



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PEARL Stands with Victims' Families in Sri Lanka on International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances**

Since the end of the war in 2009, thousands of Tamils have not been heard from after surrendering to the Sri Lankan government alive.

Washington D.C. – People for Equality and Relief in Lanka (PEARL) released a statement in solidarity with the Tamil families of victims of enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka from the 1980s and during the entirety of the country's armed conflict. There are an estimated 60,000-100,00 disappearances in that time.

This year, to mark the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances, families of the disappeared organized large protests in the towns of Jaffna and Batticaloa. Their protest happens despite an increasing clampdown on dissent by the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist government. They have also released a set of demands including: the release of any information on all currently detained political prisoners, information on all those who were kidnapped and/or kept in refugee camps before and after the war, and the immediate release of any prisoner currently being detained.

"For too long, the plight of the families of the disappeared has been used as a talking point and a prop for politicians and the international community, but no concrete measures have been taken," said PEARL's Executive Director Tasha Manoranjan. "The international community contributed to the destruction of Tamil lives and Tamil aspirations in 2009 – it is now time for the same international community to meet the demands of the families of the disappeared."

The families of these victims began their protest in Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka more than 1200 days ago in 2017 and have held constant vigil since, demanding answers from the government, the United Nations, and the international community. At least 73 family members have died in pursuit of the truth. For PEARL's full statement, please contact [bjeyasundaram@pearlaction.org](mailto:bjeyasundaram@pearlaction.org).

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PEARL is 501(c)(3) non-profit organization led by Tamil human rights activists concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka. PEARL influences foreign policy through legal and political advocacy, and direct research and reporting. PEARL is committed to achieving justice and accountability for wartime atrocities, and self-determination for the Tamil people on the island of Sri Lanka.