

Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Sri Lanka's Latest Gimmick: TGTE

Insist on First Getting Justice for the Victims of Atrocity Crimes, Before even Consider a so-called "Truth Commission" Proposed by Sri Lanka.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe's "commitment" to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is Sri Lanka's latest trick up its sleeve. Sri Lanka is very well versed in using soft tools of this kind to ward off domestic/international pressure and buy time to deflect progress on justice for the Tamil people, who were subjected to a genocide by successive Sinhala regimes.

The chart below is compelling proof of Sri Lanka's duplicitous politics:

1) The Sansoni Commission 9 November 1977.

- Mandate: To inquire into the 1977 racial riots.
- Finding: General condemnation of 'unruly' police behavior.
- Redress to victims: None.

2) Inquiry into Attack on MSF Vehicle 9 May 1991.

- Mandate: To inquire into the shooting and attack by aircraft on MSF personnel and property.
- Finding: MSF had not taken an approved route; firing was accidental.
- Redress to victims: None.

3) Kokkadicholai Commission of Inquiry 18 June 1991.

- Mandate: To report any connection between the death of 2 soldiers and the killing of 67 civilians in nearby villages.
- Finding: Killings were not found to be the result of military action but rather committed by soldiers who ran amok; "the offenders" cannot be brought before a criminal court of law.
- Redress to victims: None.

4) 1991-93 Presidential Commissions.

11 January 1991, 13 January 1992, 25 January





Sri Lanka is planning to hide behind South Africa's Truth Commission to sell its Truth Commission. But there are major differences. Also, Sri Lanka so far established ten commissions without results."

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran

Mandate: To inquire into allegations "that persons are being involuntarily removed from their places of residence by persons unknown.

Finding: None.

Redress to victims: None.

5) 1993 places of residence by persons unknown." Commission Appointed by President D.B. Wijetunge 13 September 1993.

- Mandate: To inquire into past involuntary removal of persons during 1991-1993.

- Findings: Not published.

- Redress to victims: None.

6) 1994 Commission of Inquiry into Disappearance: 30 November 1994

- Mandate: To inquire and report whether any person had been involuntary removed or disappeared from their places of residence after January 1, 1988.

- Action: investigated a total of 27,526 complaints of which 16,800 cases amount to enforced disappearance.

- Finding: None.

- Redress to victims: None.

7) 1998 All Island Disappearance Commission: 30 April 1998.

- Mandate: To inquire into allegations about involuntary removal or disappearance of persons from their residence.

- Finding: Agents of the State, paramilitary acting in corroboration with them, subversive groups and personal enemies were responsible for some of the cases.

- Redress to victims: None.

8) The Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence 1983-84: 23 July 2001.

- Mandate: To inquire the causes of whether any person or group was responsible for any violence.

- Finding: Reveals evidence regarding burning of Jaffna Public Library, the July 1983 riots, and killing of 52 Tamil political prisoners at the Welikada Prison.

- Action: None.

- Redress to victims: None.

9) Bindunuwewa Commission: 8 March 2001.

- Mandate: To inquire into the questions of responsibility for the killing of 28 Tamil youths between the ages of 14-23 at the Bindunuwewa Rehabilitation

- Action: Two senior police officers were liable for not taking action to prevent, and four junior officers for responsibility for engaging in attacks willfully.

- Redress to victims: None.

10) International Independent Group of Eminent Persons: November 2006.

- Mandate: To inquire into serious Human Rights violations arising since 1 August 2005, including 16 specific cases.

- Findings Not published.

(members of the IIEGP terminated their observation role).

- Redress to victims: None.

A prerequisite for peace is the acknowledgment of responsibility as well as the acknowledgment of the suffering of the victims. For instance, post-war German acknowledgement and repudiation of the Holocaust and of Hitler's aggression, especially Willy Brandt's emotional visit to Auschwitz, contributed significantly to enabling German reconciliation with Israel and with other neighbors.

Similarly, Sadat's acknowledgement of the past suffering of the Jews contributed to the 1978 Camp David Accords.

If Sri Lanka is not even able and willing to make such an acknowledgement of responsibility for criminal actions against Tamils, that not only shows their true intent but also demonstrates their inability to implement any kind of recommendations for justice or recompense.

While trumpeting the exploits of the Sri Lankan armed forces by erecting "victory" monuments in the Tamil Homeland and humiliating the Tamils on the one hand and - as the U.N. High Commissioner noted in his report - denying the victims' right to memorialization on the other, peace cannot be established between the Sinhala Nation and the Tamil Nation.

The U.N. High Commissioner also noted in his report, "A river management and irrigation scheme has been perceived as promoting settlement of Sinhalese farmers in villages in the Northern and Eastern provinces to distort the ethnic composition in those regions for electoral gains."

It is not perception but a fact that, according to UN internal Review Report around 70 thousand Tamils were killed in the final six months of the war, Sri Lanka continues its aggression to deprive the Tamils of their land and to destroy their identity. Given the above context, Sri Lanka's talk of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is an insult to common sense and an affront to humanity.

The TGTE firmly believes - as the High Commissioner stated - accountability is the essential component for any kind of peace. The Nuremberg Trials contributed significantly to the peace in Europe following WW2. No justice, no peace is not a mere cliché but a truism.

Sri Lanka hopes the inevitable comparison of its proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission

(TRC) with South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation

Commission (TRC) will enable her to sell this dubious initiative to the international community. There are major differences between South Africa's TRC and that proposed by Sri Lanka.

1) In South Africa, the TRC was established after the end of the conflict, whereas in Sri Lanka, while the armed conflict is concluded, the national conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils has not yet been resolved.

2) Moreover, in South Africa the TRC was proposed and managed by the victims.

Countries which are not very familiar with the history of Sri Lanka's previous duplicitous activities might think that Sri Lanka's proposed TRC is a good initiative and should be supported. However, countries which are familiar with Sri Lanka's past know very well this is another one of Sri Lanka's stunts to deflect from real issues.

The desire to keep Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe in power for geopolitical reasons, divert attention to newer crises and interests involved in accepting of other states' own schemes to deflect justice all play their part in possible acceptance of this charade.

Major International NGOs, namely Amnesty International, Front-Line Defenders, International Commission of Jurists, FIDH, Forum-Asia, Franciscans International, Sri Lanka Campaign, and Human Rights Watch, have pointed out the flaws in Sri Lanka's proposed 'Truth Commission' in their report dated September 4, 2023. As the International Crisis Group stated eloquently, "Sri Lanka needs truth, but no (yet) a Truth Commission".

The TGTE calls upon the member states of the UN Human Rights Council not to fall into this trap and instead refer Sri Lanka to the Security Council and to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In the 15 years since the end of the war, Sri Lanka has amply demonstrated that the Sinhala polity will never deliver justice and accountability for crimes against the Tamils. Therefore, direct and strong action to deliver justice for serious international crimes is imperative.

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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