

# British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

23 May 2017

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **British politicians call for a stop to continuing genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka.**

At the Mullivaikal Genocide (Sri Lanka) Remembrance Day 2017 held at the Hyde Park, London on the 18th of May 2017, organised by the British Tamils Forum, several British politicians called for an end to the continuing genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Mullivaikal is a narrow stretch of sandy baron land in the north eastern part of Sri Lanka between the Indian Ocean and the Nanthikadal lagoon. This small stretch of land was declared a safe zone by the Sri Lankan government and around 300,000 Tamils took refuge in this narrow stretch of land to save their lives. Instead they were mercilessly massacred by the advancing Sri Lankan armed forces.

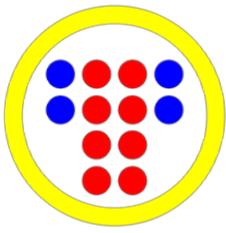
The UN Panel Report on Sri Lanka (UN POE) in 2010 estimated that more than 40,000 civilians were killed during the final stages of the conflict by the Sri Lankan armed forces in 2009. The three-member UN panel found credible allegations that comprise five core categories of potential serious violations of international law, committed by the Government of Sri Lanka in the final stages of the conflict, including killing of civilians through widespread shelling and the denial of humanitarian assistance.

In 2012 March, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution urging Sri Lanka to investigate its own alleged abuses during the final phase of war. To date no investigations have been carried out to find out the truth about these killings. Many of the Tamils worldwide lost their kith and kin in this genocide. Hence Mullivaikkal massacre created a collective trauma in the mind of the global Tamil community. Every year this day is remembered by the global Tamil community as the Mullivaikkal genocide Remembrance Day.

Following British politicians gave speeches which stressed on the need to fully implement the UNHRC resolution 30/1 immediately. They endorsed the campaign launched by BTF, to stop the continuing genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Mr. **James Berry**, Chair of All Party parliamentary Group for Tamils (APPG T), Mr. **Wes Streeting**, Deputy Chair of APPG T, Mr. **Lee Scott**, former Chair of APPG T, Ms. **Hannah David** Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, and Mr. **Matthew Scott** Prospective Parliamentary Candidate all gave speeches which stressed the importance of stopping the continuing genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

On her message to the event Ms. **Joan Ryan**, stated the following, “... we can be in no doubt. War crimes, Crimes against humanity and Genocide took place against the Tamil people on the beaches of Mullivaikal and elsewhere. I note the most recent UN Human Rights Council resolution on Sri Lanka. It is absolutely vital that the UK Government and its international partners continue to apply pressure on President Sirisena’s Government to implement resolution 30/1 – IN FULL – and to ensure that Commonwealth and foreign judges take part in Sri Lanka’s judicial processes to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity. In addition, the on-going human rights violations being perpetrated against the Tamil people must stop and meaningful steps must be taken to resolve the Tamil National Question and the Tamil people’s right to self-determination. Only a genuine reckoning with the past and an immediate improvement in the current human rights situation in Sri Lanka can help lay the foundations of a sustainable peace within the country.

On his message, **Gavin Barwell**, former MP for Croydon Central stated "This year too I read with concern that the memorialisation prayer organised by the civil society and church have been banned. Actions as these are counterproductive and will not lead to reconciliation. On this day as we remember those who lost their lives, I call on Sri Lanka to take steps to fully implement its commitments to the UN Human Rights Council and conduct an independent international investigation into the atrocities committed during and at the end of the war”.



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Former MP for Harrow West **Gareth Thomas** stated, “When so many Tamils lost their lives, and when so many atrocities and war crimes were committed we must never forget what happened. We must continue to campaign internationally as well as here in Britain for an international war crimes tribunal to investigate those events and apply pressure to be put on the Sri Lankan government to recognise their responsibilities to seek justice being done. We must also continue to fight for human rights in Sri Lanka now against torture.”

On the message sent to mark the event, leader of the Labour Party Mr. **Jeremy Corbyn**, mentioned his commitment for the full implementation of the UN resolution 30/1, and his continuing support to call for an immediate cessation of human rights violations against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

This year BTF launched the “Stop the ongoing genocide” campaign based on the following four themes,

- (1) STOP THE CULTURAL GENOCIDE,
- (2) STOP THE IMPUNITY TO COMMIT GENOCIDE,
- (3) STOP OCCUPYING PEOPLE'S LAND,
- (4) STOP DESTROYING TAMIL PEOPLES' IDENTITY.

BTF hopes all diaspora organisations around the world takes up the above themes and campaigns for it internationally to stop the ongoing genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

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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](mailto:info@britishtamilsforum.org) and/or visit: [www.britishtamilsforum.org](http://www.britishtamilsforum.org)