

TGTE Joint Session of Parliament proposes several new initiatives for Tamil Eelam

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, December 16, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ --

- Pursue charges of Genocide against the Sri Lankan Government
- Campaign for the release of Prisoners of War
- Mobilise Tamils globally for drafting a new Constitution for Tamil Eelam
- Start e-government services for the people of Tamil Eelam

The Joint Session of the TGTE Parliament, with members of parliament and senate together, took place on 5



TGTE Joint Session 2015

December 2015 resulting in a slew of innovative proposals to take forward the struggle for Tamil Eelam.

The introductory note to the session was given by Hon'ble Anan Ponnambalan, while Senators Gilles Piquois, David Matas, Thani Cheran and Satya Sivaraman placed their views on the current global situation and the way forward. Sen. Brian Senewiratne sent a recorded video message about the threat to the future of the Tamils in Sri Lanka with suggestions on what needed to be done urgently.

The UNHRC resolution in September 2015 has thrown up the possibility of the Sri Lankan government setting up a 'hybrid' court to try those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the course of the civil war. The TGTE in response has set up a Monitoring and Accountability Panel (MAP) consisting of leading legal experts from other parts of the world to examine the judicial process and provide an analysis of its credibility and adherence to international legal standards.

Members of the TGTE Senate were called upon to give their opinion to the TGTE Parliament on the different aspects of the 'hybrid' courts and help analyse their potential for and drawbacks in delivering justice to the victims of the 2009 genocide against the Eelam Tamils. Citing the opinion of Prof. Dermot Groome, the well-known international human rights lawyer, who addressed the TGTE parliament prior to the Joint Session, the Senate has recommended pursuing charges of genocide against the Sri Lankan government and gathering the legal and other resources for this purpose. The Senate also called upon all the Tamil organizations globally to speak in one voice in order for their common demands to be considered seriously by the international community.

Senator Gille Piquois urged the TGTE to start an international campaign for the release or account of 'Prisoners of War' (POWs) to highlight global attention on the fate of these mission people. Questions to ask would be how many POWs are there, who are they and what is being done with them? There

are thousands of Eelam Tamils who have 'disappeared' since 2009 and subsequently, believed to have been either abducted and killed or incarcerated by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, many of them without any charges at all.

Several other proposals made by Senate members are being taken up for further discussion and study prior to implementation. Three medium-term ideas that were proposed for examination/implementation during the course of the joint session include:

a. Most governments around the world today provide a variety of services to their citizens using 'e-services' that can be accessed entirely over the internet or through mobile phones and other telecommunication platforms. The TGTE is urged to explore the possibility of setting up a series of services that could be accessed by Eelam Tamils all over the world, but particularly in the Homeland. This would be like a 'virtual government' of sorts offering services in education, health, skills development, counseling etc., to the people. The feasibility of this project, the logistics and other modalities need to be studied by the special sub-committee set up for this purpose. The Senate however also pointed out that such virtual services are not a substitute for an independent homeland and 'we should never lose sight of the truth that our land is the very basis of our country'.

b. Starting the process of writing the Constitution of Tamil Eelam, based on the principles enunciated in 1976 Vaddukottai Resolution, Interim Self-Governing Proposal (ISGA), and the Tamil Eelam Freedom Charter and involving Tamils all around the world, cutting across political and other divisions. It was felt that the initiative will have to be taken up across the political spectrum of Tamils globally to build consensus on the drafting of a new Tamil Eelam Constitution and make it a truly historic, participatory and forward-looking exercise that would mobilize the Tamils around the world. It was felt that the process of drafting the new Constitution should be worked out and announced on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the historic Vaddukottai Resolution calling for the formation of an independent Tamil Eelam.

c. The feasibility and modalities of launching a new Tamil Eelam currency were also discussed. This idea needed to be studied by a special sub-committee consisting of financial, legal and political experts. There was also a suggestion that a global competition be held to design the currency and prizes be given to the winners to generate publicity/enthusiasm for this project.

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