

British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

Wednesday, April 20, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Leaked UN Expert Panel's report on Sri Lanka

The British Tamils Forum welcomes the report by the UN advisory panel on Sri Lanka, submitted to the UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon on 13th April 2011. The report, appears to have restored by a small measure the faith in the UN, the Tamil people had lost in 2009, when their cry for intervention fell on deaf ears, resulting in the genocide of Tamils. We call upon the UN to make the report public, especially as it has already been leaked to the press.

The extracts of the report leaked to Sri Lankan media indicate that there is credible evidence against the Sri Lankan military and the political leadership to be subjected to an independent international investigation for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

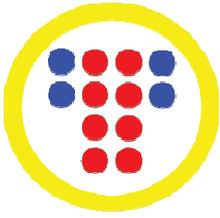
The report also completely dismisses the Sri Lankan regime's claim that there were "zero civilian casualties". On the number of people killed, the report makes reference to different methodologies, which would give figures ranging from 75,000 (330,000 +35,000 – 290,000) to 135,000 (3x(40,000+5000)).

Since the compilation of this report, new evidence has emerged, placing the number of people who were holed up in the war zone, at around 430,000, as opposed to the 365,000 (330,000+35,000) quoted in the report.

Based on information from the Kacheris (Local Government Office) of Mullativu and Killinochi about the population in Vanni in early October 2008 and number of people who came to government controlled areas after that, 146,679 people seem to be unaccounted for. According to the Kacheri, the population in Vanni was 429,059 in early part of October 2008. According to UN OCHA update as of 10th July 2009, the total number of people who came out of the Vanni to government controlled areas after this is estimated to be 282,380.

- Statement in front of LLRC by Bishop of Mannar Rev Fr Rayappu Joseph, Very Rev. Fr. Victor Sosai and Rev. Fr. Xavier Croos

The above numbers have been verified and confirmed by the British TV Channel 4's own investigators who had exposed the extrajudicial executions of prisoners of war, by the Sri Lankan military.



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The fact that nearly 147,000 human lives are still unaccounted for dictates that there should be an immediate, independent, international investigation, to establish the true extent of the genocide.

It should be noted here, that in February 2009, the military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara announced at a press briefing, that there were only 70,000 people in the war zone, when in fact the government had known the numbers to be nearly 430,000.

This deliberate understatement of numbers by the Sri Lankan government, acknowledged in the report, had two primary motives:

1. To limit the humanitarian supplies, so that people died of starvation and lack of medicine.
2. To hide the genocide of the Tamil people, once it had completed its planned all out assault.

The Sri Lankan government, having banned independent international media agencies from the war zone during its military onslaught still continues to restrict international humanitarian, human rights and media agencies from reaching the Tamil people in the hope that it could bury the truth forever.

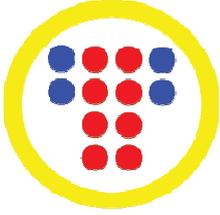
We believe that truth will prevail eventually although it did not in time to save the 146,679 presumed dead.

The Tamil people who lost their loved ones are outraged that the UNSG had allowed time for the Sri Lankan government to respond to the report, before making it available to the public. The Sri Lankan regime on the other hand, having realised the futility in hiding the truth, has engineered a leak to the local media, to provoke a Sinhala uprising against the UN. The Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has appealed to his Sinhala constituency to demonstrate against the UN report during the annual Mayday rally. The appeal appears to be uniting all the Sinhalese, including the opposition, in a common cause to resist calls for justice to the massacred Tamil people.

The mood of the Sinhala people who appear to adore the present Sinhala leadership with reverence, despite it having decimated the Tamil population, is aptly described by a former President of Sri Lanka who presided over the previous act of genocide of Tamils by the Sinhalese.

“I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people... now we cannot think of them, not about their lives or their opinion.. the more you put pressure in the north, the happier the Sinhala people will be here... Really if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy.”

– *President J.R. Jayawardene, Daily Telegraph 11th July 1983*



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This political climate in which Sinhala triumphalism blinds humanity, there is no chance that a Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan regime will conduct an independent and impartial war crimes inquiry and risk being thrown out of office by the Sinhala people. The on-going persecution of the Tamil people in their occupied homelands where murder, rape, abductions and enforced disappearances by the Sinhala armed forces and the paramilitary groups are rampant, no Tamil person will have an iota of trust in a Sri Lankan regime to deliver justice.

We therefore demand that an independent international investigation is conducted, supported by comprehensive witness protection afforded to the Tamil community by a UN task force.

We appeal to the UN to release the full report without further delay and implement with vigour the recommendations made by the advisory panel so as to restore the Tamil people's faith in the international body to deliver justice.

In addition to the recommendations by the panel we the Tamil people demand that the UN demands from its members to reject the appointment of Sri Lankan emissaries who had served in the Sri Lankan armed forces during the war as well as political leaders who stand implicated in the war crimes and crimes against humanity in the genocidal war against the Tamil people.

We urge the international community to ensure that justice is served.

-Ends-

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