

# British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

December 10 2016

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Honouring Human Rights Day and UNCAT report on Sri Lanka.**

On this day in 1948, the United Nations adopted a universal set of human rights that apply to all of us. British Tamils Forum (BTF) honours this milestone towards creating a freer and equal world by reconfirming its commitment towards achieving a just and equitable political solution for the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

BTF calls upon all the nations which supported the UNHRC resolution on Sri Lanka UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 30-1. to re-evaluate the commitment of the current Sri Lankan government, which co-sponsored this resolution.

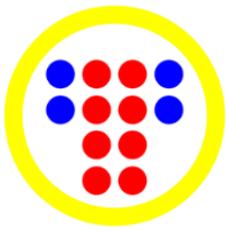
The United Nations Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) report on Sri Lanka, calls into question President Siresena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's commitment to the promised full implementation of UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 30-1.

Contrary to recommendation 12 of the UN OISL report, not only has the Sirisena government failed to vet military and security force personnel, it has re-appointed Sisira Mendis as Chief of National Intelligence, despite his links to some of the most egregious allegations of torture. The significance of Mendis's membership of Sri Lanka's delegation to the UNCAT was not lost on the Committee. The report states:

In this regard, the Committee was alarmed by the presence of the Chief of National Intelligence, Sisira Mendis, as part of the Sri Lankan delegation, since he was the Deputy Inspector General of the CID from March 2008 to June 2009. The Committee observed that Mr. Mendis is named in the OISL Report, which notes that the CID's "4th Floor" facility at police headquarters in Colombo was known as a notorious site of torture. The OISL report also recounts allegations of widespread torture, including sexual violence, perpetrated against individuals detained at Manik Farm camp and elsewhere in the aftermath of the conflict by personnel of the CID and the TID over which Mr. Mendis also allegedly exercised supervisory authority until June 2009.

In consensually adopting HRC Resolution 30-1 in October 2015, the Government of Sri Lanka welcomed and agreed to implement the recommendations of the OISL. Mendis's position sits uneasily with OISL Recommendation 12 and HRC 30-1 clause 7:

OISL Recommendation 12: Develop a fully-fledged vetting process respecting due process to remove from office military and security force personnel and any other public official where there are reasonable grounds to believe that they were involved in human rights violations;



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HRC 30-1 7: Encourages the Government of Sri Lanka to reform its domestic law to ensure that it can implement effectively its own commitments, the recommendations made in the report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, as well as the recommendations of the report of the Office of the High Commissioner, including by allowing for, in a manner consistent with its international obligations, the trial and punishment of those most responsible for the full range of crimes under the general principles of law recognized by the community of nations relevant to violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including during the period covered by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission;

Co-sponsors of HRC Resolution 30-1 should hold Sri Lanka to its commitments and ensure full implementation of the OISL recommendations.

BTF calls upon EU and the UK government to take into consideration recent critical reports on Sri Lanka by the relevant UN rapporteur, when considering the rewarding of GSP plus concession to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has been paying lip service to human rights and has been hoodwinking the international community and UNHRC for a very long time. It's high time that UNHRC takes a strong stand against Sri Lanka, and recommend punitive measures for noncompliance with UNHRC resolution.

**Contact: M Jeyapalan** Tel: +44 (0) 7766 832 754  
Email: [news@britishtamilsforum.org](mailto:news@britishtamilsforum.org)

**Notes to Editors:**

**British Tamils Forum** exists to harness the skills and the knowledge of the members of the forum, well-wishers and significant others including mainstream decision makers in the UK with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Tamils community in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self-determination within a democratic frame work under pinned by international law, its covenants and conventions. For more information [info@britishtamilsforum.org](mailto:info@britishtamilsforum.org) and/or visit: [www.britishtamilsforum.org](http://www.britishtamilsforum.org)