

TGTE Urges Paris Club to Tie Restructure of Debt and Aid to Sri Lanka with Military Spending and Accountability

Sri Lanka's military spending has resulted in the occupation of the Tamil Homeland by the Sri Lankan military comprised almost exclusively by the Sinhalese

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In a letter to Paris Aid Secretary General Duperat, Prime Minister of Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran urged him to tie restructure of debt and aid to Sri Lanka with military spending and accountability for international crimes.



I write this letter to share with you the concerns of the Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka and to

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*Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran,
Prime Minister TGTE*

request that the Paris Club tie any restructure of debt and aid to Sri Lanka to the demand that Sri Lanka reduce its military spending and mete out accountability for international crimes in accordance with international standards and norms, said Rudrakumaran.

“As stated in Sri Lanka's Post-War Defence Budget: Overspending and Under protection by Daniel Alphonsus, a report co-sponsored by NAS and ISAS, Sri Lanka's military expenditure since 1995 through 2021 on its military and institutional war against the Tamil People, not only during the long-ended conflict but also during the ensuing peace

and fueling human rights violations, breaks down as listed below. ”

Most importantly, Sri Lanka's military spending has resulted in the occupation of the Tamil Homeland by the Sri Lankan military comprised almost exclusively by the Sinhalese, highlighted the letter.

- Sri Lanka allocated 3.3% of its GDP to military expenditure during the war.
 - The Eelam War III (1995 and 2002): 1.3 million dollars.
 - During peacetime (2002 and 2005), ~1.5 million dollars.
 - The Eelam War IV (2006 to 2009): an additional 1.5 million dollars.
- Even after ending the war in 2009, Sri Lanka has continued to expand its army through the elite Special Task Force, Police and is today allocating 11% of its annual expenditure on defence.
 - In fact, the real military expenditure is reported to be 1.7 million dollars more than during the war period.
 - Sri Lanka has turned into the country in the world that is keeping 99 per cent of its military in active service, with the spending of 170 million dollars on pension payments alone for the retired military personnel.
 - The Government of Sri Lanka has raised the salary of the defence personnel by 45%, even after the war and has deployed the bulk of its army in the Homeland of Tamils.

"Sri Lanka's runaway military spending, and the subsequent occupation of the Tamil Homeland, is of such great concern and deemed in the public interest to report that it has been written about by The Financial Times and other press, as well as by institutions."

"According to Endless War: The Destroyed Land, Life, and Identity of the Tamil People in Sri Lanka, a report by the California-based Oakland Institute, the military occupation of the traditional Tamil land is extreme – with a ratio of one soldier for every six civilians in the Northern Province and one soldier for every two civilians in the Mullaithivu District. This has been followed by the forced establishment of Sinhalese settlements, victory monuments, archaeological reservations, wildlife sanctuaries, forest reserves, and special economic zones--all meant to deprive the local Tamil population of its land and wipe out their cultural identity."

The 2012 report by the UN Experts Panel on Accountability in Sri Lanka, headed by Charles Petrie, states that there are credible reports that "over 70,000 civilians are unaccounted for" during the final stages of the war. The report also states that there is credible evidence that crimes against humanity and war crimes have been committed. Furthermore, the Berlin Peoples' Tribunal held that a genocide was committed against the Tamil People. Thus far, no one has been brought to justice., said the letter.

The letter further noted that "I would also like to point out that 17 Sri Lankan workers of Action Contre la Faim (ACF), a French aid organisation, were murdered in their office in Muttur in the Trincomalee District on August 4, 2006. According to the report Fifteen Years On No Justice for Massacre of Muttur Aid Workers, "The aid workers, who were wearing T-shirts with the ACF emblem, were made to kneel and were begging for their lives when they were shot at point blank range. Thus far, no one has been brought to justice in connection with the massacre of the ACF workers."

"In addition to making a reduction in military spending requisite for Sri Lanka's debt restructure

and aid, the dispersal of these funds must also be tied to holding State perpetrators of international crimes accountable. Along this line, the UN Human Rights Council passed resolution 30/1 in 2015 calling for an investigation and prosecution with the participation of international experts, which clearly demonstrates that there is no effective domestic accountability process. That same year, former Human Rights High Commissioner Al Hussain recommended that Sri Lanka ratify the Rome Statute. In addition, former Human Rights High Commissioner Bachelet, who has accused Sri Lanka of reneging on promises to ensure justice, as well as 4 other former High Commissioners, 9 former Special Rapporteurs, and all members of the UNSG's Panel of Experts on Sri Lanka have also called to refer the Sri Lanka matter to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Luxembourg, Botswana, Ecuador, and Timor-Leste, as well as the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) have all also called for Sri Lanka to ratify the Rome Statute (ICC). " said the letter.

"Thus, we urge the Paris Club to condition Sri Lanka's debt restructure and aid to the State's ratification of the Rome Statute retroactively in order to include the massacre of the ACF workers and the international crimes committed during the final stages of the war."

"TGTE and the Tamil Diaspora notes that we are cognizant of the hardship caused to the people in Sri Lanka due to the current economic situation and we empathize with them. However, we would also like to point out one of the main reasons for the economic crisis besides the excessive military spending is spending on Chinese-backed wasteful projects. We believe unconditional aid to Sri Lanka will not alleviate the suffering of the people in Sri Lanka nor address its longstanding problems of racist policies towards Tamils and Muslims."

Finally said the letter; we would like to quote a paragraph from the International Monetary Fund Newsletter dated December 2001, Volume 38, Number 4:

"In his book *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in economics, encourages us to investigate the expansion of freedoms as both the definition of development and the means to achieve it. He notes, for example, that there is no record of a democratic country with a free press that has suffered from famine. He argues that economic indicators, such as GDP per capita and income distribution, fail to capture what is important to people: the freedoms associated with human rights. In May 2001, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights echoed this view in a forceful statement arguing for a better integration of human rights in development strategies."

"The current discourse at the IMF also demonstrates a shift away from treating economics as a technocratic non-political activity. As managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ms. Kristalina Georgieva said that the IMF should focus on climate change, women rights, and health care. Economic and fiscal policies--via what they allow and what they prohibit, what they perpetuate, and they limit--are inherently political. As economic historian Karl Polanyi stated, economy is "embedded" in politics and society. "

We believe this is the opportune time to tie the restructure of debt and aid to Sri Lanka to its

reduction in military spending and accountability for international crimes and in doing so, contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in the island of Sri Lanka, concludes the letter.

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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