

# TGTE Appreciates Former Sri Lankan President Kumaratunga's Unprecedented Admission that Sri Lanka is a Failed State

*TGTE Calls Attention to Regrettably Missing Piece of Apology: Recognition of Tamil Genocide.*

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Inability of successive Sri Lankan regimes to resolve the minority problem was one of the reasons for the country becoming a failed state.”

*Former President Chanthrika Kumaratunga*

Tamil Eelam (TGTE) welcomes the unprecedented admission by former Sri Lanka President Chandrika Vijaya Kumaratunga that Sri Lanka is a failed state. (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWsv3pna8w4>).

At the same time, although the TGTE applauds the former president for publicly stating this truth, the TGTE objects to Ms. Kumaratunga attribution of this failure to corruption and her partial mea culpa glaring omission of any mention of the States pervasive, long-standing and ongoing institutionalized discrimination against Tamils and the

Tamil Genocide as well as the causal role of the State's grave crimes against Tamils to Sri Lanka's demise into a failed state.

“Even after 450 years of destruction by colonial rulers, at independence, Sri Lanka possessed some of the best socio-economic indicators. Today, at 75, Sri Lanka is a failed state,” the former Sri Lanka President said while delivering the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Madanjeet Singh Memorial Lecture of 2023 on April 16.

In her lecture, Ms. Kumaratunga aptly quoted former Singapore President Lee Kuan Yew, who, following his visit to Sri Lanka in 1956, stated that the commonwealth country was at that time a model that the newly formed Singapore aspired to emulate. [Sri Lanka, Now Cautionary Tale, Was Once a Role Model for the Developing World by Akil Bakshi on July 26, 2022].

Ms. Kumaratunga then laid significant blame for the island of Sri Lanka's demise on the corruption of the leaders of the country, which she said had led to the nation's record of poor governance since independence. “Widespread corruption at every level” has become the “gospel

of Sri Lankan politics” and has seeped down the major pillars of democratic governance, including the judiciary, the police, and the public service,” Ms. Kumaratunga said.

Significantly, Ms. Kumaratunga, who hails from a family of former presidents and prime ministers, also said that the inability of successive Sri Lankan regimes to resolve the minority problem was one of the reasons for the country becoming a failed state. “Independent Sri Lanka failed to “weld together the diverse ethnic and religious communities to form a united pluralistic state,” she said in her online lecture.

However, while the TGTE applauds Ms. Kumaratunga's admission that rampant corruption among successive Sri Lankan leaders contributed to the island nation becoming a failed state. The TGTE is disappointed that her statement regrettably fell short of acknowledging the fact that the Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka have been subjected to a genocide—both physical and cultural—by successive regimes since the end of British colonial rule in the 1940s. This pervasive, long-standing and ongoing institutionalized discrimination against the Tamil People is the main cause that must be publicly recognized—and reckoned with.



Chanthrika Kumaratunga

Along this line, another glaring and notable omission from Ms. Kumaratunga's speech is that, in addition to former Singapore President Lee Kuan Yew's 1956 statement about Sri Lanka's economic potential, in 1966 he also said [Tamils] were active and intelligent fellows who worked hard and got themselves penalized as a result of the domination of the Sinhala majority.” Former President Yew further stated Sinhalese who are less capable are putting down Tamils who are more capable. (p. 528).” [Lee Kuan Yew: The Man and His Ideas by Han Fook Kwang, Warren Fernandez, Sumiko Tan published on August 7, 2015]. President Yew captured the essence of the malady of what Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka have been facing since independence. That is the Sinhala Racism. A well-known American political rhetoric “It is the Sinhala racism stupid.” This is the root issue from which other issues flow.

Immediately after the island of Sri Lanka's independence, the state, in a strategic power play, disenfranchised more than one million Tamils of Indian origin. The passage of the 1958 Sinhala Only Act, which discriminated against the Tamils, as well as the 1972 University admission standardization—a reverse form of affirmative action to benefit the majority community—and the

passages of the 1972 and 1978 constitutions, which institutionalized the supremacy of the Sinhala Buddhists, along with the sheer brutality of the long military campaign, are manifestations of Sinhala Racism. None of these have anything to do with corruption.

All the examples given demonstrate that Tamils never had, and still do not have, effective participation in the political process of the island of Sri Lanka. The Report of the Expert Panel on Accountability in Sri Lanka, published in 2011 by the panel appointed by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in fact states that the root cause of the conflict is the real or perceived exclusion of Tamils from the political process.

Notably, under UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (1970), which is considered as customary international law, when "people are denied effective participation in the political process they have a right to form an independent state".

This position is also taken by the Canadian Supreme Court, as it stated in its ruling on Quebec's unilateral independence decision.

Immediately after Sri Lankan independence, state-sponsored colonization began, and it continued under successive Sri Lankan governments. This strategic government flooding of the historic Tamil Homeland with non-Tamils still continues even in the current economic crisis. Notably, in 1948 the Sinhala population in the Eastern Province was less than 1%, today the Sinhala population is 29%. The above is another face of the Sinhala Racism.

The States deliberate actions to torpedo any kind of power-sharing agreements starting from the Banda-Chelva Pact, and continuing through the Dudley-Chelva Pact, the Peace Talks between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan State and the Post-Tsunami Operational Mechanism (PTOMs) are another face of the Sinhala Racism.

With respect to the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord, the Tamil National Leader, Hon. Velupillai Prabhakaran said in his historic 1987 Suthumalai Speech, "Time is not far off when Sinhala racism will devour this agreement [[On the Indo Sri Lanka Accord by Velupillai Pirabaharan on August 4, 1987].". How prophetic he was.

The sad truth is that Sri Lanka is not only a failed state but also a 'rogue state'. From 1958 until 2006, there were more than 156 racial, anti-Tamil pogroms on the island, culminating with the 2009 Mullaivaikal Genocide. Still to this day, now more than 14 years since this massacre, no one has been brought to justice for any of these atrocity crimes. This is another face of Sinhala Racism.

The Navali Church Bombing and the Nagar Kovil school bombing both took place under the watch of the Honorable Chandrika Kumarathunga. It is reported that she privately administered the Generals who were involved in these massacres. It is quite plausible that she wanted to bring a formal accountability process for these war crimes. The failure to do so leads to the reasonable

conclusion that she was also captive to the Monster of Sinhala Racism.

The enforcement since 1979 of the internationally condemned Prevention of Terrorist Act (PTA), which has been characterized by Mr. Ben Emmerson UN Special Rapporteur on The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism as disproportionately impacting the Tamils, as well as the recent unanimous ruling by the 17 judges on the UN Human Rights Committee against the State of Sri Lanka and in favor of a torture victim, a former LTTE member who was illegally detained and horrifically tortured by the Sri Lankan authorities, causing the Tamil victim paralysis and other permanent harm [Sri Lanka Routinely Tortures Security Suspects Amid Stalled Reform Process, UN Expert Finds published by the OHCHR on July 18, 2017], is another face of Sinhala Racism.

TGTE would like to note that the 30-years-long armed conflict during which the State killed according to UN Internal Review Report around 70 thousand Tamil civilians in six months, was for the recognition that the Tamils constitute a Nation, not a “minority.” Former President Kumarathunga’s repeated use of the word “minority” to characterize the Tamils is another face Sinhala Racism. It is very offensive. Sri Lanka is not a multi-ethnic plural society. It is a deeply divided entity.

The Sinhala Racism is swallowing the Sri Lankan state itself and will not allow it to continue to remain as one entity.

TGTE would like to conclude with one more quote by former Singapore President Lee Kuan Yew again. In 1998, he said, Sri Lanka the country will never be put together again. [Lee Kuan Yew: The Man and His Ideas by Han Fook Kwang, Warren Fernandez, & Sumiko Tan published on August 7, 2015].

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran  
Prime Minister  
Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

#### ABOUT THE TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL EELAM (TGTE):

The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a democratically elected Government of over a million strong Tamils (from the island of Sri Lanka) living in several countries around the world.

TGTE was formed after the mass killing of Tamils by the Sri Lankan Government in 2009.

TGTE thrice held internationally supervised elections among Tamils around the world to elect 132 Members of Parliament. It has two chambers of Parliament: The House of Representatives and the Senate and also a Cabinet.

TGTE is leading a campaign to realize the political aspirations of Tamils through peaceful, democratic, and diplomatic means and its Constitution mandates that it should realize its political objectives only through peaceful means. It's based on the principles of nationhood, homeland and self-determination.

TGTE seeks that the international community hold the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Tamil people to account. TGTE calls for a referendum to decide the political future of Tamils.

The Prime Minister of TGTE is Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, a New York based lawyer.

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