



# Sri Lanka: Geneva Press Conference by Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

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*Opening remarks by: Manicka Vasagar, Foreign Minister, Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)*

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Press Conference – Geneva Press Club: 25th March 2014

Title: Sri Lanka: What's next?

Opening remarks by: Manicka Vasagar, Foreign Minister, Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

Good morning.

On behalf of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), a warm welcome, and thank you for your presence and participation at this important Press Conference.

Firstly I would like to acknowledge the presence of some of the victims and witnesses who are here today, who were at the mist of it all, during the Mullaivaikkal war. How they survived the war is a miracle.

One of the doctors who was in the NFZ, working as a doctor, helping the injured with limited resources and without any assistance or supply of any sorts, from outside war zone or from the GoSL. He said, one of the most painful traumatic decisions he had to make under those conditions and circumstances, under bombed damaged and ill equipped environment with no blood transfusion available to do major operations, even basic facilities or clean water, and without medication, had to let the injured patients to die.

He did his very best for our people under extreme risk to himself, and is still carrying injuries caused by the bombings within the NFZ area.

My name is Manicka Vasagar, from the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam is democratically elected by the Tamil Diaspora from many countries around the world, a political organisation, pursuing a peaceful permanent political solution.

After 65 years of subjugation of Tamils by the successive Sinhala regimes, and after the Mullaivaikkal war of May 2009, there needs a permanent political solution, for our people to live in peace and with dignity, with safety and security, and to protect our people, our culture, our heritage, our religions and to live and prosper as a Nation, and for regional stability and prosperity.

I can assure you that TGTE will lead and continue this struggle for accountability, justice, and for

permanent political solution for our people.

We all know that it is already been 5 years since the end of the war, with all the reports and two UNHRC resolutions; the situation for the Tamils is getting from bad to worst.

We the Tamils worldwide, and the victims of war, the dependents of the death, and the IC need to know the truth, how and why more than 70 000 people were killed, resulting in 89 000 widows, 60 000 orphans, 146 000 still unaccounted for, still more than 50 000 IDPs still refused entry into their own homes and lands.

And the world needs to know how and why these people were killed. They need to be told who is and why they are in custody. We need an international independent investigation on what actually happened and what is happening now since the end of the war.

We need to understand and we need to prove, and I believe the findings from an international independent investigation, will highlight that the purpose and intent of the war (behind closed doors) was GENOCIDE. The above figures will explain it all. Women, children, elderly, disabled, many died of thirst, many bled to death without medication or medical care. And now colonisation, singhalanisation, Buddhism, land grab, rape, torture, murder, arrest under PTA, and the young and old are encouraged to leave by boats – and people are living in fear and the structural genocide that is taking place under the jackboot of the army.

We, in the TGTE have, from day one called for an international independent investigation, a protection mechanism, and a UN conducted referendum for the Tamils to decide their own destiny.

TGTE will pursue politically, diplomatically, economically and have now decided to take legal actions against the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

We have engaged Mr Geoffrey Robertson QC, an internationally known barrister to make application and submission to the UNHR Committee, and take up individual specific cases, for the victims of war.

Mr Robertson would offer his expertise as a renowned human rights lawyer, and as the former president of an international criminal tribunal, to synthesise the various calls made by the international stakeholders into concrete proposals as to the best mechanism for human rights accountability. Mr Robertson who served as first President of the War Crimes Court in Sierra Leone and until 2012 as a “distinguish jurist” member of the UN’s Internal Justice Council. He was awarded the New York Bar Association Prize for Achievement in International Law and Affairs, and last year he conducted the English Bar Association’s inquiry into the impeachment of Sri Lanka’s CJ. He is the author of the leading textbook “Crimes against Humanity: the Struggle for Global Justice”.

1) Statesmen and NGOs have argued for accountability, but no one has gone into the specifics of the proper mechanism to do so. Mr Robertson’s speech will therefore provide a pragmatic foundation for moving forward;

2) The TGTE will be able to align with these proposals for accountability.

Mr Robertson will explain what the resolution entails, and how it should be implemented after it is passed. As a leading expert in the establishment of justice mechanism, he will show how it can be used to examine the case for genocide as well as war crimes. He will assess very recent evidences about the continuance of racially-motivated rapes and disappearances, and indicate a view as to whether repression of the Tamil people in the North and East has reached such a level of severity that it could justify, as a matter of international law, a right to self-determination.

Will the proposed Commission of Inquiry be followed by the establishment of an international court, with a prosecutor capable of proceeding against very powerful officials? What kind of international court is needed, where should it be based and who should be prosecuted? What other reforms are necessary in Sri Lanka before the Tamil people are safe?

The Tamils and the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam holds the hands of all protectors and promoters of Human Rights throughout the world.

Thank you.

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