

# New ITJP Website lists 280+ Names of Enforced Disappearance in Sri Lanka all on One Day.

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, May 15, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Sri Lanka's](#) Office of Missing Persons is duty bound to question war-time military leaders over hundreds of cases of enforced disappearance that took place on the final day of the civil war in 2009 if it wants to recover the truth about these cases. Among those who [disappeared](#) were at least 29 Tamil children, last seen with their families in the custody of the Sri Lankan Army on or around 18 May 2009 in what are regarded as classic cases of enforced disappearance in accordance with international law.

“This is the largest single group of enforced disappearance in Sri Lanka’s history – hundreds of people disappearing at the same time and place with multiple eyewitnesses both inside and outside the country,” said the International Truth and Justice Project’s Executive Director, Yasmin Sooka. “We have written to the Office of Missing Persons saying this is the first case they should investigate if they are serious about criminal accountability for enforced disappearance. They can start by questioning Major General Shavendra Silva and General Jagath Jayasuriya, whom eyewitnesses say personally observed the surrenders and those security forces in whose custody they were placed.”

The 58th Division of the Sri Lankan Army has to date steadfastly refused to hand over a list of surrendees from the final day of the war to families who filed a habeus corpus case in Sri Lanka . The 58 Division, which is named in the UN Investigation as accepting the surrenders, was led at the time by alleged war criminal, Major General Shavendra Silva, who has been promoted by the current Government to Adjutant General of the Sri Lankan Army. Eyewitnesses indicated that Silva was present at the Wadduvakkal Bridge on 18 May and even shook hands with the LTTE political wing leaders who surrendered and shortly thereafter were summarily executed. Silva reported to General Jayasuriya who is also said by eyewitnesses to have been present at the Wadduvakkal Bridge watching the surrenders of LTTE cadres led by a Catholic priest, all of whom subsequently disappeared in the custody of the security forces. General Jayasuriya has been accused of alleged war crimes in 4 lawsuits filed by the ITJP in Latin America where he was Ambassador until he fled home to evade justice.



18 May 2009 Disappeared in Sri Lanka

The ITJP's disappearance website is recreating the surrender list that the Sri Lankan Army is withholding. It currently contains 280 names and can be viewed online in Tamil and English at: <http://itjp.bong.international/#lang=english> .

"We urge anyone with information or photos to contact us by email in English or Tamil," said the ITJP's Executive Director Yasmin Sooka, "this is by no means a complete list or a perfect one but it is a start and what it reveals is that the extent of the crime is much larger than previously known."

The ITJP concedes there could be some duplication in names because families report loved ones missing using their birth names while former comrades tend to use noms de guerre. The group says that is why it's important to add photographs where possible and urges members of the public to contact them regarding any corrections. The design of the site deliberately leaves grey boxes empty to signify that this is not a final list but rather a work in progress.

Each name is just a tiny glimpse of the human suffering that enforced disappearance leaves behind. The daughter of V. Balakumaran sent this message to be included on his page on the website:

"I always wanted to be with you appa. Since April 2009, we have been living without you with a wounded heart. You are one of the most important tamil leaders which is the fact no one can deny. And I strongly assure that you are the best father who showed us how to live a simple life regardless of how famous a leader or a person is and lived by an example. You always wanted me to be independent, courageous and a strong girl who withstands anything. But I couldn't withstand the agony and depression after your disappearance. You are the strength which gives us every single reason not give up on any circumstances. We won't give up on you appa. We miss you so much which words can't explain. We strongly hope that one day you will fill our eyes with tears of joy with your presence. We also hope and pray for every family who lost their father, son daughter, or siblings to be re-unite soon.  
Your Ever loving Daughter".

Those named on the ITJP list are believed to have been taken into the custody of the Sri Lankan Army on or around 18th May 2009 before they disappeared. Some have been reported as disappeared by their families in Sri Lanka. Witnesses are also in several countries abroad where they have given sworn testimony to the ITJP about who they saw surrendering to the security forces .

The ITJP's website is based primarily on 5 different lists – two from inside Sri Lanka and two collected abroad and a 2017 UN WGEID complaint list that is public . What is concerning is that while there is some overlap between the lists it is not huge, indicating perhaps that some families of LTTE cadres are still frightened to report them missing or that the families are no longer alive to complain.

Particularly troubling is that it includes 29 children – several of them under 5 years of age - who disappeared on or around 18 May after surrendering with their parents.

"Sri Lankan civil society needs with one voice to demand to know the plight of these children. Nine long years have gone by and their grandmothers and mothers should not be left alone to stand on the roadside demanding the truth while exposed to intimidation and threats from the security forces ," said Ms. Sooka. /continued

Yasmin Sooka  
The International Truth & Justice Project  
+ 27 (0) 11-484-0390  
email us here

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases.

© 1995-2018 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.