

TAMIL NATIONAL ALLIANCE

Election Manifesto, 2004

Within two years of Parliamentary elections of December 5, 2001 the Tamil nation was forced to the position of having to face another election as a result of a power struggle between the two largest Sinhala chauvinist parties.

However, with the current political environment and in the backdrop of the changes shaping the attitudes of the international community towards our freedom struggle, the TNA has decided to make use of the opportunity presented by this election to bring forcefully to the attention of the world, and Sri Lanka in particular, our resolve for self-determination.

The Tamil Nation which from historical times had its own traditional homeland, sovereignty and rule over it lost them first to the European aggressors. When in 1833 the British brought the whole island of Ilankai under one administrative control the Tamil Nation, without its consent, was annexed to the Sinhala areas.

Later in 1948 at the time of their departure, the British rejected every constitutional proposal submitted on behalf of the Tamil Nation and the way was paved for the fate of the Tamil Nation to be at the mercy of the Sinhala nation. Subsequently, as a result of the measures taken by the chauvinist Sinhala majority such as the appropriation of Tamils' land, disenfranchisement, abrogation of voting rights and language rights, discrimination based on race in education, employment, culture all of which threatened the distinctiveness and survival of the Tamil Nation, the non-violent struggle adopted by the Ilankai Thamil Arasu Katchi on behalf of the Tamil Nation based on the conviction that the affairs in our traditional homeland should be administered only by us and on the principle of self-determination, was put down by force of arms by the government. Since 1957 the agreements entered into from time to time, by the leaders of Tamil people with the chauvinist Sinhala political leaders have been torn up and discarded.

Continuing this behaviour, in the years 1956 and 1957 planned violence was directed at the helpless Tamil people. Because the provisions of the unitary-state republican constitution of 1972, which was approved in the midst of the opposition by Tamil people's representatives by the chauvinist Sinhala majority, which denied totally and comprehensively the rights of the Tamil people, there arose the historical inevitability of the start of an armed rebellion on behalf of the Tamil people.

In this political environment the Tamil organizations got together and resolved on May 14, 1976 to establish a sovereign independent Tamil Eelam based on our inalienable right to self-determination. Independent Thamil Eelam received its mandate as a result of the overwhelming support given to the TULF by the Tamil speaking people of NorthEast in the general elections of July 1977.

In addition to the unleashing of genocidal attacks on the Tamil people as an immediate response to the mandate for an independent Tamil Eelam, in the following year, a second republican constitution, further strengthening the unitary-state government was promulgated despite opposition from the Tamil people and their representatives. Subsequently in 1979 and 1981 and later on a enormous scale in 1983, genocidal attacks on Tamils was planned and agitated by the Sinhala chauvinist politicians.

In this circumstance, in order to safeguard the life and liberty of the Tamil race and to establish its birthright for self-determination, the Tamil Nation having been pushed to the unavoidable state of armed conflict as the only way, the war not only broadened but advanced under the generalship of the Tigers' leader Hon. Pirapaharan.

The state of affairs being that all the efforts taken by the successive Sinhala chauvinist governments to defeat the armed campaign for Tamil Nation's freedom and thereby crush the political aspirations of the Tamil people having ended in failure, and in the context of the reality being accepted and emphasized by the international community that the solution to the Tamil National problem cannot be settled by force of arms but only politically, the basis was laid for political negotiations with the help of the international community.

We are obligated to remind ourselves at this stage that the only reason we have established the power of Tamil nationalism thus is because our people have demonstrated such determination and sacrifice for the ideals in the face of numerous hardships and the loss of nearly one lakh of lives and because of the legendary bravery, sacrifices and exploits of our heroes and fighters.

The unilateral cease-fire, declared by the LTTE midnight on December 24, 2001 and the subsequent cease-fire agreement signed (between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government) as a result of the efforts of the Norwegian government with the approval of the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, paved the way for a series of talks.

On account of the failure to institute, in terms of the agreement reached in the talks, the administrative organs including 'SIHRN' to carry out the necessary and urgent functions based on humanitarian considerations required to restore normalcy in the daily lives of the Tamil people and the failure to organize the bureaucratic framework to put to use the huge amount of aid promised by the international community and bearing in mind the escalating daily hardships and misery to the people and the resulting perceptions, the LTTE put forward the proposal that an interim self-governing authority be set up for the regions of the Tamil nation.

Their draft proposals for the interim self-governing authority (ISGA) was submitted to the facilitators on October 31, 2003.

The LTTE requested the Sri Lankan government to appoint a date for the commencement of talks on these proposals. The political crisis that was precipitated by the president at this juncture by taking over the Defense, Interior and Information ministries within three days of the ISGA proposals culminated in the dissolution of the parliament and the announcement of general elections to take place on April 4, 2004. This state of affairs not only disrupted the efforts to set up an ISGA sorely needed for our people but also set back and put in peril the efforts to a political solution to the Tamil national problem. Despite this the LTTE has reaffirmed their determination to pursue the course of peace. The international community has praised and approved this.

In the forthcoming elections the Tamil national problem has been made to take the centre stage in South Sri Lanka. This has been used as the basis for Sinhala chauvinist propaganda in various forms to present to the Sinhala electorate. Thus, the responsibility resides with the Sinhala people to arrive at a mature position in the matter of resolving the Tamil national problem.

The LTTE announced the unilateral cessation of hostilities in December 2001. We wish to point out that following this on February 22, 2002 even though they signed the cease-fire agreement and continued to take part in the political negotiation regarding the Tamil national problem the LTTE not only has fully 70 regions in the Tamil people's traditional homeland under its complete control and is managing an administrative set up with characteristic features of a state government but also has a functioning government.

For these reason the TNA expects the Sinhala nation also to play its part in the productive and healthy resumption of the disrupted political settlement efforts. Based on this the TNA puts forward the following resolutions:

1) Find a political solution to the Tamil national problem based on the acceptance of the fundamental proposals regarding (Tamil Nation's) Tamil homeland, Tamil Nation, Tamils' right to self-government (autonomy).

2) The TNA has clear and definitive position on the political solution of the Tamil national problem in regard to the Muslims. Because of the fact the Muslims have Tamil as their Mother tongue like the Tamils and on the recognition that they have lived in amity amongst the Tamil in the Tamil homeland, the TNA has decided that any solution to the Tamil national problem must incorporate matters and features that reassure the distinctiveness, security, culture and economy of the Muslims. In this manner, in the ISGA proposals and features relating to the Muslims have been made manifest. That the Muslim community has the right to be a party in determining the part to be played by them in ISGA committee has been made clear by the LTTE. Moreover, LTTE has made known that the members appointed by the NorthEast Muslim community will take their place in the ISGA committee. The TNA is confident that the Muslim brothers will join with the Tamils in this front to erect a common future.

3) The Sinhala nation should accept in to the ideas developed in the ISGA document put forward by the LTTE which contains excellent proposals in regard to rebuilding the Tamil country devastated and Tamil lives ravaged in the twenty-year long war, to solve the day to day problems encountered by the Tamil people and to establish normalcy in the lives of the Tamil people, centred on their welfare, respecting human rights and conforming to the rule of law, and proceed to hold talks with the LTTE and set up the ISGA committee.

4) The high security zones and armed forces camps which are located in areas populated by Tamils disregarding their welfare, priority given to strategic interest of warfare, should be removed and arrangements made for the Tamil people to return and settle in their places of residence.

5) The armed forces' interdiction and oppression imposed must be lifted comprehensively to enable the Tamil people to carry on the activities needed for their livelihood and to move freely in their homeland.

6) The international community, instead of waiting until the Tamil nation's ethnic problem is permanently solved, should step forward and directly assist in the pressing humanitarian needs and economic development schemes and improve the economic life of the Tamil nation.

7) The political prisoners unreasonably held in jail for years should all be released forthwith.

8)An international judicial inquiry should be conducted to deliver justice to our people and to the relatives who are burdened with the unbearable sorrow of not knowing the fate of those innocents who disappeared after having been arrested by the armed forces and police in our homeland.

9)All the provisions of the cease-fire agreements must be completely fulfilled and peace and normalcy should prevail in our homeland.

10)The LTTE has for the past two years put up with the violent, surly behaviour of the armed forces without impairing the conditions for peace and observing the cease-fire and acting steadfastly and firmly towards the path of peace. Hence, the international community should create the environment by removing the restrictions put in place by certain countries on the LTTE, the authentic sole representatives of the Tamil people, so that they could, with authority, dignity and with equal status conduct talks with the government of Sri Lanka.

Accepting LTTE's leadership as the national leadership of the Tamil Eelam Tamils and the Liberation Tigers as the sole and authentic representatives of the Tamil people, let us devote our full cooperation for the ideals of the Liberation Tigers' struggle with honesty and steadfastness. Let us endeavour determinedly, collectively as one group, one nation, one country, transcending race and religious differences, under the leadership of the LTTE for a life of liberty, honor and justice for the Tamil people. Let us work side by side with the LTTE, who are fighting for the protection and autonomous life of the Tamil speaking people, for the political initiatives under their leadership. We emphasize that if the Tamil nation's requests are continued to be rejected, rightful political solution denied and armed aggression and oppressive rule return, based on the doctrine of self-determination, it is an inevitable reality that Tamil sovereignty and independence will be established in the Tamil homeland. We implore our people to identify the selfish, opportunistic packs and gangs that operate in our midst as the enemies and as the tools of the majoritarian chauvinist Sinhala forces against the Tamil nation which seeks an honourable and peaceful life and reject them totally and completely in the upcoming elections. We are sending a clarion call to the Tamil speaking people to unite under one flag and give overwhelming support to the TNA which is contesting (the elections) under the ILANKAI TAMIL ARASU KATCHI'S symbol of house, so as to emphasize the aims of the people of the Tamil Nation, to proclaim again the political resolve of our people, to strengthen further the Tamil nation and to win the political rights of the Tamil speaking people.