

Conviction of Chad leader for Crimes against Humanity - Will Sri Lanka reverse the trend? TGTE

"Unless UN takes firm steps on Sri Lanka, the whole euphoria about the conviction of Chad's leader will be short lived"

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As the world celebrate the historic conviction of the former Chad leader Mr. Hissene Habre for committing Crimes Against Humanity, there are concerns that this positive trend may get reversed by the developments in Sri Lanka, unless the UN Human Rights Council take urgent steps to address the back sliding of commitments given to the UN body by the Sri Lankan Government, said Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, Prime Minister of Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

Extraordinary African Chambers convicted former Chadian leader Hissene Habre of crimes against humanity and sentenced him to life in prison.

Several world leaders applauded the sentence and expect this positive trend

to continue and will deter other leaders from committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

But few notice the developments in Sri Lanka, where the Sri Lankan Government gave commitments to the UN Human Rights Council to take concrete steps, including involvement of foreign judges, to hold those responsible for the killing of 70,000 Tamils in six months in 2009 and rape of hundreds of Tamil women by the Sri Lankan security forces (Source: UN Internal Review Report on Sri Lanka).

But so far the Sri Lankan Government not only failed to take any meaningful steps as promised to the UN body, but it is taking steps to evade or damage any credible judicial mechanism to hold those responsible for the mass killing of Tamils.



Former Chad Leader Hissene Habre



Current & Former Sri Lankan Presidents

Here are some of the examples:

- 1) Both the President and the Prime Minister have rejected any international involvement in the judicial process, as they have promised to the UN Human Rights Council.
- 2) The Prime Minister has announced that thousands of Tamils who disappeared are now dead. He refused to give details on the manner they were killed, who is responsible for the killings, and the whereabouts of the remains.
- 3) The Army Commander during these killings was not only promoted to the highest military rank but was made a Cabinet Member (Minister).
- 4) The current President Sirisena was the acting defense minister during the final weeks of the war, when large number of Tamils were killed, thus call into question conflict of interest and neutrality in holding an investigation under his Government.
- 5) Even seven years after the war, security forces are still stationed in large numbers in Tamil areas as during the war (one soldier for every five civilians – believed to be the highest ratio in the world). These soldiers are still committing abuses like abductions and rape.

The list goes on and on.

"Unless the UN Human Rights Council take concrete steps to address Sri Lankan Government's evasive steps to fulfill its commitments it gave to the UN Human Rights Council, the whole euphoria about the conviction of Chad's leader will be short lived and several leaders who committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide will breathe a sigh of relive" said Rudrakumaran.

"To reverse this UN Human Rights Council should take a firm stand in its upcoming June Session, when Sri Lanka is coming up for review and when the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is to submit a report on Sri Lanka".

ABOUT TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL EELAM (TGTE):

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a democratically elected Government of a million strong Tamils (from the island of Sri Lanka) living in several countries around the world.

TGTE was formed after the mass killing of Tamils by the Sri Lankan Government in 2009.

TGTE held two internationally supervised elections among Tamils around the world to elect 132 Members of Parliament. It has a bicameral legislature and a Cabinet. It held one of its Parliamentary sittings in the British Parliament.

TGTE is leading a campaign to realize Tamils' political aspirations through peaceful, democratic and diplomatic means. The Constitution of the TGTE mandates that it should realize its political objective only through peaceful means.

The Prime Minister of TGTE is Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, a New York based lawyer.

BACKGROUND:

Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka faced repeated mass killings in 1958, 1965, 1977 and 1983 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 the killings.

According to UN internal review report on Sri Lanka, over 70,000 Tamils were killed in six months in early 2009 and hundreds of Tamil women were raped by the Sri Lankan Security forces. There are over 90,000 Tamil war widows and thousands of Tamils disappeared due the conflict.

According to this 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.

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

A Buddhist Monk shot and killed a Sri Lankan Prime Minister in 1959 for having talks with Tamil political leaders.

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

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

TGTE

+1212-290-2905

email us here

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