

British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

Monday, 23 May 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

7th year Mullivaikkal Genocide Remembrance Day was held on 18th May 2016, in London.

The British Tamil people gathered again in large numbers to remember and reflect their kith and kin who were massacred in a genocide by the Sri Lankan state and to demand for justice from the International Community.

As in the past six years, the commemoration event, co-ordinated by British Tamils Forum in the UK, brought together British Tamil people to remember their loved ones who perished in the Mullivaikkal Genocide in 2009.

Following a protest march from Waterloo Place to Richmond Terrace opposite the Prime Minister David Cameron's residence, a vigil meeting was held and it began with the participants lighting candles in silence to remember those innocent Tamil people killed. Across the world, there were similar events were held to remember this painful time for the families of those killed.

At the last year's event, there was wide optimism among the international community that the change of government in Sri Lanka in January 2015 would pave way for an international independent investigation into the genocide and justice for the victims. This year's event was held when those optimisms have evaporated as the international community has come to realise that the change of government has not resulted in any change with respect to justice for the victims of genocide or in respect to a political solution to the Tamil National question.

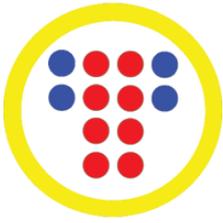
Human rights defenders, British Parliamentarians and people who support the call for justice to the Tamil people, attended and addressed the event. The Members of APPG for Tamils James Berry MP, Wes Streeting MP, Gareth Thomas MP and Bob Blackman MP, Paul Scully MP and the GLA member Cllr Keith Prince reiterate the need for an international independent investigation in Sri Lanka during their speech at the vigil meeting.

The leader of the opposition Jeremy Corbyn MP, Gavin Barwell MP, Jackie Doyle Price MP, Virendra Sharma MP, Tom Brake MP, John Mann MP, Joan Ryan MP, Mike Gapes MP, Stephen Timms MP, Roger Evans, Charles Tannock MEP, Syed Kamall MEP sent sympathy messages to the British Tamils Forum.

In a written statement and a video message, the leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn MP said, "my thoughts today are also with the wider Tamil community who have shouldered injustice for decades and remain resolute in their determination for justice". Mr Corbyn has vowed to "stand" with the Tamil community "in the search for truth, justice, accountability and reconciliation, and of course the right of self-determination within Sri Lanka".

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The chair of the APPG for Tamils' James Berry said "Sirisena has promised a lot but delivered almost next to nothing." He called on the Sri Lankan government to produce evidence of lands released, set up a tribunal as promised to the international community and end on going torture in the country. James said, "it is not a time to take pressure off Sri Lanka."

Gareth Thomas said, "we still hear huge human rights problems coming from Sri Lanka." He promised to raise these concerns in the House of Parliament on behalf of the Tamil constituents in Harrow West.

The vice-chair APPG for Tamils' Wes Streeting said, "there can be no peace and reconciliation unless there can be truth, justice and accountability." He also said, "there can be no hiding place for people who committed those unspeakable crimes during the Sri Lankan civil war, the crimes that can only be reasonably considered as genocide."

Bob Blackman said, "my view is that the people that committed war crimes must answer for these not in Sri Lanka but at The Hague."

The British Tamils Forum's general secretary V Ravi Kumar said, "the Sri Lankan state is leading a shadow war on Tamil people to divert our struggle and the Tamil people should be aware of this and not fall this discreet approach." Mr Ravi Kumar also said, "the Tamil homeland is still continuing to be occupied by the Sri Lankan military, mushrooming Buddhist temples / monuments of conquests in the Tamils' homeland, destruction of their cultural landscape, torture and rape against our people under the indefinite detention of the Tamil people without trial continues."

The absence of a comprehensive list of the 18,000 people taken away at the end of the war and the fate of the missing 146,679 were kept in the limelight at the event.

The closing speech was delivered by the British Tamils Forum woman activists Chandrika recapped our memories of the last few days, weeks and months of Mullivaikkal in 2009.

The Tamil people will never forget their kith and kin killed by the Sinhala state and will not relent until an international independent investigation is conducted, the perpetrators of the genocide are held to account and justice is served.

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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 admin@tamilsforum.com and/or visit: www.tamilsforum.com

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