

# Sri Lanka: Tens of Thousands of Tamils Rally to Call For Freedom and Rejecting Unitary State

*Slogans Shouted: "Sinhalese Army Leave our Tamil areas", "We want International Justice for Genocide", "Give Our Lands Back"and "Give our Disappeared Back".*

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Led by North East Civil Societies, tens of thousands of Tamils embarked on "Walk from Justice to Tamils" from Pothuvil to Polihandy (P2P) from February 3rd to February 7th.



Tamils Rally 1

During the rally, people shouted slogans: "Sinhalese Army Leave our Tamil areas", "We want International Justice for Genocide", "Give Our Lands Back"and "Give our Disappeared Back".

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UN Urged to Refer Sri Lanka to International Criminal Court (ICC) for War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide committed against Tamil people by the Sinhalese - Buddhist Sri Lankan State”

*Tamil Civil Society*

At the end of the rally several demands we read out and a Pledge was taken by tens of thousands of Tamils who joined the walk and the meeting.

<https://youtu.be/VVeeXerMnqQ>

\*\* HERE ARE THE DEMANDS AND PLEDGE \*\*

1) We Tamils have been fighting for over seventy years for self Determination. We are a nation of people living in the merged North and East in the island of Ceylon. We have our right to determine our own destiny. Successive Sri Lankan Sinhala - Buddhist Governments have continually

suppressed our right to self- determination and govern us employing brutal military force to annihilate, which amounts to Genocide.

2) Since the independence from the British in 1948, Tamils have been waging peaceful non-

violent struggles for our self-determination. These peaceful struggles were brutally suppressed by the use of force by the successive Sinhala - Buddhist Government, resulting in Tamil youths turn to armed struggle, which was suppressed by Sri Lankan Security forces killing tens of thousands of Tamil civilians and sexually assaulting and raping Tamil women.



Tamils Rally 2

3) According to the November 2012 Report of the UN Secretary-General's Internal Review Panel on UN Action in

Sri Lanka, over 70,000 people were killed during the final six months of the war that ended in May 2009.

4) Several were killed when Sri Lankan forces repeatedly bombed and shelled an area designated by the Government as No Fire Zones (Safe zones). Even hospitals and food distribution centers were bombed. Several also died of starvation and bled to death due to lack of medical treatment.

5) International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) in February 2017 handed over details to UN of Sri Lankan Military run "Rape Camps", where Tamil women are being held as "sex slaves."

6) According to a UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report in April 2013, there are over 90,000 Tamil war widows in Sri Lanka.

7) Thousands of Tamils disappeared including babies and children. The UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances stated that the second-highest number of enforced disappearance cases in the world is from Sri Lanka.

After the war ended eleven years ago in May 2009, Tamils are facing the following hardships, and we who Walked for Tamil's Justice from Pothuvil to Polikandy demand that the following abuses to stop:

1) Militarization of Tamil's traditional homeland is continuing, and Tamils' historical identity is destroyed with the aim to change demography in favor of Sinhalese, using several government departments, including archaeological, forest, survey departments, and Ministry of Buddhasasana as well as Mahaveli River Development Agency. Also, Government-sponsored Sinhalese settlements are continuing.

2) Continuing land grab in Tamil's traditional homeland by the Security Forces and the Government converting Tamil's traditional and historical places into Sinhalese-Buddhist areas by establishing numerous Buddhist temples in Tamil areas, including after destroying Hindu temples. As of now, around 200 Hindu temples were affected by this act of the Government.

3) Sri Lankan Sinhalese Security Forces stationed in Tamil's traditional homeland should be removed and civilian life return to normal. Also, calling for the immediate stop of appointments of Military officers to civilian administrative positions and immediately remove all the officers who are already in civilian administrative positions.

4) Sinhalese - Buddhist Government continues to intimidate and abuse Tamil journalists who cover abuses against Tamils and Tamil Civil Society activists who protest these abuses. This not only violates their constitutionally guaranteed rights, it is being used to suppress Tamil's calls for fundamental rights, including self-determination.

5) Tamil cattle owners are facing numerous problems, where their grazing areas are being occupied by Sinhalese - Buddhists and their cows killed. For example, In the Batticaloa district, Mayilathamadu and Mathavani grazing lands for cattle were forcibly occupied with the aim to create Sinhalese - Buddhist settlements. Cows belonging to Tamil's were killed with the aim to destroy Tamil's livelihood. As part of this plan forests in Tamil areas were destroyed and cleared to establish Sinhalese - Buddhist settlements.

6) All the lands that were confiscated by the Government / Sri Lankan Sinhalese Security Forces from Tamil civilians should be returned immediately.

7) Tamils have been denied the Right to Remember their war dead, as demonstrated by denying remembrance events, destruction of cemeteries of the war dead, and demolition of memorials by the Sinhalese - Buddhist Government.

8) Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) has been used to imprison Tamils without charge or trial for over 40 years and is now being used against Muslims.

9) Tamil Prisoners of War (POW) / Political Prisoners have been imprisoned for several years without trial. The Sinhalese - Buddhist Government has pardoned Sinhalese - Buddhist prisoners on a regular basis, but none of the Tamil POW's / political prisoners were pardoned.

10) Families of the enforced disappeared have been protesting to find their loved ones, including babies and children, but the Sinhalese - Buddhist Government refuses to give them any answer.

11) Muslims who died due to COVID are cremated against the wishes of the families and against Islamic teachings. Muslims who peacefully protest against this policy are suppressed.

12) Tamils in the upcountry have been urging for a pay raise of 1,000 rupees and other

grievances but successive Sinhalese - Buddhist Governments have ignored their demands.

**\*\* IN ADDITION WE REQUEST:**

\* We urge to implement Tamil's Joint Appeal to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and to UN Human Rights Council the Member States, which includes a request to Refer Sri Lanka to International Criminal Court (ICC) for War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide committed against the Tamil people by the Sinhalese - Buddhist Sri Lankan State.

\* Furthermore, as a guarantee that the Genocide that took place against Tamils is not repeated, a permanent political solution should be found by getting the wishes of the Tamil people through internationally conducted and monitored referendum.

**\*\* PLEDGE:**

\* We, with the clear understanding and historical knowledge that successive Sinhalese-Buddhist Governments have pursued as a State policy to destroy Tamil's identity and survival by employing actions amounting to Genocide, Pledge that:

\* We who walked from Pothuvil to Polikandy call upon everyone to join hands and work tirelessly and with determination to achieve our just goals, including international justice for Genocide we faced.

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