Karen Parker who provided overview of the PTGTE election process, elections for assembly members will be conducted nationally in all countries with a significant Tamil community presence.

A Country Working Committee will operate in each country to hold polls and coordinate all logistical process relating to the election. This would include formulating of the electoral process such as deciding between a filing fee or minimum signature for candidates; ensuring the candidates meet the required criteria; organising of electoral observers to ensure credibility and transparency; ensuring voter confidentiality; and adhering to the Advisory Committee guidelines.

Prof. Peter Schalk in his speech highlighted the plight of Tamil children in Sri Lanka's concentration camps. Describing the

detention of children in camps as a human rights issue that requires the urgent attention of the world, Prof Schalk said he has compiled a list of 1172 children with names and camps where they are detained. The list has the details of 536 girls and 636 boys of which 300 are under 5 years old and the youngest just 1 month old. He added that this list, though not listing all the children being detained, had been provided to the UN and the children will be tracked to ensure their safety and so they serve as an indicator of what is happening to all the other children still being detained.

Mr. Rudrakumar in his speech said the Tamils have faced untold suffering and unprecedented losses this year, with tens of thousands of people killed by the Sri Lankan security forces in the space of few months (30,000 according to international sources and 50,000 according to Tamil sources).

Mr. Rudrakumar further said the whereabouts of 20,000 alleged LTTE cadres who surrendered, after trusting pledges by the international community, is unknown and no international rights or relief agency has access to these people.

Whilst the Tamil military power has been weakened, the

Tamil Diaspora is strong and in the political space they will be operating they have advantage of setting their own rules, Mr. Rudrakumar said.

Mr. Rudrakumar concluded his speech urging all Tamils to strengthen the PTGTE and to continue to work together to create an independent Tamil Eelam.

This introduction was followed by the Advisory Committee taking questions from the members of the Tamil media present.

Following the press conference, all those present relocated to another venue for lunch, followed by a questions and answer session between the Advisory Committee and the members of the British Tamil organisations present.

The members of the UK Country Working Group were also introduced to the attendees. They are Prof. A. Sornarajah, Abarna Sanjeev, Dr Ahilan Saravananmuthu, Dr Arjuna Sittambalam, Kunalan Manickavasagam, Dr Louis Vasanthakumar, Dr Ratnakumari Pushparajah, Sivakumaran Ananthavel, Sivapoosam Sukumar, Thambipillai Manmatharajah, Thillaiyambalam Jeyathan, Vasuki Karunanidhi, Vijay Jeyanthan, Vijaya Ratnam and Vivekanantha Nagalingam.