

We urge the Government not to obstruct commemoration of the dead with monuments, Authorities it is time to break silence!!!!

Remembering our dead is a common practice. It is common knowledge that prayers memorializing the deceased are held based on our religious beliefs. Memorializing is vital for psychological well being. Collective grieving also aids in the lessening the burden of grief. Grieving is also a basic human right.

Thus, a memorial event to remember all those who were killed during the final phase of the war was organized in Mullivaikkal on May 18th. This memorial gathering was organized to facilitate all those who had lost their kith and kin to grieve privately for their dead and collectively share their grief. The display of grief on that day, despite the prevailing repressive environment, reveals the pain of the Tamil people.

Remembering the dead by building memorial structures is a worldwide practice. This is by no means a new practice in Sri Lanka. Those who were killed by the tsunami have been memorialized in sacred places and in other places through permanent memorials. The efforts to memorialize those who were killed in the last phase of the war, through rocks carved with their names, in the vicinity St. Paul's Church, Mullivaikkal East, was prohibited by the Mullaitivu Magistrate via a court order. Fr. Rajendram Elilrajan who was in the forefront of this memorialization effort has been subjected to various investigations. The Police argued in the Mullaitivu court that this memorial **may** hamper national security, national unity and peace **in the future**. The efforts of the State in obtaining this ban calls into question of sincerity, good conscience and the will of this government in facilitating reconciliation and transitional justice as loudly proclaimed.

The securitizing of this memorial gathering and the carved rocks shows us once more that normal life may never return to the North and East. Thus, the proclamations that civilian

administration has returned to this part of the country remains a myth. The Vadamradchchy Christian Union vehemently condemns the ban on the memorialization gathering and the use of the carved rocks. We stand in solidarity with Rev. Fr. R. Elilrajan who rightfully attempted to facilitate memorialization. We insist that the government reverses its stance on obstructing reconciliation and building of trust. We also reiterate that all the responsible stakeholders tip toeing around this issue must act decisively to ensure that all those affected continue to live and work with basic right and dignity.

Vadamradchchy Christian Union
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