



British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

Tuesday, 05 July 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

British Tamils Forum welcomes the statement by Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the situation on Sri Lanka.

The oral update shows the High Commissioner's insight into the Sri Lankan state's tokenism's and lack of progress in delivering justice to the Tamil victims of genocide. The statement stresses the need for institutionalised change beyond token gestures designed to fool the international community.

The statement identifies that the military is in control in the north and east and is engaged in commercial activities including farming and tourism. These farming activities are carried out using land taken away from Tamil farmers. With regards to returning the land belonging to the Tamil people, the oral update states that "little progress has been reported and civilian leaders and officials seem to be struggling to secure co-operation from the military". These are clear indicators of continuing military occupation of the Tamil homeland and the North and East of the island. The Sri Lankan military is being used to build Buddhist temples across the length and breadth of the Tamil homeland for the sole purpose of destroying the cultural landscape of the Tamil Homeland. Hindu temples, Christian churches and Muslim Mosques where Tamil speaking people worship are being destroyed and desecrated by the military for the construction of Buddhist temples in areas where there are no Buddhists. While this cultural genocide continues in the North and East the high commissioner has expressed concerns at the "continued aggressive campaigns in social media and other forms (such as Sinhale sticker campaign)" targeting non-Buddhists in the south.

On the issue of the investigation into the conduct of the genocidal war against the Tamil people, the high commissioner has reiterated the importance of international participation in the judicial mechanism and has denounced the pronouncements made by the Sri Lankan political leadership reneging on this issue.

The High Commissioner has also clearly identified the threat faced by victims of crimes and witnesses in the hands of the Sri Lankan military establishment. He also rightly recognises that even those participating in a consultation process for a justice mechanism face harassment and intimidation. The High Commissioner also "emphasizes the need to include the voices of victims abroad and encourages further outreach in the diaspora".

As the Diaspora organisation the British Tamils Forum welcomes the oral update by the High Commissioner and hope that the Sri Lankan state will heed his call.

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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

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