

# Sri Lanka Charges Tamils who Remembered their War Dead under Draconian Anti-Terror Law

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*Tamil News Service*

BATTICALOA, SRI LANKA, May 19, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/

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The Sri Lankan security forces have arrested ten Tamil men and women for peacefully remembering their war dead and charged them under draconian anti-terror law, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

PTA allows arbitrarily imprisoning people for years. Several Tamils are languishing in prisons under this law for over ten years. UN and other international organizations have repeatedly urged Sri Lanka to abolish this law.

These ten Tamils were arrested for participating at a memorial event at a beach in Kalkudah in the Batticaloa district in the Eastern Province. They lit a flame of remembrance and lay flowers to commemorate the tens of thousands of Tamils killed by Sri Lankan security forces in 2009.

Sri Lankan Government took numerous steps to prevent Tamils from remembering their war dead by banning any memorial ceremonies and vandalized a Memorial Monument.

Heavily armed troops patrolled Tamil areas and intimidated Tamils from remembering their war dead..

The police also got Magistrate Court to issue an order prohibiting all types of commemorative activities due to concerns related to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Sri Lanka. The court's prohibition order accords with similar acts in the recent past in which it used COVID-19 as a pretext to deprive the Tamils of their right to memorialization.

This is in stark contrast to a recent Sinhala – Buddhist function that took place in the North. The Security forces and the Police not only attended the ceremonies, but also gave protection. Police did not raise the COVID issue during this ceremony.

It should be noted that Sri Lankan Security Forces were emboldened to continue their atrocity crimes against Tamil people when UN Human Rights Council failed to refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as recommended by UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights, four former High-Commissioners and several other UN experts.

#### BACKGROUND:

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.

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". Also, According to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report in April 2013, there are over 90 thousand Tamil war widows in Sri Lanka.

Thousands of Tamils disappeared, including babies and children. The UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances stated in 2020 that the second highest number of enforced disappearance cases in the world is from Sri Lanka.

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. .

P2P Movement

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