



பிரித்தானிய தமிழர் பேரவை
British Tamils Forum



Tamil Friends of LibDem



April 19, 2018

Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC
Commonwealth Secretary General
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX, UK

Dear Secretary General,

Stop Sri Lanka's continued defiance of Commonwealth values and international law

Sri Lanka continues to disregard Commonwealth values while normalising impunity for international crimes.

In co-sponsoring UNHRC Resolutions 30/1 and 34/1, Sri Lanka agreed to investigate the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the civil war which ended in 2009 and to engage in a full-fledged transitional justice process to allow recovery from a devastating civil war. Sri Lanka has not yet fulfilled the commitments made to her people and the international community.

Due to the lack of progress by Sri Lanka, in February this year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on member states to explore other avenues for justice, including the application of universal jurisdiction that could foster accountability for serious abuses in Sri Lanka.

We encourage Commonwealth countries to heed the High Commissioner's recommendation that universal jurisdiction be exercised to provide accountability in cases where Sri Lanka itself fails to act. We also urge the Commonwealth of Nations to take action to assure that Sri Lanka fulfills all its commitments on transitional justice, including the imposition of military, trade, aid and travel restrictions, and even such measures as suspension from membership and the severance of bilateral ties, along with other strong measures to encourage compliance with Commonwealth values.

Sri Lanka's current President, Prime Minister and government ministers continue to renege on the promises they made to the international community. Sri Lanka's President and Prime Minister have repeatedly made announcements to the effect that no 'war heroes' will be prosecuted, no movement on truth-telling, reparations or a special court with Commonwealth and other foreign judges has been taken

and little effort has been put into institutional reform, locating missing persons or the required consultations with victims and other stakeholders.

The Sri Lankan government made 25 specific commitments when it co-sponsored the 2015 and 2017 UNHRC resolutions. The current status of progress by Sri Lanka of the 25 commitments can be viewed at <https://www.srilankacampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/A-Narrowing-Window-Sri-Lanka-Campaign-March-2018-Compressed.pdf>

By continuing to ignore Sri Lanka's inaction, the Commonwealth gives the impression of condoning impunity, which encourages other countries to flout Commonwealth values and international law. We urge the Commonwealth to take immediate action to ensure Sri Lanka honours its international commitments and upholds Commonwealth values.

Thank you for your kind attention to these requests.

Yours Sincerely,

R. Jeganathan, President, Australian Tamil Congress (**ATC**)

V Ravi Kumar, General Secretary, British Tamils Forum (**BTF**), info@britishtamilsforum.org

Dr V Santhakumar, President, Canadian Tamil Congress (**CTC**)

Satees Muniandy, Secretary General, Malaysian Tamilar Kural

Solidarity Group for Peace and Justice in Sri Lanka (**SGPJ**- South Africa)

Sen Kandiah, Chairman, Tamils for Labour (**TfL**-UK)

Tamil Friends for Liberal Democrats (**TFLD**-UK)

cc: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
