

Seeking to Find the Whereabouts of Their Disappeared Babies, Tamil Mothers Protest in the Sri Lankan Capital Outside UN

" 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. "

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, October 17, 2022

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Hundreds of Weeping Tamil Mothers of the Disappeared protested in the Sri Lankan Capital Colombo outside UN, seeking to find the whereabouts of their babies and other loved ones. Babies as young as eight months old also have disappeared. Even though several Tamil babies and children disappeared, a group documented information of 29 of them with photos and age.

<https://english.theleader.lk/news/564-tamil-mothers-mark-children-s-day-with-list-of-kids-taken-away-by-military>



3 years old when Disappeared

"Some of the babies who have disappeared must be around 14 years old by now, we constantly worry about their wellbeing." Said distraught mothers.

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Appoint an International Investigative Team to Find Out the Whereabouts of Our Disappeared Babies and Loved Ones and Bring Them Back.”

Tamil Mothers of the Disappeared

Thousands of Tamils Disappeared and 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.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/202/90/PDF/G2020290.pdf?OpenElement>

These Tamil mothers came from North and East of the island, braving intimidation and harassment by the

Security Forces and Intelligence agencies.

They submitted an appeal to UN Resident coordinator Hanaa Singer, urging UN to Appoint an International Investigative Team of Eminent Persons to Find out about the whereabouts of their loved ones and bring them back, as well as to identify the political and military leaders responsible for the disappearances over the years.

** Several Presidents were in power during these large scale disappearances, including Gothabaya Rajapaksa, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Maithripala Sirisena and Chanthrika Kumaratunga.

** Noted military leaders include Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka and General Shavendra Silva.

Watch: <https://fb.watch/gcHu1kXew4/>

BELOW, PLEASE FIND THE APPEAL TO THE UN:

From: Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearances North & East

1) INTRODUCTION:

Thousands of Tamils including babies and children have disappeared by Sri Lankan security forces. Many of us also handed over our loved ones to them in May 2009 believing the government's word that they will be released after swift investigation. Thirteen years have passed and still not a word about their plight and they have become "disappeared."

Some of the babies who have disappeared must be around 14 years old by now. We constantly worry about their wellbeing and other loved ones who disappeared.



8 Months old when Disappeared



10 years old when Disappeared

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.

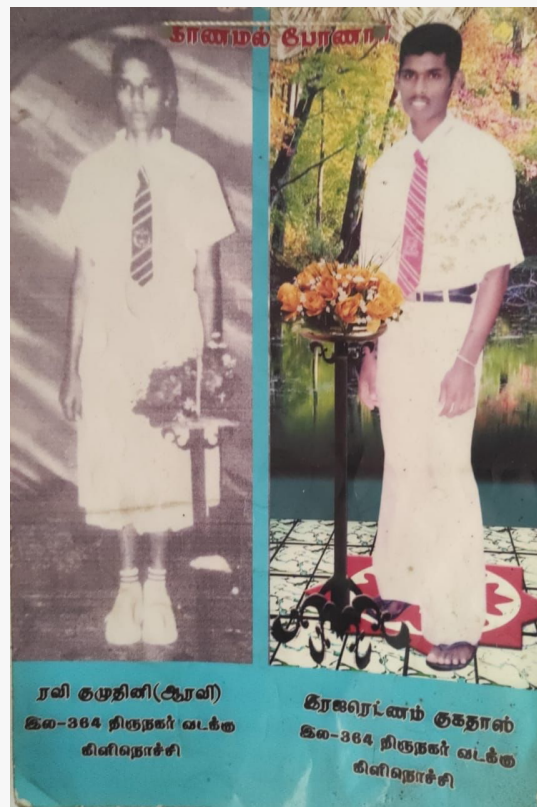
2) OUR APPEAL TO SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS AND OUR PEACEFUL PROTESTS:

We met successive Government leaders to plead with them to hand our loved ones back to us or at least inform us about their plight.

Since none of the appeals to the Government were listened to, for over the last five and a half years (2,000 days), we continuously are holding peaceful protests in different places in the North & East of this country. Our peaceful protests and hunger strikes were brutally suppressed by the large number of Security forces stationed in Tamil areas. Many of the troops who are stationed in Tamil areas are the same ones who are responsible for disappearing our loved ones. Despite this intimidating environment, we are continuing our protests. As of now 132 of our mothers who participated in our protests have passed away.

3) GOVERNMENT'S DECEIVING TACTIC BY FORMING OFFICE OF MISSING PERSONS (OMP):

While on one hand the Government uses its Security forces to intimidate us and on the other hand they took steps to deceive us and the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) by establishing the Office of Missing Persons (OMP) in response to Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1. However, since its operationalization in September 2017, it has become apparent that there was no honest intention to serve the families of the disappeared. Its title "Office of Missing Persons"



School Students when Disappeared



Tamil Mothers Seeking their Disappeared Babies Protest Outside UN in Colombo

implies the persons in question went missing when, in fact, they were victims of enforced disappearance by the state.

On 20th May 2021, former Police Chief Jayantha Wickramaratne, in-charge of three police units allegedly involved in mass disappearances at the end of the armed conflict, was appointed as a member of the OMP.

4) OFFICE OF REPARATIONS - AN INSULT TO OUR LOVED ONES:

In 2018 Sri Lanka established the Office for Reparations. We strongly rejected this initiative and consider this an insult to put a monetary value on our loved ones lives. We also consider this as an attempt to bribe us to silence us.

5) UN'S RESPONSE TO OMP:

Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in her June 2021 report stated the recent appointments to the OMP and the Office of Reparation were discouraging victims trust and hampering investigations into disappearances.

6) TO GET JUSTICE REFER SRI LANKA TO INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC):

We also believe that justice can be achieved only through an independent international accountability process. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated in her 2021 February report, the situation in Sri Lanka should be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Her recommendation was endorsed by all previous Human Rights Commissioners, eleven former UN Special Rapporteurs who visited Sri Lanka and wrote reports and all the members of the UN Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Sri Lanka.

7) APPOINT AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIVE TEAM TO FIND THE WHEREABOUTS OF OUR BABIES & LOVED ONES AND BRING THEM BACK:

As mothers of the disappeared we strongly believe that only way to find the whereabouts of our loved ones is to appoint an international investigative team of eminent persons to independently investigate to find the whereabouts of our disappeared Babies and loved ones and bring them back.

Thank you.

Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearances North & East

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