

TGTE WELCOMES BAN KI MOON'S RETURN TO SRI LANKA AND CAUTIONS HIM ABOUT FALSE PROMISES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA

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Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) today welcomed UN Secretary-General's upcoming visit to Sri Lanka this Wednesday and cautioned him about Sri Lankan Government's false promises and efforts to mislead him about its continuing failure to address the crimes committed at the end of the conflict in May 2009.

The full text of the letter addressed to the Secretary General stated:



'We are pleased to note that you are planning an official visit this week to the island of Sri Lanka. The last time you visited Sri Lanka, Mr. Secretary-General, was on 22 May 2009. At that time, you remarked about the vast devastation you saw as you were being flown over the Vanni region in a Sri Lankan Army helicopter and you stated how civilians "must have suffered terribly." When you agreed to give a joint statement with the then President Rajapaksa, you insisted that the statement included the sentence: "The Secretary-General underlined the importance of an accountability process for addressing violations."

As you return to Sri Lanka, now seven years later, justice is still a stranger to this island despite numerous calls for it by you, despite three comprehensive UN reports containing thousands of pages, despite numerous resolutions by the Human Rights Council, and despite several visits from UN's Special Rapporteurs. Little real progress has been achieved in addressing the crimes committed at the end of the conflict. The promises made to you on your last visit remain broken or unfulfilled. Therefore, we ask that you be cautious about welcoming all the new promises you are likely to be offered during this visit.

The anguish of 90,000 Tamil widows, some of whom you met at that time, has not diminished over the years. The young girls who had been sexually assaulted at the time are now grown women who are forced to live under the watchful eye of the same army that violated them. The 30 - 70,000 people missing are still missing, the actual number no more certain today. Their families have been given no clearer information about their fate than when you asked Rajapaksa about the missing when you visited seven years ago. We like to bring to your attention the statement by the present Prime Minister of Sri Lanka which claimed that all the disappeared Tamils are dead, while still misleading the

international community by passing a law to “search” for the disappeared.

We urge you, your Excellency, to not forget that many of the leaders in the current “newly elected” government of Sri Lanka were in fact senior leaders in the previous regime including President Sirisena and Foreign Minister Samaraweera. How can a justice system designed and overseen by those who played a role in the last days of the war have any credibility? How can it be countenanced by the international community?

We urge you to insist that Sri Lanka lived up to its commitment in the Resolution 30/1 which it co-sponsored with the US, namely, that independent international prosecutors and judges play a meaningful and active role in any justice mechanism and that the process of accountability commence immediately. We urge you to ensure that majority of the judges for the UNHRC - mandated war crimes probe are not from Sri Lanka, but international judges of high caliber. Tamils have years of painful experience of not receiving justice under successive governments in Sri Lanka.

Dear Mr Secretary General, we call upon you to visit Jaffna, and see for yourself what today is one of the most militarized communities in the world: A community where land formerly owned by Tamils for generations is now in the possession of military officers. A community where business formerly owned and operated by Tamil families are in the hands of army officers profiting from the very same Tamils they crushed in 2009. The military to civilian ratio is one of the highest in the world (for every five civilians one soldier). You will also see that large numbers of Buddhist temples had been built in areas where hardly any Buddhists live.

Finally, we urge you to voice concern about the so called “political solution” to the Tamil National Question that has been forced on the Tamils without any effort in getting to know the true wishes of the Tamil people. These could be eminently established through a democratic exercise along the lines of recent Scottish referendum and referendums held in Kosovo, South Sudan and other places’.

The TGTE’s letter concluded by hoping that the Secretary General’s visit to Sri Lanka became a successful one and that it did not become his last visit to the island. ‘Furthermore, we hope that when you do return to the island next time, you find justice and freedom for the Tamil people’ it said.

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.

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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.

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