

Translation of Statement
Made by Former Chief Minister, Northern Province
after the Demonstration held at Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka on 25/02/2019 at 9.30
am

Today, on the 25th day of February 2019 (starting at 9 am) former Chief Minister and presently Secretary General of Thamizh Makkal Kootanii Justice C.V.Wigneswaran after participating in the demonstration staged by the families of the Disappeared in Kilinochchi and while Hartal is being performed throughout the North and East of Sri Lanka showing the feelings of the People of Tamil homelands when responding to a question by a media personnel said as follows –

Journalist – Would you please relate your views on today’s Demonstration?

Response – I feel elated to see so many from different parts of the North and East coming over here to participate in this demonstration leaving aside their educational activities, daily livelihood activities and various other important chores needed to be handled today. They have come over here to democratically agitate for their rights and claim their remedies to Justice and bring their plight to the notice of the International Community and to the United Nations. Let me first convey my heartiest thanks to all of them. So too my sincere, heartfelt thanks go to the Traders who have closed up their trading establishments to show their support to the People’s protest staged today.

We have come over here to show our solidarity with the cause of the families of those who disappeared. The International Community and the United Nations Human Rights’ Council must understand the purpose of the demonstration that is taking place democratically throughout the North and East. Understanding the feelings of our people UNHRC must come forward to take appropriate steps without delay.

If further time is granted to Sri Lanka to execute the contents of the Resolution of the UNHRC this year it would amount to not only cheating our affected people but also UNHRC deceiving itself.

In the light of the President of this Country having openly said that many of the contents of the Resolution including War Crimes Inquiry would not take place, the constituent International member countries and the High Commissioner of the UNHRC must ask themselves the purpose of granting further time and decide to take alternative steps in this regard. That is why we have requested that the ICC should handle the Sri Lankan matter. If that is not possible for any reason, we have suggested through the Tamil Peoples' Council that appropriate steps in accordance with the principles and procedures laid down in International Law should be taken by the UNHRC to formulate an appropriate mechanism to deal with this matter.

We have also suggested that the UNHRC High Commissioner must take immediate steps to open UNHRC offices in the North and East of Sri Lanka to deal with the Human Rights' violations still continuing here.

In the light of adequate evidence emanating with regard to the War Crimes as well as Crimes against Humanity committed at the end of the war, the manner in which the Sri Lankan Government is seeking to challenge the UNHRC's right to conduct an International Inquiry would considerably weaken the jurisdiction of the UNHRC in the future.

At the close of the war when our people were killed in thousands and genocide was committed, the UN and the International Community failed in their Responsibility to Protect (R2P) our people. Our people expected at least after the war they would abide by their obligations and stand firm in meeting out justice to the People affected. Our People now feel cheated at what has and what is taking place.

In 2015 the UNHRC and International Community stressed Sri Lanka's responsibility towards accountability, its obligation to find Justice and therefore went out of their way to prepare the relevant Resolutions and insist on Sri Lanka executing the terms of the Resolution. But Sri Lanka's activities and attitude seems to exhibit its callousness and indifference towards their obligations. During the past four years Sri Lanka's dubious attitude in this regard savours of a desire to camouflage everything and ultimately cheat every one. Especially the Office of Missing Persons has ceased to function. Already our affected people were of opinion that the Office of Missing Persons was trying to cover up the War Crimes committed. Our affected people dabbled in demonstrations in this regard showing their disapproval of what was taking place.

Still our political prisoners have not been freed. Our lands continue to be expropriated by the South. Even the houses of those affected by the war have not been constructed and given to them.

On the contrary the Prime Minister of the Country publicly says let us forget and forgive the war crimes committed and let us not have any Inquiry. This utterance of the Island's Prime Minister has shocked our People. They are not only saddened by such irresponsible statements but have had their doubts increased with regard to Sri Lankan Government's intentions.

That is why we have come forward to demonstrate against the Sri Lankan Government being given any further time frame to execute the terms of the UN Resolution and to stress the need for the UN Human Rights' Commissioner to open UNHRC offices in the North and East of Sri Lanka and to persuade the UN to take adequate and appropriate steps in this regard.

Media Unit

Thamizh Makkal Kootanii