



British Tamils Forum

United Kingdom

29 November 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Clarification on the Conservative Party 2019 Manifesto - Statement on page 53 about the Two State Solution

The British Tamils Forum would like to state that we are a politically neutral organisation working with cross parties to promote our values and aspirations, and also would like to impress on the entire community that we the BTF support a two-state solution.

However, it has come to light that there have been some serious misrepresentations of the conservative party manifesto hence we feel that we need to make a statement, so as to ensure that the Tamil Community is not misinformed by anyone.

The Conservative Party Manifesto states ‘‘From helping to end the slave trade to tackling modern slavery, the UK has long been beacon of freedom and human rights – and will continue to be so. We are proud of our peace –building and humanitarian efforts around the world, particularly in war-torn or divided societies, and of our record in helping to reduce global poverty. We will continue to support international initiatives to achieve reconciliation, stability and justice across the world, and in current or former conflict zones such as Cyprus, Sri Lanka and the Middle East, where we maintain our support for a two state solution. ‘

We welcome the Conservative party’s pledge to continue helping us to achieve reconciliation, stability and justice. We are also extremely grateful to various cross-party MPs who have time and time again come out to show their support for our cause.

BTF verified with former MPs and Cabinet Ministers, who after consulting with the Foreign Secretary, confirmed that the two-state solution only applied to the Middle East. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the MPs and Cabinet Ministers for their honesty and courage to ensure that the right information is passed on to the community.

We requested that the Conservative party clarify the statement on page 53 of the Conservative party manifesto. The message from the Conservative Deputy Chairman Paul Scully is as follows:

“To be absolutely clear, the two- state line was intended to refer only to the Israel-Palestine situation in the Middle East (as is stated policy). The commitments on Sri Lanka and Cyprus were simply about continuing existing efforts to support peace and reconciliation in divided societies.”

Whilst the BTF and the Tamils around the world will indeed appreciate and welcome all parties to support a two-state solution, we the BTF have a duty to inform the community, when, that is not what the Party manifesto is actually stating.



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We the BTF are grateful that the Conservatives have now seen the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka as important and have made it a priority to address the issue, if they are elected to form a Government. Unfortunately, a Tamil organisation representing the Conservatives have put out on social and Tamil media, that the Conservative Party supports a two-state solution for Sri Lanka. Whilst the political party must ensure that their policies are clear, it is extremely important that Tamils representing their parties take utmost care not to misinterpret words on the manifesto to mislead the community to gain votes.

The Tamils of the UK have fled from persecution, racism, discrimination and genocide by successive governments in Sri Lanka. They have come to the UK and made it their home knowing that they live safely and freely. They have suffered immensely, and it is irresponsible and insensitive for any organisation to make false representations to them.

We encourage all Tamil representatives of political parties to actively seek the betterment of our community and hope that they will not mislead the community either intentionally or unintentionally in the future, as our community deserve to know the truth.

-The End

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 and/or visit: www.britishtamilsforum.org