

UK Urged Not to Accept Re-instatement of Sri Lankan Military Attaché to Deny Cover from War Crimes Prosecution: TGTE

There are allegations by UN and others against him for have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against Tamil people

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM ,
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The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) today urged the UK Government not to accept the reinstatement of Sri Lankan Brigadier Priyanka Fernando as the Military Attaché to the Sri Lankan High Commission in the UK, thus denying him diplomatic cover from prosecution for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

"As a country that co-sponsored a Resolution at the UN Human Rights Council on accountability for the mass killings and sexual assault in Sri Lanka and as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, we urge the UK to not to accept the re-instatement of a suspected war criminal as a Military Attaché, thus denying him diplomatic cover from prosecution under Universal Jurisdiction" said TGTE.



Tamil Civilians Fleeing Bombing by Sri Lankan Forces



Sri Lanka Brigadier Fernando

The TGTE believes that international law has now evolved to the state that international crimes pierce the veil of immunity provided by diplomatic status in criminal proceedings, but we are concerned that Fernando's diplomatic status might provide a viable defence in British courts. Refusal to accede his diplomatic credentials will deprive Fernando of that defence.

Brigadier Priyanka Fernando served until two days ago as the Military Attaché of the Sri Lankan High Commission in UK. He was removed from his position by the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry for violent gestures against Tamil demonstrators outside the High Commission who were highlighting mass killings and sexual assault by Sri Lankan forces against Tamils.

It is reported today that, Sri Lankan President has reinstated Fernando to the same post as Military Attaché.

Since Fernando has been reinstated, he must again go through the standard diplomatic protocols of submitting his name to the UK Foreign Ministry to be accepted as a Diplomat.

“We urge the UK not to accept Sri Lankan Brigadier Priyanka Fernando’s re-instatement as the Military Attaché when his name is submitted to the Foreign Ministry. There are credible and well documented allegations by the UN and others against him for having committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the Tamil people,” said the TGTE.

“While denying diplomatic cover, we urge you to initiate proceedings against Fernando under Universal Jurisdiction for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed against the Tamil people. Several Tamil victims who currently live in UK have submitted information and filed complaints about the abuses they underwent in Sri Lanka to the British Police. These complaints are in addition to several reports by the UN and other international bodies about serious crimes committed by members of the Sri Lankan security forces,” continued the TGTE.

There are several reports published identifying his regiment, the Gemunu Watch Battalion of the 59th Division, as responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the final months of the war in 2009. According to the UN and other organizations, the 59th Division was the frontline fighting force that committed numerous war crimes, including repeated bombing and shelling of hospitals, food distribution centers and other civilian areas.

According to the 2012 UN Internal Review Report on Sri Lanka around 70 thousand Tamils were killed in 2009 and a large number of Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by Sri Lankan security forces.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in his statement to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2017 urged countries around the world to initiate actions under Universal Jurisdiction to hold those responsible for committing international crimes in Sri Lanka.

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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 two chambers of Parliament: The House of Representatives and Senate and a Cabinet.

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, 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 Tamil women were sexually assaulted and 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 Tamils.

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.

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

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