

Sri Lankan President - a War Crime Suspect - to Speak at UN General Assembly: TGTE to Hold Protest

TGTE Urges UN General Assembly members and Journalists to raise War Crimes allegations with Sri Lankan President

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Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) alerted UN General Assembly members and journalists that Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, who is scheduled to speak to the UN General Assembly on September 25, is a war crime suspect.

The alert sent out by TGTE outlines Sri Lankan President Sirisena's military command responsibility when he served as the acting defense minister five times during the height of the War, including final two weeks of the war that ended in May 2009, when approximately 70 thousand Tamils were killed and hundreds of Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by the Sri Lankan Security Forces. (Source: UN Internal Review Report on Sri Lanka).

The Sri Lankan Government also restricted food and medicine for Tamils, which resulted in a large number of Tamil men, women and children dying from starvation and many of the injured bleeding to death.

TGTE urges UN General Assembly members to raise these allegations to the Sri Lankan President during receptions and dinners. TGTE also urges journalists who are members of the UN Correspondent Association (UNCA) to question President Sirisena while he visits the UN General Assembly on Sept. 25th.

President Sirisena has admitted that he was the acting defense minister during the war when large numbers of Tamils were killed, including thousands who surrendered. The surrendered also included several babies and children. Almost 10 years have passed since their surrender and they still remain disappeared.

It was also during President Sirisena's time as acting defense minister that Sri Lanka rejected appeals by several world leaders to stop shelling and bombing an area designated by the Sri Lankan Government as a "No Fire Zone." The Sri Lankan Government created this "Safe Zone," and urged Tamils to assemble there for safety. When thousands of Tamil civilians arrived, Sri Lankan Security Forces bombed and shelled the area and killed tens of thousands of people.

In 2015, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report about these killings and recommended a hybrid judicial mechanism for accountability. After the report was published, having saved himself from being mentioned as a war crime suspect, President Sirisena boasted, "We managed to stop UN publishing names of perpetrators." President Sirisena must be held to account.

"Sirisena is hardly a beacon of hope for the Tamils: he was acting as defence minister in the nightmarish final fortnight of the war," the Economist wrote.

NOTE: Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is holding a protest rally against Sri Lankan President Sirisena outside the UN General Assembly in New York City, on September 25th from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.

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