

British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

27 July 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black July 1983 commemoration – 2017

The commemoration event remembering the people who were massacred in 1983 was marked by a panel discussion organised by British Tamils Forum.

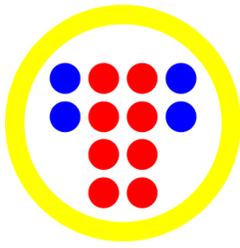
The ongoing genocide, land grab, proliferating Buddhist structures in Tamil's Homeland and continuing impunity that perpetuates repeated acts of genocide against the Tamil people, were topics of discussion at the meeting.

The discussion moderated by Sutharshan of the Tamil Guardian had Paul Scully MP and Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, Rt Hon Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP and Former Secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Richard Gowing of Sri Lanka Campaign and Andrew Thorpe Apps of Together Against Genocide in the panel.

Rt Hon Theresa Villiers spoke about the continuing building of Buddhist structures in the Tamil areas where there were no Buddhists. She described these structures as "Expression of Power" over people who are non-Buddhists and stated that these acts severely impede reconciliation between the peoples of Sri Lanka.

Paul Scully spoke about the continuing culture of torture with impunity, land grab, disappearances, militarisation and the very slow progress on fulfilling Sri Lanka's commitment to the UN.

Richard Gowing stated that the events of July 1983 will remain etched in the collective conscience of the Tamil people. He emphasised that absence of justice ensured continuation of crimes and iterated that the effects of impunity affected all the peoples of Sri Lanka. Commenting on the progress on the UN resolution he pointed out that out of 25 commitments in the resolution only 8 have seen progress with 3 fulfilled and 5 partially achieved. There has been virtually no progress in the remaining 17. Enforced disappearances and use of torture is continuing unabated. The repealing of PTA is yet to materialise and more draconian legislation is being proposed to replace the PTA. He stated that the reinstatement of GSP plus by the EU was a missed opportunity that sent the wrong signals. He stated that the International community is failing to address the continuing impunity in Sri Lanka.



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Andrew Thorpe Apps of Together Against Genocide (TAG) stated that torture continues a serious human rights violation in Sri Lanka. He insisted that Sri Lanka should sign the Rome Statute. He also condemned the heavy military interference in civilian life including their involvement in the kindergartens. He emphasised the need to attach conditions and auditing to monitor the use of funding given to Sri Lanka, by the donors. He called on individual countries to use their political, economic and trade relations to exert pressure on Sri Lanka to abide by its commitments to the International community. He highlighted the very little progress made in implementing the UN Resolution it co-sponsored and opined that a time scaled review process should be implemented to monitor progress and that Sri Lanka should be referred to the security council if it fails to adhere to the time scales. A cross section of the Tamil community representatives participated in the event.

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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