

NEWS

Diaspora Tamils to support parties supporting Tamil nationhood - GTF

IN a letter addressed to Global Tamils, President of Global Tamils Forum, Rev. Fr. S.J. Emmanuel, detailed the humanitarian and political conditions of the Tamils and said the newly formed forum will support and work with Tamil political leaders and parties who on the basis of inherent right of self-determination, adhere to the fundamental aspirations of the Tamils and courageously stand up for the nationhood, homeland and autonomy of the Tamil people.

The full text of Fr. Emmanuel's letters follows:

Dear Tamil Sisters and Brothers,

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

I hope this letter finds you in the best of health. I think there is no better time for us Tamils, to reflect upon the above quotes of Henry Ford.

Whilst it gives me immense pleasure in writing to you after a successful Inaugural Conference of the Global Tamil Forum at the UK Parliament in London on 24 February 2010, I am also writing at a time of great concern for most of our brothers and sisters back in Sri Lanka.

Below, I will try and set out the views of the newly formed Global Tamil Forum regarding the present humanitarian and political situation in general and regarding the Parliamentary Elections facing the Tamils in particular.

As stated in the vision and mission formulated by the GTF in its Paris meeting by 14 country-representatives, we will mobilise the Tamil Diaspora to contribute effectively, country wise and at the international level to further the cause of humanitarian and political aspirations of the Tamils surviving in Sri Lanka.

After the brutal and treacherous killings of tens of thousands of innocent people during the final stages of the war, after detaining 300,000 Tamils including children elders and the invalid under inhuman conditions in concentration camps, without any international humanitarian assistance and behind closed doors of the media, the Sri Lankan government still continues to hide the truth of this inhumane situation from the international community, arrogantly refusing to allow international assistance to the victims.

Over one hundred thousand out of the earlier camps in Wann

are still in new camps in Vavuniya, Mannar and Jaffna without proper rehabilitation and without the basic facilities for living and with restricted movement.

Thousands of youth who surrendered are still held in jails without proper inquiry or legal representations and without any contact even with the ICRC.

The Government, though declaring the war to be over on the 19th of May 2009, and promising the international community about their efforts for rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation, it is not genuinely making such efforts but continuing its agenda of illegal colonisation of the Tamil homeland, by colonising it with Sinhala - Buddhists from the South, all under the cover of development thus destroying the ethnic and religious identity of the Tamil people.

In the midst of such a plight, comes the holding of Parliamentary elections in the country. Tamils are not at all enthusiastic about such elections. They showed it clearly at the recent Presidential elections.

This situation is worsened by two other factors. On one hand we have Tamil politicians who only aspire for power and position in the government by betraying the genuine aspirations of the Tamils. They resort to terror and corrupt practices in winning popular support.

On the other hand, to our great sorrow and disappointment we are witnessing the divisions and disintegrations among the Tamil National Alliance. This will weaken our unity to speak with one voice regarding the fundamental aspirations of the Tamils, thus enabling the oppressors and betrayers to have their way.

It is in this situation when our brothers and sisters are suffering and enduring lack of basic amenities for life, corruption and confusion regarding the genuine Tamil aspirations, we the Tamil Diaspora united as the Global Tamil Forum, expresses in the first place our compassion and solidarity to our brothers and sisters still struggling to survive on the island. As a token of our solidarity and concern, we have already started supporting the Internally Displaced People, especially orphans and widows, by providing financial assistance through credible NGOs in the Northeast. We say token, because the main responsibility of providing rehabilitation and normalization of life for the victims of war rests with the government who



Father Emmanuel (pictured with UK parliamentarians) stresses the need to support political formations that are loyal to the fundamental aspirations of the Tamils - within and without Sri Lanka

are receiving massive aid in the name of victims.

While we hunger and thirst, frightened and threatened, our brothers and sisters within the island have a vital responsibility to remain the root and basis for the true liberation of Tamils which will end all these tragedies and sufferings. Hence in casting their votes and electing members for the Parliament, we urge and

exhort them not to support pseudo political leaders who betray our Tamil cause for liberation but to support candidates or parties who are loyal to the fundamental aspirations of all the Tamils within and without Sri Lanka.

Global Tamil Forum mobilising the varied resources and aspirations of the Tamil Diaspora will support and work with Tamil political leaders and parties who

on the basis of inherent right of self-determination, adhere to the fundamental aspirations of the Tamils and courageously stand up for the nationhood, homeland and autonomy of the Tamil people.

I invite you to find more information about the Global Tamil Forum on our website www.globaltamilforum.org

Yours sincerely,
Father S J Emmanuel

TNA drops demand for Tamil statehood

TamilNet

A FEDERAL solution based on shared sovereignty and right to self-determination in a contiguous north and east of Sri Lanka was the highlight of the TNA manifesto released on Friday, March 12, leading to international media, including the BBC, Guardian and AFP, claiming that the party has dropped its demand for statehood for Tamils.

While irreversibly committing on federal solution, the manifesto is ambiguous on the nature of the sovereignty of Eelam Tamils and their right to self determination, said Tamil political circles in their immediate responses.

The party manifesto also referred to "shared sovereignty among the peoples who inhabit

this island". The term shared sovereignty is used to describe structures such as the European Union as well as federal structures with or without the right to secession.

The manifesto refrains from asserting to Tamils exercising their right to self determination to decide the national question in an internationally monitored arrangement.

Reinforcing the party's position of distancing itself from Tamil Eelam, last month TNA leader, Rajavarthayam Sampathan, told the BBC he believed most Tamils in Sri Lanka no longer believed in violence or separation, but nevertheless wanted equality.

Another TNA parliamentarian, Suresh Premachandran, told the BBC a federal solution was appropriate given the "changed global and regional situation".

Premachandran said he was inviting the government to respond by solving Tamils' problems within a united Sri Lanka.

"If the Sri Lankan state continues its present style of governance without due regard to the rights of the Tamil-speaking peoples, the TNA will launch a peaceful, non-violent campaign of civil disobedience on the Gandhian model," according to a statement released by the TNA.

The TNA also said it would lobby neighbouring India and the international community to ensure the island's Tamil community gets a greater say in the administration.

The TNA, a coalition of Tamil parties, had 22 seats in the outgoing parliament, but the various elements have split recently, with some joining other parties or launching new coalitions.