

# UN Rights Chief Urged to Help Reclaim Tamil Civilian's Lands Occupied by the Sri Lankan Military: TGTE

*Land-Grabbing in Tamil Areas is Not done by Few Rogue Officials. It is being Done Pursuant to a State Policy. It Also Falls Within One of the Acts of Genocide*

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, November 22, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) today urged UN High commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Volker Turk to help reclaim Tamil civilian's lands occupied by the Sri Lankan Military.



Sri Lankan Military in Tamil areas

Thousands of acres of Tamil civilian's lands consisting of Houses, Schools, Hospitals, Hindu Temples, Christian Churches, Pasturelands and Farmlands were seized by the military during the war that ended thirteen years ago and refusing to handover to the rightful owners. The security forces are fully utilizing these lands, building houses, mansions and hotels, destroying Hindu temples, building Buddhist temples where hardly any Buddhists live, farming and constructing recreation centers for the security forces.

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Presently Tamils do not have either a domestic forum or an international forum to obtain justice and redress for land grabbing by the Sri Lankan Military.”

*V RUDRAKUMARAN*

Due to this, thousands of families have been living in camps for the displaced for over thirty years.

Last week a protest was held outside the Northern Provincial Governor's office to protest the refusal to hand over the civilian lands to their original owners was dispersed by the military, police and intelligence services.

There are reports of women protesters being abused by the forces.

Tens of thousands of Sri Lankan Security Forces are still stationed in Tamil areas despite the war

having ended thirteen years ago. These forces are living among their victims without accountability. These victims suffered sexual violence, rape, torture and the disappearance and death of loved ones. According to the UN's report of the 2012 Internal Review on Sri Lanka, over 70 thousand Tamils were credibly believed to be killed in the six months between late 2008 and mid 2009, while innumerable Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by the almost totally Sinhalese Sri Lankan security forces.

According to the US think-tank, the Oakland Institute, there are around one soldier for every six civilians in Tamil areas of the North, which is considered one of the highest military-civilian ratios in the world. In one district the ratio is one soldier for every two civilians.

The land-grabbing in Tamil areas is not done by few rogue officials. It is being done pursuant to a state policy. Given the cultural attachment to the land, the land grabbing is an exercise attempting to destroy the Eelam Tamil identity. The state of Sri Lanka is seeking to erase the identity of Eelam Tamils through continued militarization and territorial aggrandizement.

As stated in the study by Ricardo Falla, land grabbing falls within one of the acts of genocide, namely "the intentional subjection of a group to living conditions which will lead to their total or partial physical destruction," identified in the Genocide Convention. In other words, the land grabbing of Tamil lands by the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan state is genocide of the Tamil people by other means.

<https://www.americas.org/land-grabs-the-latest-form-of-genocide-in-guatemala/>

Presently Tamils do not have either a domestic forum or an international forum to obtain justice and redress for this land grabbing. Due to pervasive and entrenched racism in the Sri Lankan state apparatus Tamils are not in a position to obtain justice domestically.

Human Rights Watch in its 2018 report entitled "Why Can't We Go Home? Military Occupation of Land in Sri Lanka" stated, "The Supreme Court during the period when Emergency Regulations were in operation did not make any ruling on the legal status of High Security Zones but proposed that solutions be negotiated between the state and affected community." This refusal to make a ruling on such a vital topic clearly shows that the Sri Lankan Supreme Court has abdicated its responsibilities to uphold the rule of law.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/09/why-cant-we-go-home/military-occupation-land-sri-lanka>

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) as well as the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) addressed the issue of the return of occupied land by the Sri Lankan armed forces. The 2015 UNHRC Resolution called for the return of occupied land. The High Commissioner in his report in 2018 on the implementation of UNHRC Resolutions 30/1 and 34/1 noted, "The full extent of land under military occupation claimed by civilians remains in question." The Sri Lankan state has not taken any measures to comply with the UN calls, but rather continues to appropriate even more land in the former conflict zones. That Sri Lanka is able to act with such

impunity is a sad demonstration of the limitations of the UN human rights machinery.

Given the absence of domestic and international forums for redress, the call of the hour is for victim-centric international justice. The TGTE calls for legislative initiatives in democratic countries to bring an amendment adding accountability for torture and genocide to the exceptions allowed in any use of the defense of sovereign immunity.

The TGTE also calls the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other multilateral institutions to condition all aid to Sri Lanka on an end to land-grabbing and the return of occupied lands to their rightful owners.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka faced repeated mass killings in 1958, 1977, and 1983 and the mass killings in 2009 prompted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a Panel of Experts to report on the scale of the killings.

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. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2012-11-14/statement-internal-review-panel-report-sri-lanka>

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". <https://www.itjpsl.com/assets/Part-1-ITJP-Public-Submission-to-CEDAW-2017.pdf>

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

Thousands of Tamils disappeared, including babies and children. 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.

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran  
Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

+1 614-202-3377

r.thave@tgte.org

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