



# பிரத்தானிய சைவத் திருக்கோயில்கள் ஒன்றியம் THE FEDERATION OF SAIVA (HINDU) TEMPLES U.K

200A Archway Road, London N6 5BA, Tel : 020 8348 9835 | Fax : 020 8482 6508  
web : [www.saivafederation.uk.org](http://www.saivafederation.uk.org) | Email : [admin@saivafederation.uk.org](mailto:admin@saivafederation.uk.org)  
Correspondence : 2-4 Bedford Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4PX  
Tel : 0208 527 3819

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**SRI SITHI VINAYAGAR THEVASTHANAM**  
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PORT TALBOT SA126HZ

January 27, 2021

## Press release

### Tamils must unite to fight against the dictatorial government bent on seizing Hindu Temples to build Buddhist Viharas

The Sri Lankan government has declared a religious war against Tamil Hindus who are victims of Thirty Years-long Civil War. Under the cloak of identifying Buddhist archaeological importance, the Department of Archeology has laid siege to historical Hindu temples and build Viharas in their places. The state machinery is being fully galvanized for this unholy purpose.

Last week, at the Kurundurmala Adi Iyanar Temple in the Mullaitivu district, a Trident was pulled out to install a statue of Buddha. Thereafter, a Buddhist ceremony was held by monks in the presence of State Minister Vitdura Wickramanayaka.

Earlier the area was cleared by the army and decorated with hundreds of Buddhist and Army flags. Hundreds of soldiers were seen participating in the ceremony.

This act has caused acute pain and consternation among the Hindu Tamils. Tamil leaders have strongly condemned this act as a blatant attempt to Buddhize the traditional habitat of the Tamils.

It may be recalled that President Gotabaya appointed a pan- Sinhala Buddhist Presidential Task Force in June 2020 under the chairmanship of Secretary to the Ministry of Defense Major General (Retired) Kamal Gunaratne. This Task Force has been mandated to –

1. Identify sites of archaeological importance in the Eastern Province,
2. Identify and implement an appropriate program for the management of archaeological heritage by conserving and restoring such identified sites and antiquities,



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3. Identify the extent of land that should be allocated for such archaeological sites and take necessary measures to allocate them properly and legally, and

4. Preserve the cultural value of sites of archaeological importance and promote the uniqueness of Sri Lanka, both locally and internationally, and make recommendations for the promotion of such heritages.

This buddhistization under the cloak of identifying Archaeological sites (read Buddhist sites) follows the Sinhalization of the North-East since independence in 1948. Because of state-aided colonization of Tamils' traditional habitat they have been reduced to a minority in Trincomalee (32.29%) and Amparai (17.1%) Districts.

Even recently under the Weli Oya (Manal Aru) scheme, a new Divisional Secretariat has been created in the Mullaitivu District. This Divisional Secretariat consists of 18 villages comprising 3,336 families (11,189 persons). The then President Mahinda Rajapaksa personally handed over the land-permits to the Sinhalese settlers in 2015.

Since the end of the 30 years civil war a large number of Buddhist viharas, statues of Buddha and War Memorials have sprouted in the North thanks to the Sri Lankan armed forces.

Various institutions of the Government of Sri Lanka make use of Acts of Parliament most of them enacted before the enactment of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution to undermine the powers conferred on the Provincial Councils on land. The relevant Acts are:

- (1) Mahaweli Authority Act No. 23 of 1979 (as amended)
- (2) Urban Development Law No. 41 of 1978 (as amended) and Town and Country Planning Ordinance No.13 of 1946 amended by Amendment Act No. 49 of 2000
- (3) Sri Lanka Ports Authority Act No. 51 of 1979
- (4) Tourism Act No. 38 of 2005 which retains sections of the Tourism Development Act No. 14 of 1968
- (5) Antiquities Act No. 24 of 1998 together with the Archeological Sites of National Importance Act No. 16 of 1900





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In the past as well as at present successive governments have liberally used the Mahaweli Authority Act No. 23 of 1979 (as amended) and the Antiquities Act No. 24 of 1998 together with the Archeological Sites of National Importance Act No. 16 of 1900 liberally to both Sinhalize and Buddhistize the North-East.

Obviously, the state is using the Archeological Sites of National Importance Act to dislodge or forcibly shut-down Hindu temples under the guise that they occupy Buddhist sites. The above Kurunthur Iyanar temple is a typical example.

In close proximity at Kumulamunai is another temple called Vedukkunari Adi Lingeswarar temple. The Department of Archeology with the support of the Army has commenced excavations claiming that there is a ruined Kurundaseva Buddhist temple buried under.

The excavations were initiated by Minister Vidura Wickremanayaka, Minister of State for National Heritage, Archeology and Rural Sculpture Development. He was accompanied by the Sri Lankan Army, Prof. Anura Manatunga, Director General of the Department of Archeology and Jagath Ratnayake, Commander of the Mullaitivu Defense Forces, Secretary to the Ministry of Archeology. At this time a Buddha statue was brought to the Kurundarmalai for worship before excavation work was commenced. Another Archaeological excavation for another shrine at Padalaikallu near Thannimurippu Pond started recently.

In the east, the appointment of the Archeological Heritage Management Task Force has energized Sinhala nationalists and they are on spree to hurriedly fence archaeological sites and livelihood zones.

The Task Force has identified thousands of hectares of land as Buddhist heritage remains in Thiriyai, Kutchaveli, Kumpuruppiddy and Thennamaravadi and taken over. The lands have been vested in 7 Buddhist organization for Buddhist worship for 30 years according to a gazette notification. Tamil Hindus have gone to the courts to stop the seizure of their lands that include farms and homes.



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The Ven. Ellawala Medhananda Thero, a member of the Archeological Heritage Management Task Force, stated that the team has examined and identified 2,000 sites as Buddhist heritage. This poses an ominous threat not only to Hindu places of worship but also to lands belonging to Hindu Tamils. In short, many historical Hindu temples are under siege by the different agencies of the government and has declared virtual 'holy war' against Hindus and their places of worship.

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United and concerted action by Hindus all over the world is urgently needed to halt the large-scale buddhistization and colonization of lands belonging to Hindu Tamils.

**Mr. M. Gopalakrishnan**

**The Federation of Saiva (Hindu) Temples U.K.**