

British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

Monday, 18 April 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tamils' land occupied by Sri Lankan security forces

Nearly seven years after the end of the war, the Sri Lankan military is still occupying more than 96% of the land belonging to the Tamil people who were driven off their own lands, in the pretext of “national security”.

Field data obtained by British Tamils Forum (BTF), in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, indicate that as of 1st March 2016, the military is occupying 67,427 acres of land belonging to the Tamil people.

During the previous government of Mahinda Rajapakse, in the North alone, nearly 70,000 acres of land was under occupation. Since the change of government in January 2015, just over 2,500 acres of these lands has been released. This constitutes a mere 3.6% of the total land taken over in the North by the Sri Lankan military.

BTF provides below the breakdown of land occupation, obtained from primary sources in the north.

Land occupied by the Security forces in the Northern Province in Sri Lanka

Updated on:	01/03/2016		
DISTRICT	OCCUPIED IN 2015 (Acres)	RELEASED (after Jan 2015) (Acres)	OCCUPIED IN 2016 (Acres)
MULLAITIVU	19,790	134	19,656
KILINOCHI	12,840	474	12,366
VAVUNIYA	23,778	14	23,764
JAFFNA	6,270	1,709	4,561
MANNAR	7,314	234	7,080
	69,992	2565	67,427

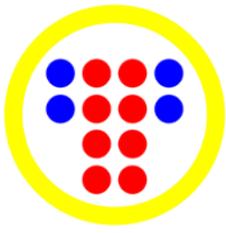
The present Sri Lankan government has been making much fanfare of the minuscule land releases while hiding the true extent of the occupation.

Above statistics show the continuing occupation of private land and lack of progress in addressing the suffering of the displaced people, who are prevented from returning to their own land.

As per our reliable sources from Jaffna, Sri Lankan government survey department has been instructed to survey 118 new locations for land acquisitions in the Jaffna peninsula for building

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permanent military camps for the Sri Lankan military. These surveys, initiated by the previous government, had been abandoned due to public protest at the time. Resumption of this process by

the present government exposes its true intentions, contrary to its pledge on demilitarization and return of land to the Tamil people.

BTF calls upon the Sri Lankan and International media to expose the above reality and calls upon the politicians who came on a promise of change to stop the deception and deliver the promised change to the Tamil people immediately.

BTF calls upon the British government to take up the issue of demilitarisation urgently and exert due pressure on the Sri Lankan government to return all the land occupied by the Sri Lankan military to the rightful owners.

We call upon the Sri Lankan government to honour its promises on several occasions including its commitment to return these lands, in accordance with the UNHRC Geneva resolution it co-sponsored.

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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 admin@tamilsforum.com and/or visit: www.tamilsforum.com