



## Let the Spirit of Thileepan unite Tamils globally

For Immediate Release  
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On 15th September 1987, Thileepan began his hunger strike, demanding that the Indian government honour the pledges it had made to the Tamil people as part of the Indo-Lanka Accord. We honour Thiagi Thileepan's sacrifice for the political aspirations of the Tamil people.

Thileepan's fast lasted 12 days, during which he was surrounded by over 100,000 supporters in central Jaffna. On 26th September 1987, Thileepan died for his principles. Despite 33 years passing, the original demands he made are still pertinent to issues facing the Eelam Tamil nation. The pledges made by the Indian government centered on releasing Tamils detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act; ending the Sinhala colonisation of the North-East; and bringing an end to the occupation of the Tamil homeland by the Sri Lankan military.

Since the end of the armed conflict, we have not seen progress on these issues, but rather a deeper entrenchment of Sri Lanka's military in the North-East, continued use of the internationally-condemned Prevention of Terrorism Act to silence government critics; and expedited colonisation schemes, as well as state-led land grabs.

Politicians from the three Tamil nationalist parties have signed a joint letter to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to appeal against this year's ban on holding commemorative events in honour of Thileepan's ultimate sacrifice for his ideals.

The letter highlighted the fact that Sri Lankan police have made applications to numerous Magistrates Courts across the North-East to block commemorative events from going ahead, forming part of a crackdown on remembrance across the North-East.

We, the undersigned diaspora organisations call upon the Tamils the world over and especially in Tamil Nadu to remember the spirit of Thileepan's campaign by lighting a candle on September 26 at 10.48 AM your local time, and by calling for action demanding that the militarised Sri Lankan dictatorship recognise international conventions on the right to remember the dead. We also call upon the diaspora, Tamil Nadu and Eelam Tamil youth to extend the campaign to all social media platforms and to spread awareness of the assault on Tamil rights to global audiences and international governments.

Only a globally united struggle against the oppressors of our people can liberate them and allow the spirit of Thileepan guide all of us in this endeavour.

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