

# Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam Condemns Sri Lanka's Ban on Muslim niqab

*TGTE Calls on Int'l Community to Stop Sri Lankan Exploitation of Easter Massacre*

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The [Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam \(TGTE\)](#) condemns Sri Lanka's ban on the niqab, veils and face coverings traditionally used by Muslim women, as a response to the Easter Massacre perpetrated by nine Muslim individuals and which murdered more than 250 men, women and children. The State's emergency regulations enacted on April 29 forbidding the Muslim religious practice of adorning a veil violates the right to religious freedom guaranteed by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

On the ground, the ban, as well as Sri Lanka's onslaught of mass arrests—some made under the oppressive Prevention of Terrorism Act—strengthens the fear that the Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist political and military apparatus will exploit the Easter Massacre to accelerate its mission to wipe out pluralism and diversity.

The ban on wearing a veil places the blame for the Easter Massacre on the entire Muslim community in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government has not produced evidence to show that the blanket ban on veils is necessary to prevent future attacks, especially given the fact that evidence points toward the Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist political and military leadership itself having deliberately failed to act on credible intelligence it received months prior and immediately before the bombings. The fact that this intelligence included the exact names of the perpetrators makes it abundantly clear that the fatal breakdown was not one of identification—which begs the question: What was Sri Lanka's real motivation for this veil ban?

This prohibitive regulation should be seen as a new chapter of the centuries old manuscript Mahavamsa, which is the inspiration for Sinhala Buddhist chauvinists trying to make Sri Lanka a mono-ethnic state. The ban is yet another act of persecution of the country's religious and ethnic communities, who are being reduced to second-class citizens in their own land.

The repeated violent attacks on both Muslims and Christians in Sri Lanka, by Sinhala Buddhist



chauvinist groups like the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) has a long history but has picked up pace after the 2009 Mullivaikal Genocide. The Genocide, which was the culmination of decades long colonization of the traditional Tamil Homeland in Sri Lanka's North and East regions, saw the cold-blooded slaughter of thousands and thousands of innocent Tamil civilians, economic and sexual exploitation of Tamil war widows, and the abduction and torture of Tamils, to name just a few of the exclusively Sinhala Buddhist Sri Lankan Army's many international crimes.

As the Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote in its report: "ongoing exclusionary policies, which are particularly deleterious as political, social, and economic exclusion based on ethnicity, perceived or real, have been at the heart of the conflict."

The April 26 statement on the Easter Sunday bombings, by Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe who, unlike his predecessors, is considered a pluralist in some quarters, said: "we may speak different languages, follow different faiths, and belong to different ethnicities, but we are all the children of Sri Lanka maatha." His use of the Sinhala word "maatha" in an English statement underscores the fact that when it comes to making Sri Lanka a Sinhala, Buddhist, mono-ethnic state, there is no difference between different sections of the Sinhalese political leadership.

Given all of the above, TGTE calls on the international community to protect the human rights enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights and prohibit Sri Lanka from imposing this ban under the pretext of fighting "Islamic terrorism". The ban should be clearly recognized for what it really is, a smokescreen for the Sri Lankan State to advance its 70-year old agenda to make the country an exclusively Sinhala, Buddhist, mono-ethnic state.

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#### ABOUT THE TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL EELAM (TGTE):

The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a democratically elected Government of over a million strong Tamils (from the island of Sri Lanka) living in several countries around the world. It's based on the principles of nationhood, homeland and self-determination. 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 the Senate and also a Cabinet.

TGTE is leading a campaign to realize the political aspirations of Tamils through peaceful, democratic, and diplomatic means and its Constitution mandates that it should realize its political objectives only through peaceful means.

TGTE seeks that the international community hold the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Tamil people to account. TGTE calls for a referendum to decide the political future of Tamils.

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 thousand Tamils were killed in six months in early 2009 and Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by the Sri Lankan Security forces. A report by the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) published details of Sri Lankan Military run "Rape Camps", where Tamil women are being held as sex slaves. 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.

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