



All-Party Parliamentary Group for  
**Tamils**

3 February 2023

**Statement from the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils on the  
boycott of the 75<sup>th</sup> Sri Lankan Independence Day**

*The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Tamils expresses solidarity with the Tamil people of North East Sri Lanka and Tamil elected representatives and political parties who are boycotting the 75th Sri Lankan Independence Day celebrations in protest of: 1) the continued militarisation of the North East, 2) lack of justice and accountability for war crimes, atrocities and genocide, and, 3) failure to achieve a political solution acceptable to the Tamil people.*

*We also express our concern for the protestors who are experiencing increased violence and intimidation from the Sri Lankan government.*

*This year's celebrations come during a time of extreme economic and political instability. Despite citizens still not being able to afford food, fuel or medicine, the Sri Lankan government has chosen to spend Rs. 200 million for the Independence Day celebrations. Even as the state structure of Sri Lanka remains unable to provide for the basic needs of its citizens, it continues to oppress the Tamils in the North East, who are still dealing with enforced disappearances, land grabs, and other human rights issues disproportionately affecting them.*

*Whilst a military parade takes place during the celebrations, elsewhere in the North East, the economic impact of the crises continues to worsen by ongoing militarisation of Tamil areas of the island. The Sri Lankan army remains nearly double the size of that of the United Kingdom and permeates into civilian life, as the military continue to survey, harass and intimidate Tamil people, whilst also excluding Tamils from the economy, continuing land grabs and destroying Tamil places of worship. Amidst this, the Tamil mothers of the disappeared continue to protest to find out about the whereabouts of their loved ones.*

*For 75 years, successive Sri Lankan governments have prioritised pandering to Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism over rational and equitable governance and policy making, perpetually plunging the island into instability, economic hardship and ethnic conflict.*



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*Sri Lanka has seen the loss of tens of thousands of Tamil lives in its 75 year history and the root cause of this loss remains unaddressed. It is clear that the state structure needs to be changed to enable rational governance and put the island on a peaceful path to stability and prosperity. I urge our government and international partners to ensure an international accountability mechanism for the mass atrocities and genocide that occurred.*

*The APPG for Tamils welcomes the recent meeting of the United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs with leaders of Tamil and Muslim political party leaders, ahead of Sri Lanka's Independence Day, to discuss a political solution to the conflict.*

*The APPG for Tamils calls on the international community to ensure that Sri Lanka finds a long term, sustainable political solution that is acceptable to the Tamil people - an inalienable right that is enshrined to them in article 1 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a covenant that Sri Lanka itself is a party to.*

*The APPG for Tamils urges the British government to ensure that our bi-lateral relations with Sri Lanka are tied to Sri Lanka's delivery on the aforementioned.*