



30 August 2021

International day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

Again, on the International Day of the Disappeared we remember and mourn all those who have intentionally and deliberately made to disappear in the island of Sri Lanka, primarily by the government and its agents, and also by other paramilitary groups. We sadly note that the Families of the Disappeared still have got no answers to their pleas for information regarding the fate of their loved ones.

We urge all those interested in justice and a peaceful society to work with us towards finding answers to what happened to the tens of thousands of Tamils made to disappear. We stand united with the families of the disappeared to work together for justice and firmly believe that there is only strength in unity.

We are saddened and note with concern of a recent statement by a member of the current government in Sri Lanka that “most of those supposedly disappeared are actually overseas under other names”. This, we believe, is a brazen attempt to deflect attention of the guilty parties and shift the blame on the victims.

It is a known fact that Sri Lanka has the ignominious record of having the second highest recorded cases of enforced disappearances in the world. While we support attempts to enumerate the dead through gross numbers¹, we firmly believe a collective effort should be made to count the actual number of those who have disappeared and to compile their names and details for the purposes of judicial process, historical records and memorialization.

Enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka has been intensified with the introduction of the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in 1979. As part of the many facets of the on-going structural genocide, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual abuse, detention without trial for decades, removal of the dead without judicial process, silencing political dissent and enforced disappearances all thrived under the cloak of PTA. We urge the international community to initiate the International criminal justice mechanism required for the whole range of crimes committed against Tamils for decades.

Our organizations once again express our total solidarity with all the victims organizations campaigning for answers to their loved ones forcibly disappeared, and pledge to work for their cause.

For further information, please contact:

Australian Tamil Congress (ATC): +61300660629, mano_manics@hotmail.com

British Tamils Forum (BTF): +447814486087, info@britishtamilsforum.org

Maison du Tamil Eelam (France): +33652725867, mte.france@gmail.com

Irish Tamils Forum (ITF): 0035389959270, irishtamilsforum@gmail.com

National Council of Canadian Tamils (NCCT): +14168307703, krishanthy@ncctcanada.ca

Norwegian Council of Eelam Tamils (NCET): +4790641699, stevenpush.k@gmail.com

Solidarity Group for Peace and Justice (SGPJ - South Africa): pregasenp@telkomsa.net

United States Tamil Action Group (USTAG): +12025953123, info@theustag.org

ⁱ HRW, August 25, 2021, "60-100,000" disappeared in Sri Lanka [Families of Sri Lanka's Forcibly Disappeared Denied Justice | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](#)