



British Tamils Forum

United Kingdom

25th of March 2025

THE BRITISH TAMILS FORUM APPLAUDS AND WELCOMES THE UK GOVERNMENT IMPOSING SANCTIONS ON FOUR SRI LANKANS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

We, the British Tamils Forum (BTF), welcome and praise the Government of the United Kingdom for imposing sanctions on four individuals responsible for serious human rights abuses and violations during the Sri Lanka civil war, including extrajudicial killings, torture and/or perpetration of sexual violence.

The UK Government's decision to apply the Magnitsky-style sanction under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations and imposing travel bans and freezing assets on the former head of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, Shavendra Silva, former Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda, former Commander of the Sri Lankan Army Jagath Jayasuriya and former leader of the paramilitary Karuna Group, which worked on behalf of the Sri Lankan Army Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, aka Karuna Amman.

We sincerely thank the Prime Minister Rt Sir Keir Starmer MP and the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, The Rt. Hon David Lammy MP for delivering a part of their promises during the election. It is worth recalling The Prime Minister Rt Sir Keir Starmer's pre-election promise reference <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aFa36ZY61E> at this juncture. We also thank the USA and Canada for applying the Magnitsky Act against the Sri Lankan perpetrators.

It has been over a decade, BTF and the Tamil victims community in the UK and spread across the globe requesting the application of universal jurisdiction principles using Act like the "Magnitsky Act" in the United States, in liaison with many cross party politicians, especially with the former Conservative MP The Rt Hon Teresa Villiers, The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP, Wes Streeting MP, The Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP who accompanied us to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Sessions. Time and again, the UN High Commissioners for Human Rights have called on the member states to apply the universal jurisdiction principle against the perpetrators of atrocity crimes in Sri Lanka.

During a visit to the UNHRC session in March 2020, The Rt Hon Teresa Villiers reassured us the then Conservative government had been in the process of tabling an act in this regard. The outcome was the **Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations** in July 2020. As this Act is now in place, BTF has been actively pursuing the imposition of sanctions in the United Kingdom against perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, whilst it is fighting for justice at the UNHRC and other international forums for accountability through an international criminal justice mechanism.



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The BTF in association with sister organisations' enduring efforts at the UNHRC, where the aforementioned politicians played significant parts with their participation, resulted in passing the resolutions HRC/RES/46/1 in March 2021 followed by a stronger resolution HRC/RES/51/1 in October 2022, both of which instituted the **OHCHR's Sri Lanka Accountability Project (OSLAP)** for the mandate of **collecting, consolidating, analysing, and preserving information and evidence to develop possible strategies for future accountability processes for gross violations of human rights or serious violations of international humanitarian law, to advocate for victims and survivors, and to support relevant judicial and other proceedings, including in Member States with competent jurisdiction.**

In consequence, the OHCHR's interim report [A/HRC/57/19](#) published in August 2024 cited several findings of the OSLAP illustrating numerous human rights violations committed by the Sri Lankan state and the armed forces. With the extension of one year in September 2024 for the OSLAP to produce its report covering other emblematic cases in their possession, the forthcoming Resolution on Sri Lanka at the 60th UNHRC Session in September 2025 is expected to reveal a colossal number of violations of human rights perpetrated by the Sri Lankan state and security forces. As per their mandate, the OSLAP is available to provide information for the member states to help with such legal actions in their judicial mechanisms.

In this context, we are pleased that the government of the United Kingdom has taken positive steps towards sanctioning perpetrators under the Global Human Rights Regulations 2020. This will encourage many other countries respecting human rights and the rule of law, in particular those countries in the EU, to follow suit.

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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 info@britishtamilsforum.org and/or visit: www.britishtamilsforum.org