



Tamils' right to remember and mourn denied again

Tamil Diaspora organizations condemn the removal of the Mullivaikaal Monument in the University of Jaffna on 8 Jan 2021

Geneva, January 10, 2021: A monument that was erected at the University of Jaffna in the north of Sri Lanka to commemorate the tens of thousands of Tamils, including several university students, massacred by the Sri Lankan state at #Mullivaikaal in the North-East of Sri Lanka in 2009 was demolished by the Sri Lankan authorities under the protection of the security forces on the night of 8 Jan 2021. Protests by the university students, politicians and the public who gathered in vast numbers have been ignored by the forces. The Mayor of Jaffna municipality who was among the protesters was visibly berated by one police officer as reported in the media.

We stand in solidarity with the peaceful protesters and vehemently condemn this unwarranted act sowing the seeds of ethnic disharmony. We also recall this government's refusal to allow the Tamil people to remember their dead during the National Heroes' week in November 2020.

The authorities maintain that this action was taken on the instructions of the Sri Lankan Government headed by Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Jaffna University's former Head of Law, Dr K. Guruparan has expressed concern over these developments explaining that the previous Vice Chancellor (VC) was fired from his position for his refusal to destroy the monument. He has tweeted: "The previous VC was sacked because he didn't demolish the monument. I have concrete reasons to believe that one of the pre-conditions for appointment of the new VC by the incumbent President was demolition of this monument."

On Twitter, *Gary Anandasangaree*, MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park, Canada, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, has responded:

"Tearing down memorial commemorating tens of thousands of Tamils killed in [#Mullivaikkal](#) is a

despicable act by the [#SriLankan](#) govt. Justice & accountability must prevail to stop this vicious cycle of erasure & annihilation of Tamil identities experiences & history on the island.”

We fear that this is an attempt by the Sri Lankan ethnocentric state to undermine the University of Jaffna as a cradle of Tamil history, heritage, culture, higher education, and political awareness. Timing of this dastardly act also raises the question whether this is a rebuff to the Indian Foreign Minister’s assertion made during his recent visit to Sri Lanka that Sri Lanka should negotiate with the Tamil people a political solution that meets their legitimate aspirations.

This was the latest example of turning the clock back on reconciliation was so characteristic of the heavily militarised Sri Lankan State governed by people implicated in atrocity crimes. We call upon the governments of the civilized world and the United Nations including the Human Rights Council to unreservedly condemn this act of the Sri Lanka government. For the international community, this demolition incident should act as the cue to seize the urgency and bring justice to the victim community in Sri Lanka, during the March 2021 deliberations of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Contact details follows:

Mr. M. Manokaran
Chairman - Australian Tamil Congress
T: +61 300 660 629
Email: Mano_manics@hotmail.com
Website: www.australiantamilcongress.com/en/
Twitter: @austamilcongres

Mr. V. Ravi Kumar
General Secretary - British Tamils Forum
T: +44 (0) 7814 486087
Email: news@britishtamilsforum.org
Website: www.britishtamilsforum.org
Twitter: @tamilsforum

K. Sutharsan
Irish Tamils Forum (ITF)
T: 00353 899592707
irishtamilsforum@gmail.com

Pragas Padayachee
Solidarity Group for Peace and Justice in Sri Lanka (**SGPJ**- South Africa)
pregasenp@telkomsa.net

Mr. S. Seetharam
President - United States Tamil Action Group (USTAG)
(formerly USTPAC)
T: +1(202) 595 3123
Email: Seetha73@hotmail.com
Website: www.ustpac.org
Twitter: [@UstpacAdvocacy](https://twitter.com/UstpacAdvocacy)