

# Tamil Civil Society Groups Reject "Himalaya Declaration" for Not Addressing Tamil Grievances

*This "Himalaya Declaration" was declared by Sanga for better Sri Lanka (SBSL) and Global Tamil Forum (GTF).*

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Tamil civil society groups consisting of - Tamil University Students, Victim groups, families of the disappeared, religious groups, labor unions, academics, women groups, and others have jointly rejected the "Himalaya Declaration" by Sanga for better Sri Lanka (SBSL) and Global Tamil Forum (GTF), for not addressing Tamil grievances.



Tamils P2P Rally

"We carefully read with interest the Himalaya Declaration but was totally disappointed for completely ignoring Tamil grievances and the pain and suffering Tamils have undergone and are still undergoing," said the groups.

\* "It is understandable that the Buddhist clergy is unaware of Tamil grievances, since they live outside Tamil areas among Sinhalese and have no clue what Tamils have gone through and continue to go through."

The groups further stated that "Since the war ended fourteen years ago, Tamils have expressed their grievances through mass rallies like, P2P (Pothuvil to Polihandy). P2P led a seven-day march across Tamil areas with around half- a-million Tamils joining despite attacks and intimidation by security forces and notorious military intelligence."

Tamil University Students, victim groups, Families of the disappeared and other civil society groups held numerous protests, hunger strikes and marches to express Tamil grievances. None of their grievances were addressed in this "Himalaya Declaration."

"We like to bring to your attention following Tamil grievances articulated by Tamils since the war ended fourteen years ago:"

1) Reduce armed forces presence in Tamil areas to the pre-war 1983 levels:

It has been over fourteen years since the war ended in 2009, but the security forces presence, including the notorious Military Intelligence, is being maintained as it was in the peak of the war in May 2009.

\* The security forces presence during Peacetime among the civilian population is creating numerous security and social issues for Tamils, especially for women. Tamils have faced atrocity crimes, including mass killing of Tamils amounting to Genocide and large-scale rape of Tamil women by the Security forces.

2) Stop the Destruction of Hindu temples, including ancient Hindu sites and stop Building Buddhist Temples in Tamil areas, where no Buddhists live.

3) Stop Government sponsored Sinhalese settlements in Tamil areas and stop land grab of Tamil lands by the government. Also, completely release all the civilian lands still occupied by the security forces.

4) As requested by UN officials, Refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC):

Fourteen years have passed since the war ended, but not a single security force official or political leader have faced justice for the killings. Also, thousands of Tamils, including babies and children have Disappeared.

\* As requested by several UN officials, including a former UN High-commissioner for Human Rights, refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

5) To prevent further bloodshed, hold an internationally conducted Referendum to solve protracted Tamil conflict:

The root cause for the protracted Tamil conflict since independence is due to lack of political solution. The Tamil conflict resulted in the recurrence of mass killing of Tamils in 1958, 1977, 1983 and 2009.

Several agreements between Tamil leaders and the Sinhala-dominated governments were unilaterally abrogated by successive Governments.

Even international mediation by India and Norway failed.

\* As practiced in several countries around the world, hold an internationally conducted referendum to democratically find a permanent political solution to prevent further bloodshed.

- 1) Mr. A. Vijayakumar  
President – Student Union, University of Jaffna.
- 2) Mrs Y. Kanagaranjini  
President – Association for relatives of the enforced Disappearances, North and East Provinces.
- 3) Thavathiru Velan Swamigal, Sivaguru Aatheenam – Coordinator, Pothuvil to Polikandy Rally, (P2P).
- 4) Rev. Fr. Joseph Marry (S J) - Batticaloa.
- 5) Mr. T. Thangaraja, President - Employee's Union, University of Jaffna.
- 6) Mrs. Vimalleswary Srikantharuban, Women United Monitoring Society, North and East Provinces.
- 7) Thavathiru Akathiyar Adikal, Thenkailai Aatheenam - Trincomalee.
- 8) Rev. Fr. Jayanthan Pachchek OMI, Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Jaffna.
- 9) Mr. Vigneswaren Gajaruban, Student Union, Faculty of Art and Culture, Eastern University.
- 10) Mrs. Mithilaichelvi Sripathmanathan, Working Women Society.
- 11) Rev. Fr. Kandaiya Jegathas, Coordinator, Pothuvil to Polikandy Rally, (P2P).
- 12) Mrs. Sroja Sivachchandran, Centre for Women and Development.

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