

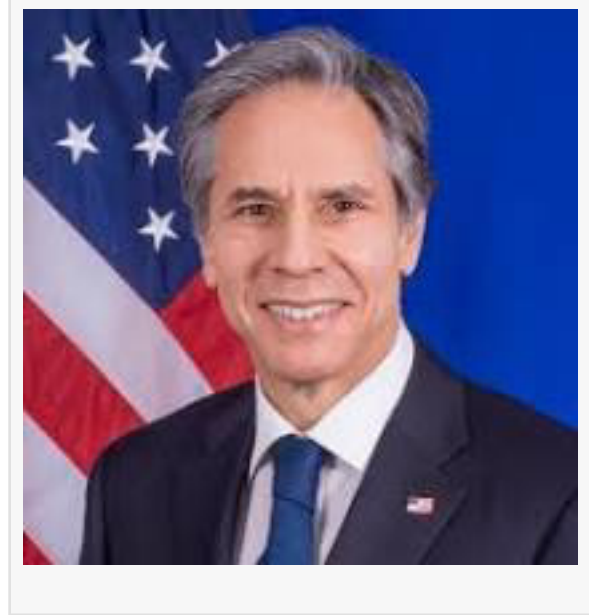
Secretary Blinken Urged to Address Sri Lankan Parliamentarian Ponambalam Arrest by Sending US Diplomats to Observe Trial

Joint letter sent by influential US based Tamil Diaspora organizations and the Human Rights Ministry of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE)

WASHINGTON DC, UNITED STATES, June 15, 2023
/EINPresswire.com/ --

United States Secretary of State Antony J Blinken was urged to address the recent arrest of Tamil parliamentarian Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam and other Tamil protesters by sending US diplomats to observe their trials.

This appeal was sent in a joint letter to Secretary Blinken by influential US based Tamil Diaspora organizations and the Human Rights Ministry of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).



"We are jointly writing to inform you of the latest developments against Tamils in Sri Lanka and urge you to take appropriate steps to address our concerns.

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These tactics of intimidation and harassment of Tamil political leaders is geared to instill terror in the Tamil population, are initiated at the highest levels of the “powers that be” in Sri Lanka.”

Tamil groups

Main among these concerns is the destruction of Tamil heritage sites including Hindu temples and the subsequent building of Buddhist temples in Tamil areas where hardly any Buddhist live. This is done with the active support and protection of Sri Lankan security forces," said the letter.

"When Tamils peacefully protest, Sri Lankan police harass them and recently arrested nine human rights activists including four women and the legal adviser, Mr. Suhash Kanagaratnam, of the Tamil National People's Front (TNPF)

political party."

"The harassment against Tamils, including this political party, continues unabated and when the same political party's Leader and Member of Parliament (MP) Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam was having a meeting with his constituents in another village, armed Police intelligence officials in plain clothes interfered. When Mr. Ponnambalam requested their identification, they refused to comply. Later on, MP Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam was arrested in the capital Colombo. He was charged and released on bail awaiting trial. Another two persons one of whom was a woman were also arrested and charged."

"Clearly, these tactics of intimidation and harassment of the Tamil political leadership and civil society, geared to instill terror amongst the Tamil population, are initiated at the highest levels of the "powers that be" in Sri Lanka. There is no doubt that Shavendra Silva who played a major role in Genocidal actions against Tamils in 2009, controls the levers of that power" highlighted the letter.

"Shavendra Silva was promoted Chief of Staff in open defiance of US sanctions imposed on him two years earlier for gross human rights violations and war crimes. Recently added functions of control over Sri Lanka's internal security and civil society have given him the added incentive and impunity of resuming anti-Tamil actions using armed forces and police stationed in large numbers in Tamil areas."

"We urge you to address this grave situation faced by the Tamils in Sri Lanka, especially in the light of the current bailout of the country from its bankruptcy by the US and other international entities."

"We trust you will take the first step towards deterrence in this respect, by sending diplomats from the US Embassy in Colombo to observe these trials when taken up for hearing" appealed this joint letter.

This joint letter is signed by:

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