

The World Lost a Great Sports Writer and a Champion for Human Rights - Eelam Tamils Lost a Friend: TGTE

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The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is deeply saddened by the demise of veteran journalist and human rights activist, Trevor Grant. Following a decades-long career and recognized as one of the finest sports writers of his time in Australia, Trevor Grant took a keen interest in the plight of Tamil refugees arriving in Australia at the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka in May 2009. He thus became a passionate advocate for refugee rights and a campaigner and spokesman with the Tamil Refugee Council, while also taking care of the emotional and material needs of asylum seekers and refugees through working in several fronts within the wider Australian community in his home State of Victoria.

Admirers of Trevor Grant have noted his commitment to principles and fair play and his determined stand in not letting authorities get away with power. It is, therefore, not surprising that he did not limit his concerns to the future of the disenfranchised and downtrodden refugees arriving in Australian shores. He also took a journalist's interest and curiosity to dig into the causes for their fleeing from their native lands.

Trevor Grant exhibited his moral anger over the Genocide perpetrated by the Sri Lankan State on the hapless Tamil civilians in Mullivaaiikal in May 2009. This resulted in the publication in 2014 of his book 'Sri Lanka's Secrets: How the Rajapaksa Regime Gets Away with Murder', a book which was described by analysts as 'a determined and forceful portrayal of the nature of the Sri Lankan society and the corrupt regime that was running the country'. As part of his advocacy work, Trevor Grant has also been scathing in his criticism of successive Australian governments for their foreign policy obsession that was focused on turning back boats with refugees rather than on the human rights of the Tamil refugees.

As a brave and compassionate man, Trevor Grant felt the necessity to bring out the truth as best as he could even through the period of his recent illness. He used his pen and his sharp and powerful style of writing to bring out some of the ugly truths of the new 'good governance' regime of President Maithripala Sirisena in Sri Lanka, and the complicity of powerful members of the international community in allowing Sri Lanka 'to keep its secrets'. Equally, he has been active in sharing details of the mesothelioma that has now taken him from us so prematurely. His honesty in telling us about the things that made him angry and those that made him sad through his illness is a measure of the caliber of the man he was.

It is tragic that the voice of Trevor Grant is no more with us at this time when new forms of nativism and populism are emerging in the West, contributing to a hostile environment for refugees fleeing persecution, violence, and environmental degradation, and seeking safe haven. The craft of journalism that he much loved and practiced is facing new challenges at this time as well. Let us find solace in Trevor's own words, as stated in his book, 'You can kill thousands of people, but you can never kill the human spirit'.

We, Tamils, shall remain in eternal gratitude for Trevor's tireless work and unparalleled service to a vulnerable and oppressed people. Farewell, dear friend!

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

TGTE

+1 516- 308-2645

email us here

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