

TGTE condemns murderous assault on writer Salman Rushdie

Freedom of speech and thought are the foundations of any civilized and democratic society and attempts to silence in any way is truly reprehensible

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The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) strongly condemns the heinous knife attack of well-known writer Salman Rushdie by a religious fanatic in western New York. We wish him a speedy recovery and are glad to know that his life is out of danger following the prompt medical treatment provided to him.

While the motives of Hadi Matar, the attacker, are yet to be fully confirmed it is widely believed he was motivated by the edict to kill Rushdie issued by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who viewed his 1988 book "The Satanic Verses" as blasphemous. Mr Rushdie's contributions to world literature are immense and is known to be an impartial critic of a wide range of oppressive regimes everywhere in the world.

The TGTE believes that freedom of speech and thought are the foundations of any civilized and democratic society and attempts to silence writers, artists and intellectuals in any way is truly reprehensible. In the case of Mr Rushdie it is particularly shocking that the government of Iran is directly implicated in issuing such a 'death warrant'.

Like the Iranian regime, successive governments in Sri Lanka too have been motivated by religious fanaticism for many decades now in their persecution of ethnic, linguistic and other populations that do not fit into their vision of a 'Sinhala Buddhist' nation. The Tamil Nation in particular have suffered heavily in the hands of the Sinhala Buddhist state, going through what is now being globally recognised as nothing less than a genocide.

Countless Tamil writers, journalists, poets and other intellectuals have been assassinated, imprisoned and tortured for their creative expressions demanding justice and the realization of the right of self-determination for their people. Not a single Sri Lankan official has ever been punished or even indicted for these crimes against humanity.

The recently ousted President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa in particular was notorious for operating 'White Vans' that were used for abducting political opponents and dissident

intellectuals when he was the country's Defence Secretary at the height of the armed conflict in the late 2000s. Currently Gotabaya Rajapaksa is hiding in Thailand, running out of options for refuge and we at the TGTE urge the world community to ensure his arrest and prosecution under Universal Jurisdiction.

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