

Plight of Sri Lanka's Tamil Disappeared Must be Brought Before the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances: TGTE

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As the world remembers the disappeared on August 30th, the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) urged countries that are State Parties to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances(ICPPED), to bring the plight of the tens of thousands of Tamils who disappeared, to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances(CED).



Tamil Families of the Disappeared

According to the UN, Sri Lanka ranked the second highest number of disappeared in the world. This include several babies who were with their families when these families surrendered to the Sri Lankan Security Forces during the final days of the war in May 2009. These Tamils, including several babies, children and girls voluntarily placed themselves in the hands of the security forces at the end of the conflict in reliance on assurances that they would be safe.

Sri Lankan Government also failed to fulfill its obligations under international law as well as its obligations under Human Rights Council Resolutions 30/1 and 34/1 which Sri Lanka voluntarily co-sponsored and assured the UN body that they will enforce the Resolutions fully, including the plight of Tamil's who disappeared. Furthermore, despite numerous promises by the Sri Lankan Government, not a single Security force personal have been brought to justice.

When Tamil Mothers of the Disappeared met Sri Lankan President Mithripala Sirisena, he assured them that he will give an order at the Security Council Meeting to be held on the following day to release the list of those surrendered at the end of the war in May 2009. But so far the President did not fulfil his promise.

Also, when Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, visited the Northern city of Jaffna for a major festival of Thai Pongal, he said in a public meeting on January 15, 2016 that: "Those who surrendered to the Sri Lankan Security forces at the end of the war in May 2009 are no longer alive". So far, the Prime Minister is refusing to give any clarification about his statement, including who is responsible for the killings, manner in which they were killed and where the dead bodies of the disappeared are.

Due to international pressure the Sri Lankan Government established an Office of the Missing Persons (OMP), but OMP itself became meaningless, when its Section 13 (2) mentions that the findings of the OMP could not be used in any civil or criminal cases for seeking justice.

Repeated requests to include UN and other international experts to be included as Commissioners of the OMP were rejected by the Government. Adding insult to the injury, Sri Lankan Government included a former senior Security Force Officer as one of the Commissioners of the OMP.

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