



பிரித்தானிய தமிழர் பேரவை
British Tamils Forum

US★TPAC

December 10, 2017

For immediate release

BTF and USTPAC Commemorate International Human Rights Day - 2017

On this day in 1948 the United Nations adopted a universal set of human rights values that apply to all of us. The British Tamils Forum (BTF) and the United States Tamil Political Action Council (USTPAC) honour this milestone towards creating a freer and more equal world by reconfirming our commitment to achieving a just and equitable political solution for the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

BTF and USTPAC call upon the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and its member countries to ensure that Sri Lanka commences a credible and timely transitional justice process as envisioned in 2015's Resolution 30/1, which Sri Lanka co-sponsored and re-committed to in 2017's Resolution 34/1.

UNHRC Resolution 30/1 encouraged the Government of Sri Lanka to take firm action to set up a transitional justice process to provide a pathway for reconciliation and a peaceful future for all Sri Lanka's communities following a long war. Resolution 30/1 envisioned the reform of Sri Lanka's domestic law, along with implementation of the recommendations made by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and the recommendations in the report of the Office of the High Commissioner's Investigation of Sri Lanka (OISL), including by providing for, in a manner consistent with Sri Lanka's international obligations, the trial and punishment of those most responsible for the full range of crimes committed during and after Sri Lanka's recent war. The Government of Sri Lanka committed that this judicial process would be undertaken by a hybrid special court which contained Commonwealth and foreign judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators.

The United Nations Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) November 2017 report on Sri Lanka notably calls into question President Siresena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's commitment to the promised full implementation of Resolution 30/1, as do Sri Lanka's failure to accept many recommendations during the recent Universal Periodic Review process, the report of the Commission on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the reports of numerous UN Special Rapporteurs who have visited Sri Lanka in recent years.

The painfully slow progress on implementing critical confidence-building measures and credible transitional justice structures and multiple statements by the president and prime minister and other members of the government denying the need for any action raise doubt about their actual commitment to the promises made in Resolution 30/1.

The Chairman of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Tamils, Paul Scully MP has called again today on the government of Sri Lanka for time-bound action on implementation of Resolution 30/1. To

this day none of these commitments have been fulfilled by the Government of Sri Lanka and no one has been brought to justice. Co-sponsors of Resolution 30/1 should hold Sri Lanka to its commitments and ensure full implementation of the OISL and LLRC recommendations

BTF and USTPAC call upon the EU, the UK and US governments to take into consideration the lack of progress on transitional justice, the ongoing human rights abuses on the island, statements by many members of the current government that do not respect Sri Lanka's international commitments and recent critical reports on Sri Lanka by relevant UN bodies and rapporteurs. We believe that Sri Lanka has been merely paying lip service to human rights for the benefit of an international audience in expectation that there will be few consequences. The UNHRC and its constituent members must take a strong stance on Sri Lanka's failure to respect its commitments in a timely manner and should start alternative international diplomatic initiatives to achieve the recommendations of Resolution 30/1.

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On this Human Rights Day, our thoughts are with the families of those who were arrested and disappeared during and after the war. Many of these families have been protesting on the roadside for 300 days and all continue to wait in sorrow and impatience to receive information and to see justice done.

Justice delayed is justice denied.

About USTPAC

USTPAC is a US-based Tamil advocacy group advocating for a cessation of ongoing human rights abuses in Sri Lanka, accountability from all sides for crimes committed during and after the civil war, and a political settlement to address the root causes of the conflict. It has worked for these goals at the UNHRC since 2012.

About BTF

The British Tamils Forum, also widely known as 'BTF' is an organisation which represents and gives voice to a large Tamil community in the United Kingdom in political and socio-economic spheres. 'Working for peace with justice and dignity.'

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