

Sri Lanka: Remedial Justice for 1983 massacre of Tamils would have averted 2009 Mullivaaikaal Genocide - TGTE

Today Tamils across the globe are remembering 34th anniversary of massacre of Tamils - Black July 83.

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During the final days of July 1983, Sinhala racism unleashed a pogrom towards the Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka, when thousands of Tamils were killed and Tamil properties were destroyed, said Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

As noted by the International Commission of Jurists in their reports following the 1983 riots, business establishments bearing English names but owned by Tamils were also

demolished. This established the fact that the 1983 Massacre was pre-planned targeting the Tamils, and orchestrated by the State itself or with the connivance of the State to, in addition to killing Tamils and raping Tamil women, also destroy any economic position held by Tamils in the South. Thus began the exodus of Tamils to the Tamil homeland and to countries abroad as asylum seekers.

At the height of the genocidal barbarism more than 50 Tamil political prisoners were tortured and massacred in the main Welikade prison in the capital.

The then Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayawardene in an interview to London Daily Telegraph brazenly told:

"I am not worried about the opinion of the Jaffna Tamils Now. Now we cannot think of that. Not about their lives or their opinion about us."

Following the 1983 massacre the Sri Lankan delegate to the UN stated:

"The Sri Lankan authorities... would leave no stone unturned to bring justice to all those responsible for killings, violence and acts of destruction no matter who they were and regardless of their status, ideology or political alignments. There would be no exception."

However, thus far the Sri Lankan state, the Sri Lankan Government, the Buddhist establishment, the Sinhala media or the Sinhala people have neither acknowledged nor apologized for, individually or collectively, for the 1983 racial pogrom inflicted on the Tamil people.



Sinhalese Mobs killed Tamils and destroyed Tamil properties

Even the present government, the so called pioneer of “good governance” has at no stage acknowledged or apologized for what happened in 1983. The present Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Mr Ranil Wickramasinghe, who was the Minister for Youth and Employment during the 1983 racial pogrom, who holds a special responsibility as part of the then Cabinet, has not uttered a word on the matter let alone acknowledge it or apologize for it.

Black July 83 was not an isolated one-time event. It was a watershed moment in the process of Tamil annihilation on the island of Sri Lanka. It culminated in 2009 in Mullivaikaal Genocide in which more than 100,000 Tamils were killed.

Had Tamils been given remedial justice as reparation to the 1983 racial pogrom in the form of an independent state, 2009 Mullivaikaal Genocide would have been averted.

There is no surprise that to date no one has been held accountable for all that took place in 2009. In 2015, in order to divert the international call to accountability, Sri Lanka co-sponsored Resolution 30/1 along with UK and US in the Human Rights Council. However, the former Foreign Minister and the current Finance Minister, Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, has explicitly stated that he had clearly told the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid al-Hussein, that Sri Lanka would not implement the HRC Resolution 30/1. The President and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka are on record for their public repudiation of the central feature of the Resolution, namely participation of international judges in a judicial capacity in the accountability process.

It is important to note that immediately following the 1983 racial pogrom the International Commission of Jurists stated that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) is used exclusively against the Tamils. In 2015, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid al-Hussein, stated that the PTA is used in a racial manner. The US State Department Human Rights Reports have repeatedly commented that the victims of disproportionate human rights violations in Sri Lanka are Tamils. Today, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism, Mr Ben Emmerson QC, has stated that it is the Tamil community that bears the brunt of the State’s well-oiled torture apparatus. These claims made by different institutions over three decades of history go to establish the fact that all the persecution and oppression in Sri Lanka are not ethnic-neutral but carried out on a people on account of their Tamil ethnicity – it is an act of Genocide pure and simple.

Thus Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) urges governments around the world to take on the recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and initiate domestic prosecution, by invoking universal jurisdiction, against Sri Lankan political and military leaders implicated in the 1983 racial pogrom and the 2009 Mullivaikaal Genocide.

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