

Thaiyiddy Buddhist Temple, Symbol of Sinhala Occupation, Should be Removed : TGTE

Tamil Cultural Genocide for Assimilation into Sinhala Buddhism - Letter Sent to UN

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, February 11, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the 2009 Mullivaikkal genocide of the Tamils, the Sri Lankan State capitalized on Eelam Tamils' relatively weak position domestically to brazenly engage in cultural and heritage genocide—forcing the assimilation (“Sinhalization”) of the Tamils and Muslims into the Sinhala Buddhist polity. This includes the removal and destruction of Hindu temples at Kurunthur Malai, Kuchchaveli, the illegal construction of a Buddhist temple in Thaiyiddy and several other destructions of Tamil heritage sites.

During the last presidential campaign, the leader of the United National Party (UNP), Mr. Sajith Premadasa, stated as part of his election platform that he would build 1,000 Buddhist temples in the Tamil Homeland. It is also believed that former president and prime minister Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe had a similar plan.

The position of the current administration—that they will not destroy the Thaiyiddy Buddhist temple—shows that, despite changes in personnel, the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony remains the same in the current government and in the presidency. As the TGTE has stated repeatedly, there is no space for Tamils to live in dignity and freedom due to the pervasive and entrenched racism in the Sinhala Buddhist State.

The 1949 Geneva Convention IV allows military occupation of civilian lands only if it is imperative for the conduct of hostilities. Since the hostilities ended over 15 years ago, the Sinhala military occupation of the Tamil homeland is a clear violation of international law.

In fact, Sri Lankan armed forces' refusal to withdraw from civilian lands during the peace process was a key reason for the breakdown of peace negotiations. We can draw a parallel between the



building of Sinhala Buddhist temples in Tamil areas and Israel building a wall in occupied Palestinian territory in 2003, for which the International Court of Justice found “...the construction of the wall and its associated regime, by contributing to the demographic changes mentioned, contravene article 49 paragraph 6 of the Fourth Geneva Convention...”

The military has also planned to build various facilities around the Buddhist temple. (One wonders what Lord Buddha would think of stationing armed forces around a Buddhist temple!) Building a Buddhist temple in a place where no Sinhala civilians live is a clear act of colonization of the Tamil homeland by the Sinhala polity. Thus, our request to remove the Buddhist temple is de-colonization. (There is precedent in Sri Lanka for removing religious sites. For example, in 2013, a Hindu temple in Dambulla was destroyed.) Further, several Hindu temples and Saiva holy sites were destroyed in the Keerimalai, Kankesanthurai and Sampil areas by the Military) .

According to the US State Department's 2016 International Religious Freedom Report, “...the construction of Buddhist shrines by Buddhist groups or the military in parts of the Northern and Eastern provinces became contentious symbols of perceived Buddhist Sinhalese religious and cultural imperialism” despite objections and resistance from non-Buddhist locals.

[\[https://www.state.gov/reports/2016-report-on-international-religious-freedom/sri-lanka/\]](https://www.state.gov/reports/2016-report-on-international-religious-freedom/sri-lanka/)

A 2023 Human Rights Watch report discusses how government-backed land grabs are targeting Tamil and other minority communities, often using draconian counterterrorism laws to silence dissenting voices. [\[https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/09/18/if-we-raise-our-voice-they-arrest-us/sri-lankas-proposed-truth-and-reconciliation\]](https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/09/18/if-we-raise-our-voice-they-arrest-us/sri-lankas-proposed-truth-and-reconciliation).

From the first day when construction of the Thaiyiddy Buddhist temple began, the Tamil National People’s Front (TNPF) and other Tamil civil society organizations opposed and staged protests, along with the Tamil landowners whose private land was illegally stolen. The Sri Lankan State is trying to create a “fait accompli” on the ground in order to keep the temple permanently. This cunning action is not only a thumbing of the nose at the Tamil Nation but also displays a wanton disregard for international law. There is no equivalence between Hindu temples & Muslim mosques located in Sinhala areas and Sinhala temples in Tamil areas; the former are under the Sinhala regime and thus cannot be perceived as symbols of occupation or colonization—a stark contrast from Buddhist temples in Tamil areas.

* 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 held four 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 an internationally conducted and monitored referendum to decide the political future of Tamils.

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