

The English Version of the proclamation made in Batticaloa and Kilinochchi at the end of the 'Black Day' marches in the North-East undertaken at the behest of the students of the University of Jaffna and Eastern University, declaring the 76th Independence Day of Sri Lanka as a 'Black Day' for the Tamil homeland.

2024.02.04

Batticaloa/Kilinochchi.

## **INDEPENDENCE DAY FOR WE THE TAMILS WILL BE THE DAY OUR HOMELAND IS LIBERATED!**

We, the University Students, civil society organisations and the Tamil people in the North-East, having declared the Sri Lankan Independence Day as a 'Black Day' for Tamils, are mobilised here on this fourth (04) day of February 2024.

We, the Tamils of Eelam, declare once again to the world that we are a nation with a traditional homeland and are entitled to nationhood and the right of self-determination. We are assembled in Batticaloa and Kilinochchi on this day, having realised the need to reiterate once more our unanimous desire to seek an acceptable permanent political solution to the national issue of the Eelam Tamils, whose aspirations have throughout history been asserted collectively through the Vaddukkoddai Resolutions, Thimpu Principles and Ponghu Tamil Declaration.

The Sinhala nation should first accept the historical truth that Sri Lanka is an island with two distinct nations – the Tamil and the Sinhalese – that had, for administrative purposes, been brought under a single administration by the British colonial rulers. The transfer of power to the Sinhala nation based on its numerical superiority and in utter disregard to the historical realities has paved the way to the persistent oppression of the Tamil nation, and the Sri Lankan State is bent on crushing through military might the struggles and protests of the Tamil nation and the voices for its rights.

Worth noting are the facts that the Tamil nation had in 1977 expressed its yearning for freedom through the Vaddukkoddai Resolution that sought to establish a Tamil nation-state based on the right of self-determination, that the concepts of Tamil homeland, nationhood and its right to self-determination were approbated during the Thimpu Talks in 1985 and that it was the lack of progress in political solutions that planted the seeds for the emergence of armed struggle of the Tamils.

Must be acknowledged is the destruction - through the genocide that has been committed against the Tamils by and with the support of the successive Sinhala governments of more than 75 years, including the atrocious genocidal campaign of 2009, past and ongoing mass murders and exterminations, land expropriation, rape and destruction of cultural and

economic structures - of structures that buttresses the Tamil people's entitlement to nationhood.

We emphasise that any attempts at solutions for the Tamil nation should be grounded on Thimpu Principles, reject any and all attempts that seek to curtail the Tamil nation's aspiration within the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the unitary constitution of Sri Lanka, and underline that the recognition of the Tamil nation's inalienable right to self-determination is the only political solution to the Tamil national question that would guarantee the non-recurrence of the aforementioned atrocities and oppression.

It is in this context that we call for solutions to the following contemporary and fundamental issues plaguing the Tamil nation:

1. The right to freedom of thought and expression, the right to seek our disappeared relatives, the right to enjoy our own resources and the right to seek justice have been denied by the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Online Safety Act and other proposed pieces of legislation. These legislations, therefore, must be repealed.
2. Land expropriation in the guise of and through the Department of Archaeology, Department of Wildlife Conservation and Mahawali Development Authority must be terminated immediately, and actions must be taken to release, to the rightful owners, the land hitherto expropriated.
3. All Sinhala settlements erected with the plan to sever and disrupt the somatic contiguity of the Tamil homeland must be dismantled.
4. All the remaining Tamil political prisoners must be released unconditionally.
5. International investigation into the enforced disappearance must be carried out, justice must be dispensed, and those that committed the crime of enforced disappearance must be prosecuted and punished.
6. The circulation and distribution, with the assistance of Sri Lankan security forces, of narcotic drugs aimed at hindering the collective thinking of the Tamil youths in the North-East and crippling them psychologically have to be brought to an immediate end.
7. The ability of the University of Jaffna, of Vavuniya and the Eastern University, which are the regional and cultural universities of the Tamil nation, to centre their function on their regional political, social, economic and cultural facets ought to be guaranteed, and the educational and extra-curricular opportunities for the Tamil students must be ensured.

8. Intimidations against and arrests of journalists that try to bring to light the human rights violations and students and activists undertaking protests against the oppression of the Tamils must cease immediately.
9. Crackdown and prohibition against the memorialisation events organised by the Tamils must be brought to an end, and the right to memorialisation must be guaranteed.
10. Individual perpetrators of the genocide against the Tamil nation must be prosecuted before the International Criminal Court through a Security Council of the United Nations referral or before an ad hoc tribunal that the United Nations establishes. The Sri Lankan state must be made accountable under state responsibility for the continuing genocide in front of the International Court of Justice, and redress should be provided to the victims.
11. The Sri Lankan military, which has committed genocide against and seized the land of the Tamil nation and continues to commit human rights violations and support illegal actions, must be withdrawn and removed from the Tamil homeland, and its intrusion into civilian activities must cease completely.

Firm is our stance that any political solution - which is capable of guaranteeing sustained peace in Sri Lanka - for the Tamil nation canvassed on the basis of its traditional homeland, nationhood and the right of self-determination must be reached only with a mandate of the Tamil nation expressed through a plebiscite organised and overseen by the international community. On behalf of the Tamil nation, we declare to the world that such a plebiscite must give the Tamil nation a permanent solution wherein it can determine its own future and govern itself.

**THANK YOU**