

UN Rights Chief Urged to Investigate Suspicious Deaths in Sri Lanka of Recently Released Tamil Prisoners of War: TGTE

Over 100 of these former detainees have died within a short period after their release. Some report having been forcibly injected with unknown substances.

NEW YORK, USA, August 11, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An urgent letter by Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), was sent to the UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein, urging him to conduct an investigation into the suspicious deaths of over 100 recently released



Tamil Prisoners of War (POW), under the mandate set out in the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1.

“Since the adoption of Resolution 30/1 former Tamil combatants, held in detention camps by the Sri Lankan Army under the guise of rehabilitation, have been released. Over 100 of these former detainees have died of maladies such as cancer within a short period after their release. Some of the detainees report having been forcibly injected with unknown substances.” said the letter.

“After completing your comprehensive investigation last year you concluded that many of the structures responsible for the violations and crimes remain in place, ready to be reactivated...” I am profoundly concerned that as you predicted, those responsible for the crimes at the end of the conflict in 2009 are again committing serious violations of international law. The injection of substances designed to cause the death of detainees after their release would clearly constitute inhumane treatment in violation of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions,” continued the letter.

The letter also urges the High Commissioner to “investigate and intervene in this situation to ensure that those who continue to be unlawfully detained by the army are not subjected to treatments designed to cause their death and that any detainees who have received such agents receive immediate medical attention.”

Letters were also sent to Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General; Juan E. Mendez, the Special Rapporteur for Torture; Pablo de Greiff, the Special Rapporteur for Promotions of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non- Recurrence; and Dainius Puras, the Special Rapporteur for Health urging their intervention in this matter.

These letters were sent by Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam's Prime Minister Mr.

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran.

HERE IS THE TEXT OF THE LETTER SENT TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS:

Dear High Commissioner,

I write to bring to your urgent attention the suspicious deaths of over 100 former Tamil combatants shortly after their release from rehabilitation camps of the Army of Sri Lanka. I request that you commence an immediate investigation of this matter under your mandate set out in Resolution 30/1. (1)

Since the adoption of Resolution 30/1 former Tamil combatants, held in detention camps by the Sri Lankan Army under the guise of rehabilitation, have been released. Over 100 of these former detainees have died of maladies such as cancer within a short period after their release. Some of the detainees report having been forcibly injected with unknown substances. (2)

In paragraphs 379 to 385 of the OISL report of September 2015, you found that the continued detention of former combatants without charge “contravenes international standards.” You found that thousands of former combatants continued to be detained without charge, without clear records of their detention and without clear criteria for their release.(3) The recent consistent reports of untimely deaths shortly after release is cause for grave concern.

After completing your comprehensive investigation last year you concluded that “many of the structures responsible for the violations and crimes remain in place, ready to be reactivated...” I am profoundly concerned that as you predicted, those responsible for the crimes at the end of the conflict in 2009 are again committing serious violations of international law. The injection of substances designed to cause the death of detainees after their release would clearly constitute inhumane treatment in violation of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

To date, the government of Sri Lanka has failed to investigate these deaths, despite loud calls to do so both domestically and internationally. Its continued failure to investigate is an abrogation of its commitment in paragraph 17 of Resolution 30/1 to issue clear instructions to all branches of the security forces that they must cease all ongoing violations and that alleged violations will be investigated and punished. Your finding in paragraph 1278 of your report stated that Sri Lanka’s justice system is not yet ready to conduct “independent and credible investigations,” also causes me concern should any domestic investigation be initiated.

I therefore request that you direct your office to investigate and intervene in this situation to ensure that those who continue to be unlawfully detained by the army are not subjected to treatments designed to cause their death and that any detainees who have received such agents receive immediate medical attention.

Kindest regards,

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, Esq.
Prime Minister
Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

(1) Paragraph 18 of A/HRC/RES/30/1 states, “Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to assess progress on the implementation of its recommendations and other relevant

processes related to reconciliation, accountability and human right and present...a comprehensive report followed by discussion on the implementation of the present resolution in its thirty-fourth session.”

Paragraph 18 of A/HRC/RES/30/1 states, “Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to assess progress on the implementation of its recommendations and other relevant processes related to reconciliation, accountability and human right and present...a comprehensive report followed by discussion on the implementation of the present resolution in its thirty-fourth session.”

(2) Please find below but a few examples:

1. Ms. Thamizhini, was a detainee who was in charge of the women’s political wing of the LTTE. She succumbed to cancer in Killinochi, shortly after being released from rehabilitation. She was the 99th former detainee to have died of cancer after “rehabilitation” in the army center.
2. Miss ThambirajaSaraswathi (age 37), a Tamil teacher of Poonagari Tamil Vidyalayam, died on 12 July 2016 at Jaffna Tellipalai Hospital, purportedly from cancer, which first afflicted her while undergoing rehabilitation with the army.
3. On the same day as Saraswathi’s death, SasikumarRahulan, a former militant and driver for Pottu Amman, the LTTE intelligence wing chief, died of an unspecified disease.

(3) OISL documented 16 cases in which detainees were only release upon payment of bribes.

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 twice held 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.

Contact: pmo@tgte.org; Web: www.tgte-us.org

BACKGROUND:

Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka faced repeated mass killings in 1958, 1965, 1977, 1981 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 five months in early 2009 and 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 report, 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 1959 for having talks with Tamil political leaders.

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.

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaram
Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)
+12122902925
email us here

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