

Sri Lanka President Election: Tamil Parties Demand Reduction of Military Presence in Tamil Areas a Condition to Support

1) Stop Settlements in Tamil Areas 2) Police, Land & Financial Powers to Provincial Councils 3) North & East Provincial Councils directly receive Int'l Funds

JAFFNA, SRI LANKA, July 19, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ --

As the Presidential Elections in Sri Lanka are going to take place on July 20th, main Tamil political parties have jointly sent the attached memo to all three Presidential Candidates of their position of their demands before deciding whom to vote.

"On hearing from each candidate their views in writing we would decide whom our Parliamentarians should vote on the 20th July 2022." said the memo.

Below, please find memo:

19-07-2022

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES BY SIX TAMIL NATIONAL PARTIES INCLUDING THEIR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
-REGARDING THEIR GRIEVANCES -

WHEREAS THE SRI LANKAN TAMILS AND SINHALESE ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THIS ISLAND. BUDDHISM WAS RECEIVED INTO THIS COUNTRY IN THE 3RD CENTURY BC. Both communities HAVE OCCUPIED THIS COUNTRY FOR A LONG TIME AND HAD LIVED

AMICABLY. THERE IS NO REASON WHY THEY CANNOT LIVE IN AMITY HEREAFTER TOO. THE TAMILS SEEK EQUALITY AND DIGNITY AND THE RIGHT TO LIVE AND GOVERN THEMSELVES IN THEIR AREAS OF CONTINUED RESIDENCE PEACEFULLY UNINTERFERED BY OUTSIDERS.

WHEREAS PRIOR TO THE COUNTRY BEING AMALGAMATED BY THE BRITISH FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES IN 1833, THERE WAS A DISTINGUISHABLE TAMIL SPEAKING AREA GOVERNED BY TAMIL RULERS IN THE NORTH AND EAST OF THE ISLAND. DESPITE AMALGAMATION WHICH BECAME A FAIT ACCOMPLI AT THE TIME OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE ENACTMENT OF SUCCESSIVE UNITARY CONSTITUTIONS, THE MAJORITY IN THE NORTH AND EAST STILL SPEAK

THE TAMIL LANGUAGE. THE INDO SRI LANKAN AGREEMENT OF 1987 RECOGNISED THE NORTH-EAST AS HAVING BEEN THE HISTORICAL HABITATION OF THE TAMILS.

AND WHEREAS SINCE SRI LANKA OBTAINED INDEPENDENCE THE TAMILS INCLUDING THE UPCOUNTRY TAMILS HAVE UNDERGONE MUCH DISCRIMINATION AND CALUMNY DUE TO THE ETHNOCENTRIC POLICIES PURSUED BY SUCCESSIVE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENTS.

AND WHEREAS THE UNITARY CONSTITUTION GIVEN BY THE BRITISH AT THE TIME OF THEIR DEPARTURE HANDED OVER POLITICAL POWER TO THE SINHALESE WHO WERE MINORITIES IN THE NORTH EAST BUT MAJORITY ELSEWHERE. THEREBY THE MAJORITY IN THE SEVEN PROVINCES OUTSIDE THE NORTH EAST WERE ABLE TO DOMINATE AND HEGEMONIZE THE TAMILS SO FAR. THE IMPOSITION OF SINHALA LANGUAGE BY THE SINHALA ONLY ACT OF 1956, IN AREAS WHERE THE MAJORITY WERE TAMIL SPEAKING, WAS SYMBOLIC OF SUCH DOMINATION.

AND WHEREAS THE RAJAPAKSES IN ORDER TO COVER UP THEIR CORRUPT PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES BOTH WITHIN THE MILITARY AND ELSEWHERE, CREATED AN IMAGE ABOUT THE TAMILS AS BEING TERRORISTS AND MUSLIMS AS EXTREMISTS. IN RECENT TIMES THE SINHALA MAJORITY HAVE BEGUN TO UNDERSTAND THE ATROCITIES PERPETRATED ON THE TAMILS AND THE SUFFERINGS UNDERGONE BY THEM SO FAR.THEY HAVE ALSO COME TO REALISE THAT THE INCIDENTS OF APRIL 21ST 2019 WERE STAGED TO GET THE SINHALA BUDDHIST MAJORITY VOTES.TODAY THOSE VERY VOTERS HAVE TURNED AGAINST THEIR PRESIDENT WHOM THEY PASSIONATELY VOTED FOR.

AND WHEREAS THE COUNTRY HAS NOW REALISED TO A GREAT EXTENT THAT POLITICIANS IN SRI LANKA HAD FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL BENEFIT CREATED THE BOGEY OF TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM BUT RECONCILIATION AMONG THE DIVERSE PEOPLE OF THIS ISLAND IS INDEED POSSIBLE IF UNDERSTANDING DAWNS.

AND WHEREAS IT IS NECESSARY THAT WHEN THE COUNTRY TURNS A NEW LEAF POLITICALLY, WE DO NOT REPEAT THE WRONGS SO FAR COMMITTED AND THAT WE PUT RIGHT THE POLITICAL WRONGS COMMITTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. NOW THEREFORE WE THE LEADERS OF SIX TAMIL NATIONALIST PARTIES DO HEREBY SET OUT HEREUNDER THE STEPS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO BRING AN END TO THE LONG DELAYED ETHNIC CRISIS-

1. The Sri Lankan Tamils are entitled to the right of self- determination in terms of Article 1 of the provisions of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They form a Nation in terms of the Law. Therefore steps must be taken to bring to an end the hegemonic administration and governance hitherto practiced by the Centre. This must take place within six months of election of the new President.

2. Pending the enactment of a new constitution following remedies must be found for the

existing immediate problems of the Tamils-

- a. Withdraw the Prevention of Terrorism Act as undertaken to the UN.
- b. Release under a special Amnesty all Tamil Political Prisoners convicted, detained and taken into custody under the PTA. Needless to say the provisions of the PTA are contrary to the normal criminal law of the Country.
- c. Release all lands to the People in the Northern and Eastern Provinces which were expropriated from the People by the Archaeology Commission, Mahaweli Authority, Forest Department, Wild Life Department and the Military Forces et al.
- d. Reduce the Military in the North and East substantially handing back the extensive lands and number of buildings back to the People or the respective District Secretaries, as found appropriate. There are new lands recently appropriated by the Military. The Military must be asked to hand over them too to the owners or the respective District Secretary of the area concerned.
- e. Take steps without delay to inquire into the enforced disappearances.
- f. Stop all land grabbing taking place in the North East in order to settle Persons from outside the Provinces with a view to change the demography of the Tamil speaking areas.
- g. Review all delimitation of boundaries in the North East undertaken by the State with a view to decrease the Parliamentary representation of Tamil speaking people and take necessary steps to give adequate representation to the people of the area in contra- position to those brought from outside the Provinces. There is no need for delimitation for new electorates in the North -East and in the Hill country.
- h. Review Election procedures so far adopted with a view to decrease Tamil speaking People's representation. Proportional representation should continue.
- i. Implement all existing provisions in the Thirteenth Amendment including land and police powers before a proper Constitution recognizing the right of self -determination of the Tamils is put in place. Financial power now in the hands of the Governor must be passed on to the Provincial Councils.
- j. Make arrangements for the Northern and Eastern Provinces to receive investments without any obstacles being placed by the Central Government. The Tamil diaspora is prepared to bring in large amount of capital despite the dire straits the country is in, if sufficient guarantees in terms of International trade practices are given by the Government. To overcome the present economic crisis, Sri Lanka needs foreign investments. We are having almost 1.5 million Tamil diaspora all over the world and quite a number of them are willing to bring investments into this

country. But they do not have any faith in the Colombo Governments. If the North and East Provincial Councils are given the powers in this interim period to invite and protect the international investments many would like to come and invest here. Under a proper Constitution which recognizes the rights of Nation or Nations within its fold, such powers would be automatically invested in the federal unit. Powers for tax relief and other relevant concessions like land, infrastructure etc must be given to the Provincial Councils until a proper Constitution is in place. If we make it easy for the investors we would be in a position to invite large foreign direct investments.

On hearing from each candidate their views in writing we would decide whom our Parliamentarians should vote on the 20th July 2022.

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