



British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

12th of April 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Facts – 23rd March 2021 Resolution No 46/L.1 Rev.1 of UNHRC **The way forward**

A great volume of water is flowing under the bridge since the successful passage of the resolution A/HRC/46/L.1/Rev.1 at the 46th session of the UNHRC on 23rd March 2021.

Obviously, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) is not pleased and so are a few members of the Tamil diaspora. The GOSL initially engaged itself in a comical mathematical computation, probably to misinform the local populace about the outcome and later claimed that the resolution was “ultra-vires”, meaning that the UNHRC has no mandate in this regard. A noticeably disappointed member of Tamil diaspora commenced her well anticipated onslaught on the BTF and its General Secretary questioning their role in ensuring the successful outcome, at the recent session of the UNHRC and the very lawful existence of the BTF.

What was posted in the social media, post UNHRC session press meet, was unfortunate and a fine exhibition of lack of grace. The journalistic maxim of “comments may be free but facts are sacred” has, not strangely though, gone unobserved.

On the other hand a few are disenchanted over the resolution’s reach or lack of it. The outcome may not be a giant stride but certainly the step in the right direction. Considering the inter-state dynamics, to secure a positive outcome was a himalayan task. The success rested not only on the support harnessed but also in ensuring that, a few states, normally known to be friendly to GOSL, abstained. The diplomacy at this level is not simply a number game. A judgement of what is achievable is the essence.

Before the British Tamils Forum could respond to this fair lady’s comments, the GOSL has helpfully cleared the air by naming the BTF and its General Secretary amongst those proscribed and or declared “persona non grata”, in the Gazette notification No 2216/37 of 25th February 2021 but released only around 27th March 2021. The fact that this Gazette notification was made under the seal of the Defence Secretary of Sri Lanka, one who stands accused of war crimes, says it all eloquently - “Res Ipsa loquitor” – thing speaks for itself.

Suffice it is to say that the BTF along with a number of concerned allies played a full role in ensuring the successful passage of the resolution no 46 L.1 Rev.1 at the UNHRC session of 23rd March 2021 and Mr. Ravikumar was privileged to have been given the opportunity to address the informal session. Whatever the personal bile one may have, spilling it in public, that too without verifying the facts, can only boomerang.



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The BTF remains lawful and vibrant. It is plain that one does not ban an organisation dead in the water. The master understands, do others?

The move of GOSL is unsurprisingly not surprising. It is positive to Tamils, though unintended and capable of opening a few windows of opportunities, which otherwise can be elusive, in the immediate future.

The iron fisted response to the successful passage of the resolution - imposing ban on individuals and organisations and the sanctions threatened, are eye openers. A lot more remain to be achieved. The need of the hour is unity and consensus amongst the members of the Tamil diaspora. The civil society in Sri Lanka faces the ever shrinking democratic space, with fascism rearing its ugly head, quite visibly.

Whilst this gazette notification denies all forms of the fundamental human rights to the Tamil nation within the island of Sri Lanka, it is also capable of touching the Sinhala nation, which remains opiated by the ethno centric neo colonial rhetorics, periodically augmented with the “Mahavamsa” sentiments.

By the time the Sinhala nation wakes up from its deep slumber, the octopus like iron grip of fascism will have engulfed the Sinhala nation with a dynastic rule well entrenched.

The international community will, no doubt, become alive to the true nature of the political road map of the GOSL. It no longer belongs to the family of democratic nations and there lies the opportunity to coax the international community to consider the range of options.

The collation of the data and harnessing the wider support during the currency of the current resolution are more important than to be distracted by the ill-informed campaign of the not so well meaning individuals. The BTF will march forward.

Contact: S Sangeeth **Tel:** +44 (0) 7412435697
Email: 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 and/or visit: www.britishtamilsforum.org