



British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

27th of June 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BTF meeting with the UK's Shadow Foreign Minister Stephen Kinnock and Shadow Exchequer Secretary Wes Streeting

The British Tamils Forum (BTF) had a very constructive meeting with the UK's Shadow Minister for Asia and the Pacific, Stephen Kinnock and Shadow Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Wes Streeting. Together we raised concerns over the Sri Lankan Government's current actions and the way forward to achieve justice, peace, and prosperity for the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

We made clear that our top priority was to stop the systematic ongoing genocide against Tamils in Sri Lanka, and Mr Kinnock and Mr Streeting made clear that a major aim of Keir Starmer's leadership would be to protect and promote human rights everywhere, including in Sri Lanka.

The following specific issues were discussed.

- Sri Lanka's withdrawal from its current United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) mandate.
- Continued impunity and promotion for senior civil, parliamentary, and diplomatic positions for defence personals alleged as perpetrators in the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL) report.
- Establishment of the Archaeological Task Force in Eastern Sri Lanka with the sole objective of Buddhisation, land grab and further colonisation. The composition of the task force is questionable and does not represent the Tamil speaking people.
- Protection of the victims, witnesses, human rights activists, journalists and evidences against the alleged perpetrators of the atrocity crimes.
- The negative results of the £6.6 million that the UK Government spent on the Sri Lankan Security Sector Reforms.
- An International Mechanism for the preservation of evidence (E.g.: IIMM Mechanism for Syria or IIMM for Myanmar).
- Setting up an International Judicial Mechanism.
- Taking these issues to the UN General Assembly, and the Security Council.



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Amongst other confirmations we were assured that the Labour Party's Foreign Policy will escalate the political pressure on these issues within the UK Parliament, and that the future Labour Government will not provide lip service to human rights but will uphold and deliver on our asks. By taking up the mantle from where David Miliband and Ed Miliband left it, the Labour Party look forward to working shoulder to shoulder with us in that context. Tamils for Labour also attended this meeting.

On behalf of the Tamil diaspora we thanked the Shadow Ministers and the Labour party for their continued support for the Tamil community in the UK, while appreciating David Cameron's initiative in taking Sri Lanka to the UN Human Rights Council in order to bring Resolution 30/1 (Transitional Justice), stepping up with the UK Foreign Policy to ensure Truth, Justice and Accountability on Sri Lanka's War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity.

Contact: S Sangeeth Tel: +44 (0) 7412435697

Email: news@britishtamilsforum.org

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