

Webinar: International Experts to Discuss Whether Sri Lanka Should be Referred to ICC - TGTE

* *WHEN: Thursday, September 5th. - - **
TIME: New York: 8:00 am; -- UK: 1:00 pm;
-- Sri Lanka 5:30 pm; -Australia
(Cambara): 10:00 pm. -
** WATCH LIVE: TGTE.TV*

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM,
September 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/
-- Transnational Government of Tamil
Eelam (TGTE) is pleased to Invite you to
a Webinar Titled: "International Experts
to Discuss Whether Sri Lanka Should
be Referred to ICC."

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** *SPEAKERS:*

1) Geoffrey Robertson, AC, KC

2) Stephen Rapp
(Former US Ambassador at Large - War Crimes)

3) Shriritharan Sivagnanam.
(Member of Parliament - Sri Lanka).

4) Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran



SHOULD SRI LANKA BE REFERRED TO THE ICC?

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2024
8:00AM - 9:00AM (EST) | 14:00-15:00 (GENEVA)

“... domestic initiatives have repeatedly failed to ensure justice for victims and promote reconciliation... Member states should consider new options such as referral to the ICC.”
-Michelle Bachelet
Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Webinar Moderator
Ms. Shivani Jegarajah
Barrister in London, UK

FEATURED PANELISTS

- Geoffrey Robertson, AO, KC
- Stephen Rapp
(Former US Ambassador at Large - War Crimes)
- Shriritharan Sivagnanam
(Member of Parliament - Sri Lanka)
- Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran
Prime Minister - TGTE

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(Prime Minister - TGTE)

* MODERATOR:

Shivani Jegarajah

(Human Rights Barrister, Justitia Chambers, London)

** WATCH LIVE: TGTE.TV

BELOW, PLEASE FIND A LETTER BY TAMIL REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT ICC

August 28, 2022

To: Foreign Ministers of the Sri Lanka Core-Group at the UN Human Rights Council

Dear Foreign Ministers,

Since you take the lead on Sri Lanka as members of the Sri Lanka Core-Group at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC); we from Tamil political parties and Tamil civil society are jointly writing to you ahead of the upcoming September UNHRC 51st Session, about our concerns of continued failure for accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed against the Tamil people.

During this Session Sri Lanka will be evaluated about Sri Lanka's compliance of UNHRC Resolutions. We urge you to present a strong Resolution for achieving accountability for atrocity crimes committed thirteen years ago, by calling Sri Lanka be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), as recommended by UN High- Commissioner for human rights in her March 2021 report to UNHRC and reinforced by all four former UN High Commissioners for Human Rights, nine former Special Rapporteurs who had visited and written reports on Sri Lanka, and all three members of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Sri Lanka.

We as representatives of Tamil people strongly believe that anything short of calling for the referral to ICC will permanently eliminate any chance of getting justice for the mass atrocities we faced. Additionally, this will encourage the security forces and government to commit mass atrocities against Tamil people without any hesitation.

We collectively urge you to ensure that in the Resolution by Core-Group on Sri Lanka to the UNHRC 51st Session clearly urge UN Security Council to refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

BACKGROUND:

Within a week of the end of the armed ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka in May 2009, a joint communique was issued by the Government of Sri Lanka and the United Nations at the

conclusion of the U.N Secretary General's visit to Sri Lanka on 23rd of May 2009, which inter alia stated:

"Sri Lanka reiterated its strongest commitment to the promotion and protection of Human Rights, in keeping with international Human Rights standards and Sri Lanka's international obligations. The Secretary General underlined the importance of an accountability process for addressing violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights law. The Government will take measures to address those grievances". Sri Lanka has not taken any meaningful steps to address the above commitments in the last thirteen (13) years. During the intervening years the UNHRC has adopted seven (7) resolutions ending with UNHRC 46/1 in March 2021. Sri Lanka even co-sponsored some unanimously passed Resolutions, including one about establishing Hybrid-Courts with the participation of international judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers. Several years have passed, but Sri Lanka did not take any initiative to set up a Hybrid-Court as promised by the Government to UNHRC.

Furthermore, successive Sri Lankan Governments have adopted different tactics to drag the accountability process to hoodwink UNHRC.

In addition of not addressing the accountability issue, the government of Sri Lanka continues a program of oppression of Tamils, including keeping extremely large military in Tamil areas despite thirteen years have passed since the war ended, land grab to settle Sinhalese in traditionally Tamil areas with the aim to transform Tamil areas into majority Sinhala Areas.

* RECOMENDATION BY UN HIGH_COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER SENIOR UN OFFICIALS:

Due to serious nature of the atrocity crimes committed and successive Sri Lankan Governments evasive tactics to address accountability, UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights in her report to UNHRC in January 12, 2021 urged the Council to take steps to refer Sri Lanka to ICC. This call was reinforced by several senior UN officials suggesting the same.

High -Commissioners report on Sri Lanka on Jan 12, 2021 referring Sri Lanka to ICC states:

Member states have a number of options to advance criminal accountability and provide measures of redress for victims. In addition to taking steps towards the referral of the situation in Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court, Member States can actively pursue investigation and prosecution of international crimes committed by all parties in Sri Lanka before their own national courts, including under the principles of extraterritorial or universal jurisdiction."

<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/46/20>

An open letter from 20 former high-level UN officials on February 18, 2021. The signatories included all four former UN High Commissioners for Human Rights, nine former Special Rapporteurs who had visited and written reports on Sri Lanka, and all three members of the

Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Sri Lanka.

* IS IT A VALID ARGUMENT THAT UN SECURITY COUNCIL WILL BLOCK A REFERRAL OF SRI LANKA TO ICC?

Some people argue that referring Sri Lanka will be blocked at UN Security Council (UNSC). This argument is misleading since none of the UNSC Permanent members have indicated that they will veto any referral of Sri Lanka to ICC.

In addition, it should be noted that the same concern was raised previously in other situations, but UNHRC went ahead and urged UNSC to refer those countries to ICC.

For example:

a) Sudan was referred to UNSC with recommendation to refer it to ICC. Even though Sudan is very much close to China compared to Sri Lanka, China did not exercise its veto, resulting in Sudan being referred to ICC and then Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir was served with ICC summons.

b) Similarly, North Korea was referred by UNHRC to ICC, despite very serious concern of China using its veto.

Then the question arises why this excuse is being advanced against Sri Lanka being referred to ICC by UNHRC. Only logical conclusion for this argument is that is to protect Sri Lankan political leaders and military officers from facing justice for the mass atrocities committed against Tamil people.

* REQUEST:

For the above reasons we, as representatives of the Tamil people jointly urge you, as requested by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN officials, to call in your Resolution to urge UN Security Council to refer Sri Lanka to the ICC, as was in North Korea and Sudan.

Thank you for your consideration.

* WATCH LIVE: TGTE.TV

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