



Tamil diaspora organizations collectively observed Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day Mullivaikkaal May 18 18:18

Tamil diaspora organisations came together to collectively observe the Tamil genocide and Mullivaikkaal Remembrance Day on May 18th 2021. The following global Tamil organisations took part in it:

- Australian Tamil Congress (**ATC**),
- British Tamils Forum (**BTF**),
- Maison du Tamil Eelam France (**MTE**)
- Irish Tamils Forum (**ITF**),
- National Council of Canadian Tamils (**NCCT**),
- Norwegian Council of Eelam Tamils (**NCET**),
- Solidarity Group for Peace and Justice (**SGPJ** - South Africa)
- United States Tamil Action Group (**USTAG**)

This joint effort signifies greater unity among global Tamils coordinating events and initiatives.

May 18th marks a defining moment in the history of the Tamil freedom struggle. Post-Mullivaikkaal struggle for justice shifted to the international arena, involving not only diaspora Tamils, but many international players, including governments and non-government organisations.

After 2009, from suffocating military occupation, intimidation, and surveillance to imposing legal bans on diaspora Tamils and organizations by denying rights to social activities, including mourning and memorialising of the dead, the Sri Lankan State's stranglehold on the Tamil people has intensified.

The conduct of the successive Sri Lankan governments in the last 12 years has dashed all hopes for Tamils ever finding a solution to the ethnic issue domestically within Sri Lanka. Hopes of having their lost rights restored are pinned mostly on the International community.

The recent increase in interest among Tamil youth and their participation in advocacy related activities are a welcome and positive sign, inspiring more to join. We welcome their involvement in all aspects of the struggle.

In the Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day event, the "Mullivaikkaal congee" was prepared and served widely. Amid the state-imposed hunger and widespread starvation, this rice porridge sustained the lives of tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who perished in the shelling and aerial bombardments, and the near 300,000 survivors of Mullivaikkaal Genocide.

In observing the Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day event, lamps were lit at exactly 18 hours, 18 minutes (May 18 at 18:18) by the Tamil people worldwide, signifying paying homage to the victims of the Tamil-struggle for freedom and amplifying global Tamil unity in demanding justice for the genocide.

Please find some quotes from the Parliamentarians, dignitaries and Tamil Diaspora representatives.

Australia

Hugh McDermott, State Member for Prospect, NSW

“The Tamil community deserves justice. I have called on the Premier of NSW and the NSW Opposition leader to lead the campaign and move a bipartisan motion to recognise the Tamil Genocide. It is not a matter of if we will recognise the genocide, but a matter of when. There is unrefuted evidence that a genocide was perpetrated against the Tamil population. It is time for Australia to follow the leads of other parliaments around the world and recognise this appalling acts of genocide. I also call on the Commonwealth of Governments to set an example to the international community by leading the push to recognise the Tamil genocide and supporting the movement to refer the perpetrators of genocide as identified by the UNHRC to the International Criminal Court.”

Julie Owens, Federal Member for Parramatta, NSW

“This is a day of sadness, a pain for the many Tamil refugees and asylum seekers who have found homes in Parramatta since 2009, and others in our Tamil community who lost loved ones in Sri Lanka’s civil war. I hope the March 2021 UNHRC resolution will help people who are still waiting for answers and help people in my community heal. My thoughts are with you on Mullivaikkaal Day.”

Anthony D’Adam, Member of the NSDW Legislative Council

“On 18 May Tamil people around the world will observe Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day. The day marks the final days of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009, when government forces escalated their tactics to include deliberate acts of genocide against Tamil civilians in the north-east of the country. The Sri Lankan Government is yet to acknowledge its participation in those acts. The Australian Government should be giving serious consideration to the suggestion from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that member states apply targeted sanctions such as asset freezes and travel bans against state officials and other actors credibly alleged to have committed or be responsible for grave human rights violations or abuses.”

Canada

Prof. Sri Ranjan, Chairperson – National Council of Canadian Tamils

“Canada is home to the largest diaspora of Eelam Tamils outside of our homeland. ...Recently, the Ontario Provincial Parliament in Canada unanimously passed Bill 104 proclaiming the week from May 11 to 18 as the “Tamil Genocide Education Week.” This provides a space and an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Tamils to share their memories with others.These proclamations add strength to our call to recognize the ongoing Tamil genocide.”

Gary Anandasangaree, the member of the Canadian House of Commons, said that as a country Canada will continue to work with core group partners and others including the British Tamils Forum

who have steadfastly worked for the last 12 years towards obtaining and advancing accountability. He also reiterated the need for Sri Lanka to have an accountability process that has the trust of Tamils and also to go towards the path that assures justice, accountability, peace and self-determination for Tamils.

France

Thiruchothy, Maison du Tamil Eelam France (MTE)

Ever since Sri Lanka gained independence Tamils were targeted in many ways. They were victimised by the state. This can be described as ethnic cleansing, crimes against a people, can be also taken as crime against humanity, that's why we say it as Genocide.

Ireland

Revichandran Velayudan – Secretary, res Irish Tamils Forum (ITF)

Sri Lankan government have systematically eradicated the Tamil speaking community. Now, they have destroyed our memorial statue. Sri Lankan government is now directing their attack against the Tamil diaspora; those of us living outside the island need to work together to obtain our own land and right to self-determination.

Paul Murphy is an Irish Solidarity–People Before Profit Politician Member of the European Parliament for the Dublin constituency from 2011 to 2014.

When I was a member of the European Parliament with having the opportunity to campaign on the issue of the repression and oppression of the Tamil speaking people. I want to extend my full solidarity and just to say that ultimately your struggle for the right to self-determination for Democratic rights for an end to the horrific oppression which continues in the North of Sri Lanka will be successful.

UK

Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary & Director, Hindu Council UK (HCUK)

The events of the final weeks of the Sri Lankan civil war were among the most bloody and barbaric. We have a responsibility to honour the memory of the deceased and the disappeared and to continue our quest for truth, accountability, and reconciliation. Even now, 11 years on, we still have to get justice for the people who remain so that they can rebuild their lives, rebuild their future in Sri Lanka and elsewhere around the world. It's very difficult to hear the stories of the survivors of Mullivaikkaal, but we really do need to listen to them and redouble our efforts to get that justice. We call on the UK government and the UN to guarantee a full international inquiry, action to support the human rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka and justice for all the families and communities of the Tamil diaspora. Today we stand in remembrance and solidarity and urge Sri Lankan Government to provide full support to Tamil people seeking justice and put immediate stop to all encroachment of their religious and heritage sites and marginalisation of them in the North East of Sri Lanka.

Ravi Kumar, the General Secretary of the British Tamils Forum (BTF) - UK underlined the importance of putting up a united front to present Tamils as a unified force to be reckoned with at the international level. In a changing geopolitical dynamic, Tamils need to make moves towards finding justice for genocide by devising strategies and winning alliances, by sharing and coordinating ideas as well as tasks, and also by finding unity in diversity of opinions and organisations.

Melissa Dring, the campaign director at Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice Ltd (SLCPJ) said that Tamil communities in Sri Lanka fighting for their right to remember are facing increased threats, intimidation and harassment by Sri Lankan state. The SLCPJ stands with them and will not rest until there is peace and justice.

Wes Streeting MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Child Poverty - assured his commitment to continue the campaign for justice to make sure that those who are responsible for perpetrating human rights abuses and unspeakable acts of barbarism are brought to justice.

Rt Hon Stephen Timms, Member of Parliament for East Ham

US has rightly designated the army commander who led the ground assault on the beaches of Mullivaikkaal at the end of the civil war attacking civilians, hospital staff and no fire zones. The UK government needs now to respond with much firmer action than we've seen so far and I hope do so well before the next time we all commemorate Mullivaikkaal.

Stephen Kinnock MP, Shadow Minister (Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs)

The suggested evidence gathering mechanism is a step in the right direction, but it stops way short of recommending the establishment of a fully-fledged international independent investigative mechanism and we are urging the United Kingdom government to give more support to that and there's nothing in the resolution of course about prevention and particularly protecting human rights defenders in Sri Lanka and in the northern regions. We will keep urging the British government to keep the pressure on the Sri Lankan government and in addition to what's happening in terms of the multilateral institutions in the United Nations is actually a lot that the British government can do in terms of bilateral and unilateral actions, for example we have the Magnitsky sanctions, this is a British system of global human rights sanctions I wrote to the minister on the 11th of December saying that a number of Sri Lankan officials and senior military personnel should be sanctioned under the global human rights regime. UK government has favourable tariff arrangements with Sri Lanka that existed when the United Kingdom was part of the European Union. The so called GSP plus needs to be rethought. We stand shoulder to shoulder with you in solidarity in seeking truth, justice, and accountability on this very sad day.

Elliot Colburn MP, Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils (APPG T)

We have managed to secure new UN resolution which does go further than the old one does open up the opportunity for new evidence gathering. But we do need to see more action, the one we have been calling for targeted sanctions against Sri Lankan officials. We also must leave no options off the table including the potential for an ICC referral as well. The assurance I can give you all as we gather today and remember those who were lost is that the all-party group will continue to work across the house bringing together politicians to ensure for Tamils in Sri Lanka to this day will not drop off the UK government's radar. It must continue to be a Foreign Office priority of this country and the allies around the world.

Rt Hon Teresa Villiers MP (former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland)

As the UN High Commissioner for human rights only relatively recently concluded, the human rights situation is actually deteriorating for Tamils with increased involvement of the military in civilian life, the abandonment of commitments under UNHRC resolutions, the reduced space for media freedom and Democratic expression. I think that is a great shame deeply worrying after there was a time to think when it looked as if there was a hope for a better future. We've certainly seen a reversal in that and so I very much hope that this fresh resolution recently agreed in Geneva will help turn the tide and take us closer to justice for the Tamil people as we remember the tragic events that occurred in Mullivaikkaal in 2009.

Sam Tarry, Member of Parliament for Ilford South

As the MP for Ilford South I'll be working incredibly hard to ensure that you have justice, self-determination and that all of the religions and peoples that exist on the island of Sri Lanka are able to do so for shared future free from repression, free from human rights abuses and free to have self-determination within that island. Democracy, after all, is the key to freedom and it is real democracy that the Tamil people seek.

Margaret Ferrier, Member of Parliament for Rutherglen and Hamilton West

On this Mullivaikkaal Genocide Remembrance Day, I, alongside the Tamil community in the UK, remember Tamil victims of state and communal violence in Sri Lanka, and pay my respects to all who have fought and continue to peacefully fight for justice and respect for the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, and call on the UK Government to do everything in its power to ensure that such injustices as the Tamil people have faced come to an end.

Feryal Clark, Member of Parliament for Enfield North

I was pleased to see the support shown for the Tamil community by MPs from across the political divide during March debate on Sri Lanka. I continue to support calls for the UK Government to provide a full assessment of the recent financial support provided to Sri Lanka, and to implement Magnitsky sanctions against those members of the Sri Lankan government who are known to have been complicit in human rights abuses. Together with colleagues, I will continue to do everything I can to push for the UK to put human rights at the front and centre of our foreign policy approach towards, and relationship with, Sri Lanka, to ensure that an atrocity like the Mullivaikkaal Genocide is never repeated.

Stella Creasy, Member of Parliament for Walthamstow

The recent UNHRC Resolution constitutes a step towards the international community taking responsibility for its role in making change in Sri Lanka. Yet there is no recommendation to pursue criminal accountability by referral to the International Criminal Court. The UK Government should use its influence to ensure that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should continue to monitor and report on human rights in Sri Lanka, providing recommendations to ensure justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators. As your MP I will continue to work with colleagues across parliament to call for the UK Government to use its influence to advocate for human rights in Sri Lanka and for those who have abused them to be held to account.

Rt Hon Robert Halfon, Member of Parliament for Harlow

We must remember the genocide that the Tamils have struggled, have suffered so much that genocide has to be recognised internationally. We need to make sure that those who perpetrated that genocide are brought to justice and that the international court mechanisms work in the way that they are supposed to be. Tamils deserve human rights, they deserve autonomy for the nation, they deserve that the perpetrators of the genocide are brought to justice.

Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

When I was trade minister, I prevented Sri Lankan government GSP plus being given back to Sri Lankan government and I was appalled when the Conservative government work with other EU governments to give Sri Lankan government GSP plus. They do not deserve these trade preferences. They should be taken away. Liberal Democrats are internationalist we work with our European partners, our global partners champion human rights, champion accountability, security and peace that's why multilateral organisations like the EU, like the UN, like the NATO are so important so we can effectively tackle these shared challenges. The British Tamils forum for example is right to note that because Sri Lankan government arrest those in communication with banned individuals or groups this mechanism is not as effective as it should be and could be, but we need to make it work as best we can. So, I will continue to work with my Tamil brothers and sisters, I continue to work with you to put pressure on the Sri Lankan government, so it actually meet its human rights obligations to the Tamil people and justice for the Tamil communities, but also I want to put pressure on the British government to final.

Gareth Thomas, Member of Parliament for Harrow West

There has to be a referral to the International Criminal Court and for the government of the United Kingdom to use its powers to take sanctions against individual members of the Sri Lankan military and Sri Lankan government who quite clearly were responsible for terrible war crimes at the end of that conflict certainly at least until they can appear before a Court of Justice. I will be using my continued opportunities in the House of Commons to press for the UK government to take action to show more leadership than it has done so until now and continue to press the United Nations and in particular the Sri Lankan government to respect international opinion and to allow a full independent inquiry to take place into what really went on at the end of the conflict in 2009.

Bob Blackman, Member of Parliament for Harrow East

I'm making sure that justice is provided for the families and the relatives of those who disappeared, lost their lives. We also call on the Sri Lankan government to desist from creating the violence between different communities in Sri Lanka and ensuring that the homelands of Tamils are preserved for Tamils to prosper and grow and equally call on United Kingdom government to use all measures through the Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings, through the United Nations for an independent inquiry into the actions of the Sri Lankan government and ensuring that those perpetrators of war crimes are brought to justice so everyone and indeed ensuring can actually live in peace and harmony and the Tamils can enjoy full justice within the state of Sri Lanka.

James Murray, Member of Parliament for Ealing North

On the 12th anniversary of Mullivaikkaal my thoughts are with the British Tamil community. I know members of the Tamil community in my constituency and beyond will be remembering the atrocities

of the civil war in Sri Lanka. We must all take this moment to reflect, remember and renew our commitment to seeking accountability and justice.

Steve Baker, Member of Parliament for Wycombe

Sri Lanka makes it extremely difficult to want to be supportive when memorials have been desecrated and damaged in the country. I would say to the government of Sri Lanka you've got to show good faith, to show that you care about the Tamil people, to show that you too want peace and justice and reconciliation of course.

Norway

Steven Pushparaja, Norwegian Council of Eelam Tamils (NCET)

The North and East of the island is the traditional homeland of the Tamils. Tamils as a nation have their inalienable right to their self-determination. Nobody has the right to compromise on the inalienable and fundamental rights of the Tamils

Switzerland

Biro Diawara, Programme Manager of African Meeting for the Defense of Human rights (RADDHO)

This year we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of adoption of resolution 44/14 on responsibility to protect population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It is time for the international community to take responsibility for ending impunity in Sri Lanka. We would like to pay a moving tribute to the civil society of Tamil diaspora and their international partners for their commitment and determination to fight impunity in order to bring justice to the victims.

Vithushan & Aparna, Switzerland Tamil Action Group (STAG)

On behalf of Swiss Tamil Youths, we, Vithushan and Aparna, are willing to say few words on Mullivaikkaal Remembrance Day today. It is the time for us to recollect the memories of 18th May 2009. We have begun a process of setting out a strategy to see what we can do for the freedom of Tamils in Sri Lanka from this oppressive government. As an initial step, we have commenced communicating with the government officials in Swiss, by bringing the ongoing atrocities to their attention and seeking their support to regain our fundamental rights to our people in Sri Lanka. We declare our determination to do our best to restore the fundamental rights and self-determination to Tamils in Sri Lanka.

India

"Pasumai Thayagam" in India, General Secretary Arul Rathinam described how his organisation has been playing a supportive role at the UNHRC to the just demands of Eelam Tamils ever since the Mullivaikkaal genocide in 2009. He said that it shall be a good idea to continue to keep the Eelam Tamil issue at the UNHRC as it is the only international forum where the Eelam Tamil issue can be kept under the spotlight of the international community. And It would be prudent and beneficial to the objective of the Eelam Tamils to continue to be in alignment with Delhi and to nourish the good relationship with Tamil Nadu people through the political parties.

Mr. C Mahendran – Tamil Nadu State Secretary, Communist Party of India (CPI)

By the continued actions of the world Tamil community and the human rights organisations, the Sri Lankan government has now been subjected to defend itself against the International action. We, the

Tamil people around the world, have to get together and take new initiatives to mobilise people around the world. The perpetrators should be punished. We, the Tamils who lived in the island for many thousand years, should not rest until we get justice and self-determination.

K Balu - Spokesperson for Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK)

The diaspora Tamil community rigorously works with the confidence that it will get justice with the support of the United Nations. We have to continue our journey with the hope that the justice will prevail, the Tamils will get their equal rights in Sri Lanka.

Mr. D Raja – General Secretary, Communist Party of India

We cannot keep quiet, we had to build a strong public opinion, we have to build a strong international solidarity. To gain support in India, the Communist Party of India has been doing whatever it can do in the given situation. We will always stand for the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. We will be organising many programs to this respect. The Communist Party of India will always be with Tamils in and outside of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Ram Sankar – Advocate & the Secretary of Delhi Tamil Advocates Association

We praise British Tamils Forum for its tireless works, in collaboration with other global Tamil associations and voluntary organisations, seeking justice for the genocide against Tamils carried out by the Sri Lankan state in May 2009. It should be remembered that we continuously urge the United Nations Council, UNHRC and other similar organisations to bring the perpetrators and the Sri Lankan state to justice in accordance to the International Criminal Laws. We are confident that the justice will prevail.

Mr. Gowthaman – Director, Activist

Tamils should not forget about May 18. After 12 years have passed, there is still no signs for Justice which hurts all Tamils. There are no sounds of guns, but under the guise there is a structural genocide still going on. The war criminals have come back to power in Sri Lanka. The younger generation should understand the history and what has happened to us and plan to make an impact on the international front.

USA

Representatives **Danny K Davis** and **Bill Johnson** issued solidarity messages and assured that the Caucus for Ethnic and Religious Freedom in Sri Lanka will continue to shed light and work for justice for the victims. On May 18, Rep. Debra Ross and the Co-Chairs of the Caucus Rep. Bill Johnson, Rep. Danny K Davis & Rep. Brad Sherman introduced a resolution honouring the 12th anniversary of the end of the war in Sri Lanka.

Anuradha Mittal, Executive Director, Oakland Institute, USA

The actions of the Sri Lankan government and security forces towards the Tamil people were driven by genocidal intent. Our recent report “Endless war” brought forth shocking evidence on the extent of the continued persecution of the Tamil population in the North and East of the country and details of Sri Lanka is headed to becoming an ethnocratic state. Land grabbing has increased under the pretext of development schemes, archaeological sites, forest reserves, special economic zones and more. The Sri Lankan state is intent on changing the demographics and divide the geographically and ethnically

connected northern and eastern provinces and erase the homeland doctrine of the Tamil people. On this 12th anniversary as the Sri Lankan army attempts to erase the memory by vandalising the monuments dedicated to the victims of war crimes. the struggle for justice led by the Tamil diaspora globally stands strong.