



International Federation of Tamils

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PRESS STATEMENT

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Title: IFT call upon 70 million world Tamil community to redouble its support to the Eelam Tamils

The International Federation of Tamils (IFT) has noted the recent statements and sentiments expressed by several members of the international community about the need for the Sri Lankan government to work towards a political solution, particularly in the context of the Sri Lankan armed forces occupying Kilinochchi, which was formerly the administrative headquarters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The reasoning behind this renewed call to initiate a political process is, in their view, a sure way to wean the Tamil people, both in the Tamil homeland and the Diaspora, away from the LTTE. Some have gone as far as to state that they do not advocate that the Sri Lankan government talk to the LTTE. It should be noted that since these views had been expressed, the Sri Lankan government has banned the LTTE.

IFT notes that in 1996 when the entire Jaffna peninsula which was then considered the administrative capitol of the LTTE, came under the occupation of the Sri Lankan State, the very same members of the international community made similar calls for the then government to commence a political process, which they hoped would alienate the Tamil people from the LTTE. Like at present the Sri Lankan State responded by banning the LTTE and pursuing a military solution in the name of "War for Peace". The reasoning expressed then was the same as the present. Such calls went unheeded then, as will be the case now. In this regard IFT wishes to state the following:-

The Sinhala Nation that comprises a permanent majority of 75% of the population in the island of Sri Lanka, and which practices Sinhala Buddhist Ethno Nationalism, is the custodian of the Sri Lankan State. This brand of Sinhala Buddhist Ethno Nationalism insists that the entire island of Sri Lanka belongs only to the Sinhala people. It is for these reasons that all peaceful efforts by the Tamil political leadership to negotiate political arrangements to live with the Sinhalese as equals, consistently failed.

It is after over 30 years of such failure that all the Tamil political parties united to pass the 1976 Vattukkoddai resolution which called on the Tamil people to struggle for the recognition of the separate sovereignty of the Tamil Nation and the creation of the State of Tamil Eelam. The fact that this very same resolution when put before the Tamil people at the 1977 General Election by the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) received a clear mandate is well known.

Currently the struggle to realize the 1977 mandate of the Tamil people is being spearheaded by the LTTE. That the LTTE are considered by the Tamils to be their authentic representatives is clear from the overwhelming support received by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) at consecutive elections in December 2001 and April 2004, where the Tamil people were specifically asked by the TNA to endorse the LTTE as their authentic representatives.

At the core of the Tamil peoples' struggle for the creation of a separate state and by extension, their support for the LTTE, is their strong belief that not only is it morally justified in order for them to live as a free people with dignity, but also that equally important practical reasons exist. It is the latter that this statement wishes to address.

As mentioned earlier, the brand of Sinhala Buddhist Ethno Nationalism that is entrenched in the Sinhala peoples' collective psyche is one of the Sri Lankan State being the exclusive possession of the Sinhala people. This being the case, the Tamil people creating the realities of a second power centre to that of the Sinhalese on the island becomes fundamentally important, as it is by presenting to the Sinhala State such a fait accompli – the State of Tamil Eelam – can the Tamils expect the Sinhala Nation to negotiate with it as an equal.

It is also through such a process can the Tamils hope to keep the Sinhala Nation focused on the essential political nature of the conflict and negotiate an acceptable solution. It is the considered view of IFT that such a solution can only be arrived at by the Tamil and Sinhala Nations pooling their separate sovereignties to associate with each other and build a common identity, premised on equality, respect and peace.

IFT wishes to point out, that whether it be the cry for Tamil Eelam, or the formulation of the Thimpu Principles, or the creation of a de facto state, or the formulation of the ISGA proposals, at the core of all has been the need to create and have recognized a power centre for the Tamil Nation in order for it to be in a position to successfully negotiate with the Sinhala Nation as equals. IFT strongly believes that it is only such a process that has a realistic prospect of ushering a just and durable solution to the conflict. It is also through such an approach can peace and stability be achieved in the island of Sri Lanka.

It is precisely to prevent the Tamil Nation creating a second power centre on the island that the Sri Lankan State has been keen to pursue policies that are genocidal in nature. Whether it be State aided colonization of the Tamil homeland with an intention of sinhalization; or be it the de-merger of the North-East; or the refusal to commence negotiations on the ISGA proposals; or the refusal to recognize the Tamils as constituting a Nation of People with the right to self-determination; or the overwhelming desire to pursue a military solution to the Tamil National question; all stem from the need to prevent the Tamil Nation from creating the political, economic, social and legal reality of a second power centre to theirs.

It is in this context that IFT firmly believes that the international community should formally recognize the right of self-determination of the Eelam Tamil Nation. By doing so the international community will contribute politically in recognizing a separate power centre for the Tamil Nation that is an essential prerequisite for meaningful negotiations to take place between the Sinhala Nation and the Tamil Nation in order to arrive at a just and durable solution to the current conflict.

IFT also takes this opportunity to call upon the over 70 million strong world Tamil community to redouble its support to the Eelam Tamils for their struggle to create the State of Tamil Eelam. IFT reiterates, that the future State of Tamil Eelam will negotiate with the Sinhala State of Sri Lanka to create a mutually acceptable relationship whereby both Peoples pool their sovereignties to associate with each other for purposes of mutual benefit.

(the end)

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