



Secretary Kerry Urged Not to Ignore Tamils in Sri Lanka: Appeals Tamils for Obama

Urged to secure the release of thousands of Tamils who were arrested five years ago

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In an appeal to Secretary of State John Kerry, Tamils for Obama urged him not to ignore Tamils during his trip to Sri Lanka and meet Tamil war widows as well as to raise the issue of continuing arrests of Tamils. Tamils for Obama also urged Secretary Kerry to reaffirm US support for an international investigation and for a referendum to determine the wishes of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Tamils for Obama also pointed out that the Sri Lankan President Sirisena was the acting defence minister when large number of Tamils were killed. According to the Economist, January 3, 2015 edition: "Sirisena is hardly a beacon of hope for the Tamils: he was acting as defence minister in the nightmarish final fortnight of the war." "You will be meeting Sri Lankan President Sirisena, who is potentially a suspected war criminal" said the organization.

Tamils for Obama strongly urged Secretary Kerry to urge the Sri Lankan President Sirisena to release the names of thousands of Tamils who were taken into custody by the Sri Lankan Security forces five years ago. Over five years have passed but the Sri Lankan Government is refusing to release the list of Tamil detainees. Family members of these detainees are undergoing enormous emotional pain wanting to know what happened to their loved ones.

Sri Lankan Government supporters and their NGOs will bring family members of the Sri Lankan soldiers and portray them as Women Affected by the War. We are urging you to meet Tamil war widows and orphans as well." said Tamils for Obama. According to a May 2012 report by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Human Rights and Democracy; there are up to 90,000 Tamil war widows in the North-East of Sri Lanka.

Tamils for Obama pointed out that arrests of Tamils are continuing. For example, recently 16 Tamils who were returning for their contract work in Middle Eastern countries were arrested at the Katunayake airport.

Sri Lankan Government supporters will hand-pick their supporters in the Civil Society and arrange meetings for you. We strongly urge you to meet genuine Tamil civil society groups as well." Said the spokesman of Tamils for Obama.

"We want to highlight the role of Buddhist Monks in anti-Tamil activities. A Buddhist Monk shot and killed a Sri Lankan Prime Minister in 1959 for having talks with Tamil political leaders to find a peaceful solution to the conflict." continued the spokesman

"We also want to bring to your attention Tamil's long and close association with the United States. One example is 'Mrs. Harriet Wadsworth Lathrop Winslow. She was a missionary who founded schools and hospitals in the northeastern (Tamil) areas of the island. She was beloved by the Tamils, and she is buried in Tellipalai in northeastern Sri Lanka. She was a great-grandmother of former

Secretary of state John Foster Dulles. We hope that you will find time to visit her monument." Said the spokesman.

BACKGROUND:

Tamils have faced repeated mass killings since 1958 and the mass killings in 2009 prompted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a Panel of Experts to report on the scale of killings.

According to the report by this UN Panel, tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were killed and women were sexually abused and raped by the Sri Lankan Security Forces (According to UN Internal Review Report over 70,000 Tamils were killed in five months in 2009).

According to the UN Panel, the killings and other abuses that took place amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Independent experts believe that there are elements of these abuses that constitute an act of genocide.

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Members of the Sri Lankan security forces are almost exclusively from the Sinhalese community and the victims are all from the Tamil community.

Tamils overwhelmingly voted in a Parliamentary election in 1977 to establish an independent and sovereign country called Tamil Eelam. This Parliamentary election was conducted by the Sri Lankan Government.

Tamils for Obama is a politically active group of Tamil Americans. They believe that over 70,000 Tamil civilians were massacred during the last weeks of the Sri Lankan ethnic war. They have also watched the behavior of the Sri Lankan Sinhalese victors after the war, and strongly conclude that Tamils in Sri Lanka will only be safe when this unfortunate island is divided into two states.

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