

## Sri Lanka: On 31 March 2019 - TGTE Will Announce a Justice Initiative on Behalf of Victims

*This initiative is in response to the failure of the UN Human Rights Council and the international community to effectively promote justice for Tamil victims.*

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On 31 March 2019, the [Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam \(TGTE\)](#) will announce an initiative to commence on the tenth anniversary of the end of the conflict. This initiative is in response to the failure of the Human Rights Council and the international community to effectively promote justice for Tamil victims. It will take steps to assert the right of victims to know the truth about what happened to their loved ones and to obtain justice for them.

The TGTE will call upon other organizations representing Tamil victims to join in this effort. The TGTE will call upon all countries and people of conscience to join in this initiative to ensure that the international community no longer "ignores" atrocity crimes, whether they be committed in Syria, Myanmar or Sri Lanka.

At the end of last week, the Human Rights Council passed its latest resolution on Sri Lanka (A/HRC/40/L.1).

The resolution makes no mention of Sri Lanka's complete failure to investigate the atrocity crimes committed against Tamil victims and UN employees. It omits any reference to the three UN reports establishing these crimes with evidence. It fails to mention the High Commissioner's recommendation in 2015 for an special international tribunal. It avoids the conclusion of every report by the High Commissioner since the adoption of Resolution A/HRC/30/1, that Sri Lanka has failed in its core obligation to investigate crimes.

It ignores the High Commissioner's most recent conclusion:

"Since 2015, virtually no progress has been made in investigating or prosecuting domestically the large number of allegations of war crimes or crimes against humanity collected by OHCHR in its investigation, and particularly those relating to military operations at the end of the war."



H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, The High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 February 2019, (A/HRC/40/23)

The Council, in an outrageously cavalier resolution, ignores Sri Lanka's persistent and public refusal to hold perpetrators accountable and "requests the Government of Sri Lanka to implement fully the measures identified by the Council in its resolution 30/1 that are outstanding." The failure of Sri Lanka to start a credible justice mechanism and the Council's willful blindness in response, continues to cause suffering to Tamil victims. For these people, justice is not merely an "outstanding measure."

Sadly, the Council's apathy to the continued suffering of victims and their families is not unique to Sri Lanka. We have entered a new era of international relations where atrocities in Sri Lanka, Syria and Myanmar are not met with the firm resolve demonstrated in Nuremberg, Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Instead, the international community has become tired and complacent. Its feigned outrage at atrocity crimes now dissipates quickly and without embarrassment. International investigations and prosecutions of the killing of over 7,000 men and boys in Srebrenica began immediately in 1995. The first step towards accountability has yet to be taken with respect to the 70 thousand civilians killed in Sri Lanka a decade later.

The international community has forgotten the warning Justice Robert Jackson, the Chief Prosecutor gave in his opening statement at Nuremberg explaining why justice for atrocity crimes must be undertaken no matter what the cost or how politically difficult: "civilization cannot tolerate their [atrocity crimes] being ignored, because it cannot survive them being repeated."

This May will mark ten years since the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka; the world's realization of the full extent of the atrocities committed by the Army of Sri Lanka; and the international community's complicity in denying victims justice.

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