

Colombo Government Has The Responsibility To Examine Itself And Ask Why Tamils Wish To Secede: Dr. José Ramos-Horta

Former East Timor President and Nobel Laureate Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta Delivered Mullivaikal Memorial Lecture on May 18, 2020: TGTE

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Former East Timor President and Nobel Laureate Dr. Jose Ramos - Horta

'Just like why Madrid should ask itself the question why the Catalan people want to be alone after living together for centuries, or why it is London who

have to ask themselves the question why Scots would desire secession from the Union, so also should the government in Colombo ask why the Tamils wish to ho leave' said the Nobel Laureate, and a freedom fighter turned diplomat and later President of independent Timor Leste, Dr José Ramos-Horta, on Monday 18 May from Dili, the capital of East Timor.

Dr Ramos-Horta delivered the fifth annual Mullivaaikkaal Memorial Lecture at the invitation of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

He urged that ruling Sates have the responsibility to ask themselves why a nation of people such as the Tamils, who have an incredible sense of identity and history, want to be on their own; States also must acknowledge that something must have been going wrong. He spoke of the struggle of the Tamil people in the same vein as the extraordinary demonstrations of the same phenomenon by Catalans in Spain, the Kurds in Turkey and the Scottish in UK by way of current examples.

The Mullivaaikkaal Memorial Lecture is held by the TGTE annually to remember the victims of Mullivaaikkaal who perished in their thousands at the hands of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces in the final phase of the war that ended on May 18, 2009. Prominent speakers from a range of backgrounds and coming from USA, Kosovo and South Sudan have delivered these Lectures in previous years. The 2020 Lecture was a virtual event due to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and was livestreamed across the world at 11:00 EST on 18 May 2020.

President Ramos-Horta placed the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka within the larger context of genocide of Jews in Germany in the last century and the genocide going on in Syria and Sudan, and emphasised the need to rise above mutual demonization of national ethnic groups and for them to engage in productive dialogue to resolve national issues. The struggle for Self Determination and nationhood is a historical truth and every nation and every people want to be free, but that freedom does not have to mean secession he said.

Narrating the path the struggle of his own East Timorese people in Indonesia took, he referred to how their resistance movement at a later point pursued a dialogue with the Indonesian government under UN mediation, and the eventual Referendum that led to their independence. At no stage during the oppressive ways of the Indonesian State did the East Timorese demonised their oppressor.

Dr Ramos-Horta thought that the government of Sri Lanka being the greater force could also demonstrate the compassion of Buddhism and reach out to the Tamil people. He told the Tamil people never to lose hope and never cease to dream. Whatever the outcome may be, you shall prevail, he concluded.

Video: https://tgte.tv/watch/former-east-timor-president-and-nobel-laureate-jose-ramos-horta-i-mullivaikal-memorial-lecture-2020_NRv914vyclvq3P6.html

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