

## Motion by Tooting CLP - Tamil Suppression in Sri Lanka

There are around 200,000 Tamils in the UK with its biggest population living in South London, Tooting and Mitcham. Most Tamils living in Tooting came as Refugees fleeing prosecution from the Sri Lankan government.

The Tamil community in the UK have always made significant contributions from serving in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War to Tamil scientist working on the Astra Zeneca Vaccine.

Around 15,000 Tamils work for NHS England, 1000s of Tamils serving in education and over a hundred adult social care facilities are operated by Tamils.

The Tamil community continues to contribute to society in the UK whilst their families in Sri Lanka continue to face persecution by the government and suppression of their language and culture.

The UK is the leader of the core group on Sri Lanka at the United Nations Human Rights Council. Contrary to its leadership commitments at the Human Rights Council the UK government continues to prioritise unethical trade with Sri Lanka and in talks of training Sri Lankan Police in Scotland.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights; Michelle Bachelet, reported last year; President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had put at least 28 serving or retired military and intelligence figures in key administrative posts, including some "implicated in United Nations reports on alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity during the final years of the conflict".

"States can consider targeted sanctions, such as asset freezes and travel bans against credibly alleged perpetrators of grave human rights violations and abuses," she said in a report to the U.N. Human Rights Council ahead of a February session.

The UN report goes on to state: "..... deteriorating situation of human rights in Sri Lanka, including: the accelerating militarization of civilian government functions; the erosion of the independence of the judiciary and key institutions responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights;

ongoing impunity and political obstruction of accountability for crimes and human rights violations in "emblematic cases";

policies that adversely affect the right to freedom of religion or belief;

increased marginalization of persons belonging to the Tamil and Muslim communities; surveillance and intimidation of civil society;

restrictions on media freedom, and shrinking democratic space;

restrictions on the public memorialization of victims of war, including the destruction of a memorial; arbitrary detentions;

alleged torture and other cruel, inhuman degrading treatment or punishment, and sexual and gender-based violence;

and that these trends threaten to reverse the limited but important gains made in recent years, and risk the recurrence of policies and practices that gave rise to the grave violations of the past”

John Fisher of Human Rights Watch said the report “lays bare Sri Lanka’s record of complete impunity for appalling crimes under international law, and the very alarming developments under the current government”.

Since 1948 till present day Tamils have been subject to pogroms, murder, torture, rape and discrimination.

The UN report states an estimated 40,000 Tamils were killed in the last few months of the war alone in 2009.

Sri Lankan government's biggest Mass Murder, killing of Tamils in Mullivaikkal by bombing, shelling thousands of innocent Tamils in No Fire Zones.

Since then, it has moved onto the attempted eradication of culture, identity, language, religion and further advancing Land Grab.

Sri Lanka is now being supported by China to carry out its agenda to make Sri Lanka a mono-ethnic, mono-linguistic, and mono-religious country.

**Therefore, Tooting CLP calls on the Labour Party to urge the UK Government to take action against the Sri Lankan Government, in support of the Tamils including Muslims in Sri Lanka.**

- **Uphold and action the UN High Commissioners Resolution of March 2021 (A/HRC/RES/46/1)**
- **Sanction Sri Lankan perpetrators of Human Rights violations and War Crimes under the UK Global Human Rights Act,**
- **Impose asset freezes and travel bans on the Sri Lankan perpetrators,**
- **Prosecute suspects in UK courts under universal jurisdiction and International Criminal Court.**
- **Stop unethical Trade with Sri Lanka, such as arms, military hardware, training or facilities and any Sri Lankan government support.**

**Tooting CLP calls on the Labour Party and Labour MPs to support and sign the Early Days Motions at the UK Parliament on Tamil Heritage Month (tabled on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022).**

*Proposed by Sarmila Varatharaj. Seconded by Paul White.*