



British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

09 June 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNHRC HIGH COMMISSIONER'S SRI LANKA VISIT & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNEARTHING CHEMMANI MASS GRAVE

"The unearthing of mass graves at Chemmani and the ongoing plight of Tamil victims demand urgent international attention. We trust that the High Commissioner's visit will serve as a turning point in our pursuit of truth and justice, and that the upcoming UNHRC session in September will pave the way for justice and accountability."

The British Tamils Forum (BTF) underscores the critical importance of the upcoming visit of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Turk to Sri Lanka scheduled for the third week of June 2025. This visit marks the first official visit of the High Commissioner to Sri Lanka in nine years, and it presents a vital opportunity to witness and address past and ongoing human rights violations, in the northeastern regions, particularly Trincomalee, **Chemmani** and Mullivaikkal.

Among many fully substantiated documentations of emblematic cases lodged by the British Tamils Forum (BTF) to OHCHR's Sri Lanka Accountability Project (OSLAP), to facilitate its mandatory provisions pursuant to the UNHRC Resolutions of A/HRC/46/1, A/HRC/51/1 and A/HRC/57/1, **Chemmani Mass Grave and Krishanti Kumaraswamy Murder** had constituted significant parts therein.

Sooner the BTF learned that the High Commissioner (HRC), Mr Volker Turk, would be making a 3-day official visit to Sri Lanka in June 2025 and inter-alia would be visiting only Trincomalee in the traditional Tamil homeland, the BTF wrote a letter to the High Commissioner on 27 May 2025 (copy attached) urging, among the other areas, to visit **Chemmani and Mullivaikkal** to witness and consult the Tamil victims about the ruthless & heinous human rights violations committed in these areas.

With the advent of recent excavations a few metres away from **Chemmani Mass Grave**, with over 17 skeletons, including infants, stripped off their clothes being unearthed, it is inevitable that the High Commissioner, Mr Volker Turk, is ethically obliged to visit Chemmani and directly witness the situation and to ensure justice and accountability incorporating victims' centric consultations.

The BTF considers that it is vital to reiterate communications hitherto it had with the High Commissioner at this stage.

- **Letter dated 22 July 2024** - Warning the monumental failure of the UN institutions, the "**Sri Lanka Model**" has become an international precedence for ruthless states to escape binding justice and the necessity to transform Sri Lanka from its "bad model" to a "good model", setting it as a **deterrence** for other countries to follow.



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- **Email dated 16 September 2024** - Common Proposal by Tamil People for UNHRC Resolution of September 2024 expressing our concerns about the **slow progress** of the UNHRC at that time.
- **Letter dated 10 March 2025** – Referring to the new NPP (JVP) government and quoting its Sinhala fundamentalist policies, reiterating the importance of setting a pathway to truth, justice and accountability to Tamil victims in Sri Lanka.
- **Letter dated 27 May 2025** – Expressing pleasure of the High Commissioner’s intended visit to Sri Lanka in June 2025, the BTF, among other things, emphasized the importance of going to **Mullivaikkal and Chemmani** to witness the plight of the victims of the war even after 16 years lapsed since the end of the civil war and to see unearthing mass graves respectively.

It is important that the High Commissioner or the international community should not be carried away with the common concept that the current Sri Lankan government is taking a righteous path in respecting human rights with its guises “Clean Sri Lanka” but should be sagacious by taking the facts and figures that are already warranted in UN repository. Tamil people are anxious if the UN bodies and the international community will desert them by believing that the current NPP government will provide justice and accountability for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, through its **internal criminal prosecution mechanism**.

With the High Commissioner’s victims’ centric consultations along with OSLAP’s final report and reasons cited above, we, Tamil people, trust that the forthcoming 60th UNHRC Session in September 2025 will pave a pathway to deliver justice for Tamils, peace, stability and prosperity for the island.

- The High Commissioner now has an opportunity to get the focus of the international community on Sri Lanka’s **killing fields, mass graves, hidden torture chambers, illegal detention centres** and the **victim’s community**.
- Based on the past 77-year history of Sri Lanka, the UN and other international communities will acknowledge that only an **international criminal justice mechanism** can identify the patterns and root causes of the conflict and ensure the non recurrence of cyclic violence by establishing necessary structural changes in Sri Lanka.

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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