

# Taking Advantage of Coronavirus Crisis, Sri Lanka Pardons a Soldier Sentenced to Death for Killing Tamil Civilians: TGTE

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*Visivanathan Rudrakumaran*

While the World Reels from the Coronavirus, Sri Lankan President Instead Focuses on Perpetuating Immunity for Int'l Crimes Against Tamils, Pardons Soldier Sentenced to Death for Slaughtering Tamil Civilians, said Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

"President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's pardoning of Sergeant Sunil Rathnayaka, who the Colombo High Court sentenced to death for murdering eight Tamil internally displaced

people (IDPs), including four children, in December 2000 is yet another reprehensible example of Sri Lanka's culture of impunity for crimes committed against Tamils" said Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, TGTE's Prime Minister.

"This latest action by Sri Lanka, which sets free a man found guilty of murdering four Tamil children, including a five-year-old whose body showed signs of torture, as well as four Tamil civilian adults, reinforces the urgent need for the international community to step up and refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC)."

"Clearly even the rarest of victories for Tamil victims of the grave international crimes perpetrated against them by the Sri Lankan State during the armed conflict cannot withstand the bias against Tamils that permeates Sri Lanka's institutions."

President Gotabaya, who served as Defense Secretary during the brutal final phase of the armed conflict in 2009 which saw the death of tens of thousands of Tamils at the hands of the security forces he oversaw, is implicated by UN and international NGO reports for perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Tamil People. He also stands accused of genocide.

According to the UN Internal Review Report on Sri Lanka, at 70 thousand Tamils were killed by Sri Lankan forces during the final 6 months of the armed conflict. Among a long list of other heinous crimes, security forces committed the widespread rape of Tamil women. A report by the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) published details of Sri Lankan military-run "Rape Camps," where Tamil women were held as sex slaves. There remain over 90,000 Tamil war widows, some of whose relatives were disappeared by the State. Tamil mothers of the disappeared have called for ICC referral for years.

Earlier this month, President Rajapaksa withdrew Sri Lanka's co-sponsorship of UN Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1, which calls for establishing an international justice mechanism. Only the ICC can pierce head of state immunity.

In March 2019, the International Commission of Jurists stated that ICC referral of Sri Lanka “is fully warranted.”

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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.

TGTE was formed after the mass killing of Tamils by the Sri Lankan Government in 2009.

TGTE thrice 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. It's based on the principles of nationhood, homeland and self-determination.

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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