

Tamil Information Center (TIC) Shines a Spotlight on Human Rights Advocacy in London: Celebrating World Human Rights Day 2023



@Anushanbalasubramaniam



Tamil Information Center (TIC) marked the annual celebration of World Human Rights Day

2023 in Barnet, London, on Sunday (10), aligning with the International Human Rights Day observed globally. This event has become a significant tradition for TIC, serving as a platform to acknowledge the United Nations' designated World Human Rights Day and to shed light on the persistent human rights violations faced by the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, as well as various ethnic groups worldwide. The aim is to amplify voices against these injustices and bring them to the attention of the international community.

In recognition of the 75th year since the inception of Human Rights Day, TIC organized the event at the Multi-Cultural Community Center in Barnet, London, from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Under the theme "Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All," the Human Rights Day proceedings commenced with the lighting of an auspicious lamp.





The event featured a Tamil language greeting song, drawn from Vibulananda Adikalar's novel "Keerthimalai," specifically resonating with Sri Lankan Tamils. Councillor Nagus Narendra, the Mayor of Barnet, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Honourable Theresa William, British Member of Parliament for Barnet Constituency and Deputy Chairperson of the British All-Party Parliamentary Committee for Tamil People, was the distinguished special guest.



Keynote addresses were delivered by Dr. Andy Higginbottom, a professor of international

politics at Kingston University, and Mr. Andy Bailey, director of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee for the Prevention of Genocide. The event saw the presence of religious leaders, political figures, human rights activists, academics, and TIC activists.





A significant highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the Human Rights Awards 2023 by TIC to Frances Harrison, director of the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP), and Bashana Abeyawardane, a journalist and human rights activist. Frances Harrison, a former journalist and UN consultant, has been a vocal advocate against ongoing human rights violations and military repression in Sri Lanka, particularly those targeting the Tamil people. Bashana Abeyawardane was recognized for his courageous efforts in confronting human rights abuses.

Dr. Siva Thiagaraja, an author and researcher in human genetics, received the prestigious late Varadakumar Memorial Award, honouring one of the founders and former operators of TIC.

The event also showcased a documentary advocating for the establishment of a Tamil Heritage Center in Britain. A project proposal and request were formally presented to the Mayor on behalf of TIC's Cultural Department and CCD.

Adding to the cultural richness of the celebration, Alan Pradeepan's RAB musical and a play titled "I Am Buried" by London's Meiveli Theatre Artists captivated the audience. The proceedings included expressions of gratitude towards volunteers and a lucky draw.

Presided over by Mr. Geeth Kulasegaram, one of TIC's directors, the event was skilfully hosted by activists Dilakshan Manorajan and Subhamakisa Varadarasa, underscoring the commitment of TIC to promoting and safeguarding human rights for all.













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Tamil Information Centre is joining hands with the
National and International community to observe

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INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

2023

"Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All"

Barnet Multi Cultural Community Centre
Hendon Sports Centre (Youth & Community Centre),
Algernon Rd, London NW4 3TA

Nearest station:  Hendon (Overground)

2pm - 5pm

All are welcome



TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

10 Dec
2pm onwards



Barnet Multicultural
Community Centre,
Algernon Road,
London,
NW4 3TA

Nearest Station: Hendon (Overground)

Tamil Information Centre is joining hands with the National and International community to observe

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2023

"Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All"

Guest of Honour



Cllr. Nagus Narenthira
The Worshipful Mayor of Barnet

Special Guest



Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP
Member of Parliament for Chipping Barnet
Vice Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils

Guest Speakers



Dr. Andy Higginbottom
Professor of International Politics,
Human Rights and Social Justice, Kingston University



Andy Bailey
Director of APPG for Genocide Prevention,
Expert in Atrocity Prevention, FoRB, & Development Policy

Roll of Honour 2023

Human Rights Award



Frances Harrison
Director of ITJP
Former Journalist, Human Rights Activist
UN Consultant

Human Rights Award



Bashana Abeywardane
Journalist,
Human Rights Activist

Varadakumar Memorial Award



Dr. Siva Thiagarajah
Writer, Academic researcher in human genetics,
Archeology & History

"I AM BURIED" Theatre performance by MEIVELI THEATRE GROUP

Multi cultural performances, Raffle draw along with Complementary food & drink.

Tamil Information Centre



Deepening Impunity in Sri Lanka as Government Fails to Address War Crimes and Suppresses Commemoration Rights





In a scathing assessment of the state of affairs in Sri Lanka, Yasmin Sooka, the director of the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP), has cast a stark light on the deepening culture of impunity persisting within the nation. Sooka's revelation underscores the government's persistent failure to ensure accountability for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the culmination of the civil war in May 2009.

The aftermath of the civil war has not ushered in an era of peace for Tamils in Sri Lanka; instead, they continue to face persecution both within the country and abroad. Sooka pointed out that the ongoing violence perpetrated by security forces not only inflicts harm on individuals and their families but also serves to dismantle the very social fabric upon which coexistence, tradition, and trust are built.

Of particular concern is the Government's blatant disregard for the legitimate rights of Tamil families to mourn and remember their loved ones on November 27th, a date significant to the Tamil struggle for liberation.

The ITJP has been diligently documenting a disturbing trend since 2014, wherein torture survivors who have fled abroad face continued threats and intimidation from Sri Lankan intelligence agencies. Those attending remembrance events in the north-east are systematically photographed, later becoming targets of threats and harassment, fostering an atmosphere of fear and silencing dissent.

Sooka shared a poignant and tragic account of a man who, under the impression that it was safe to speak at a cemetery event on November 27, 2022, was later subjected to abduction, torture, and forced to flee. This individual, who left behind a newborn baby and a thriving

business, symbolizes the human cost of the Government's oppressive actions.

The interrogation tactics employed by security forces, particularly focusing on the funding of commemorations, were criticized by Sooka as missing the essence of these events. Commemorations, she emphasized, are not only acts of resistance but also serve as expressions of deep personal grief for survivors of the war, who find themselves not only victims of state-sponsored violence but also grappling with the overwhelming barrier of impunity.

Survivors consider it their moral and social responsibility to remember the dead and the disappeared, constituting a collective act of remembrance that transcends individual suffering.

Despite relentless repression, Tamil survivors abroad continue to courageously reclaim their right to remember the dead, finding new ways to articulate their experiences. These endeavors are not merely for personal catharsis but are seen as crucial for keeping the memory alive for future generations.

Sooka challenged President Ranil Wickremesinghe's proposal for a Truth Commission, expressing doubt about survivors' willingness to participate in a context where their basic right to mourn is denied. To make the commission successful and credible, President Wickremesinghe must take decisive action, ensuring an end to state-sponsored violence, no surveillance on November 27, and a commitment to prevent reprisals against organizers or participants.

In a plea to the international community, Sooka urged them not to remain silent in the face of this repression. She called for the deployment of international observers to ensure transparency during commemorations, emphasizing the critical need to prevent further repression. Sooka underscored the importance of guaranteeing that officers in plain clothes are not surveilling or documenting events, asserting that the diplomatic community must play a proactive role in addressing the ongoing human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

British Politicians jointly call upon the UK to Ban the Sri Lankan War Criminals!



Tamil Youth release a video of British MPs publicly calling for sanctions

Since the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020 came into force, the ICPPG launched a campaign to call upon the UK government to sanction the Sri Lankan war criminals including the notorious Shavendra Silva who are responsible for the Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Tamil youth and the victims in the UK joined the campaign and took it forward in multiple channels.

In April 2021, the ITJP, a highly respected Human Rights Organization submitted a 50-page dossier consisting evidence of Shavendra Silva's involvement in the war crimes to the Sanctions Department of the UK's FCDO and demanded his ban in the UK.

In May and in June 2021, the ICPPG submitted petitions to the British Prime Minister and the FCDO based on testimonies of at least 200 Tamil Youth tortured and sexually abused by the Sri Lankan armed forces most recently in 2019 to 2021.

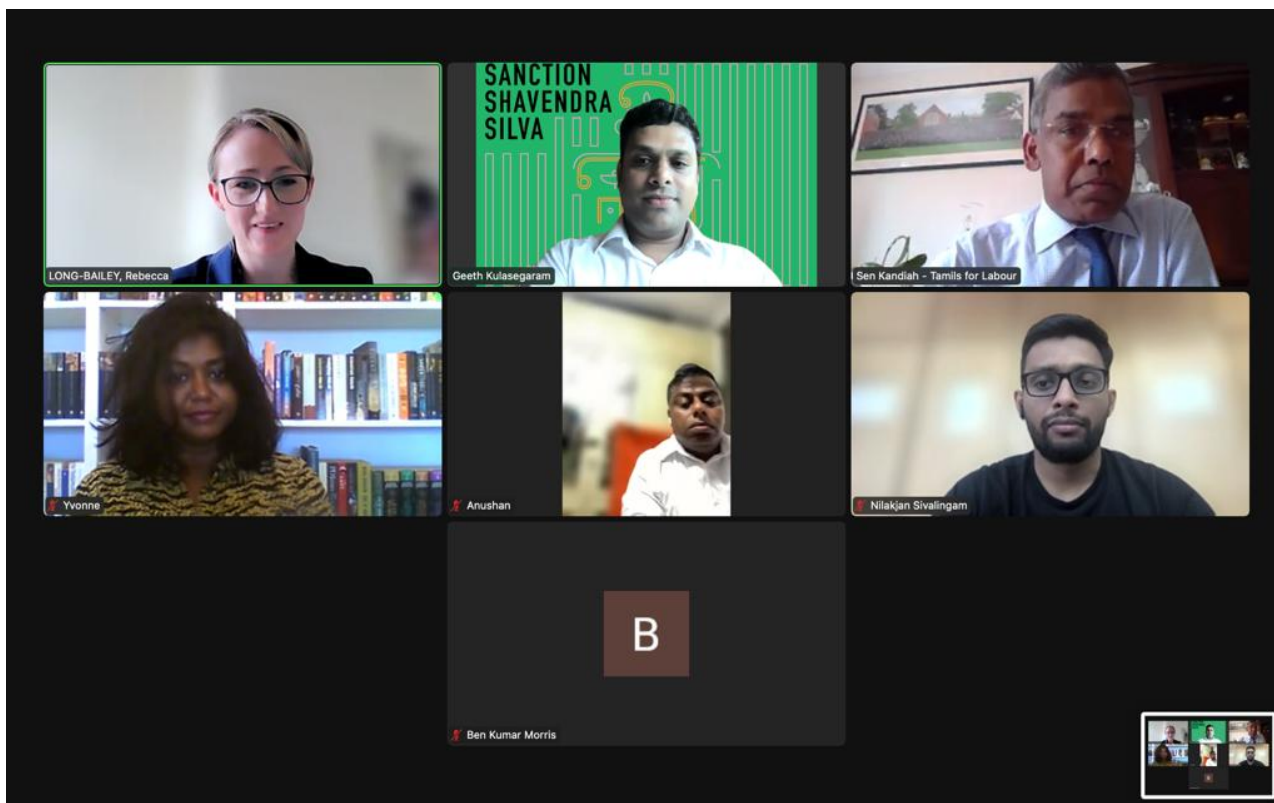
As a result of the rigorous campaign, on 18 May 2022 an Early Day Motion (EDM 64) was brought in the British Parliament. The Tamil victims managed to persuade more than 30 British MPs jointly signed the EDM calling for sanctions and independent investigation into the War Crimes and Genocide in Sri Lanka.

Under the pursuit of the ICPPG, the Tamil youth and the victims continue to meet the British Parliamentarians and urge them to apply political pressure on the FCDO to take serious steps to sanction Shavendra Silva and others. As a result of their relentless efforts, several British MPs joined the campaign and expressed their support by publicly calling for sanctions.

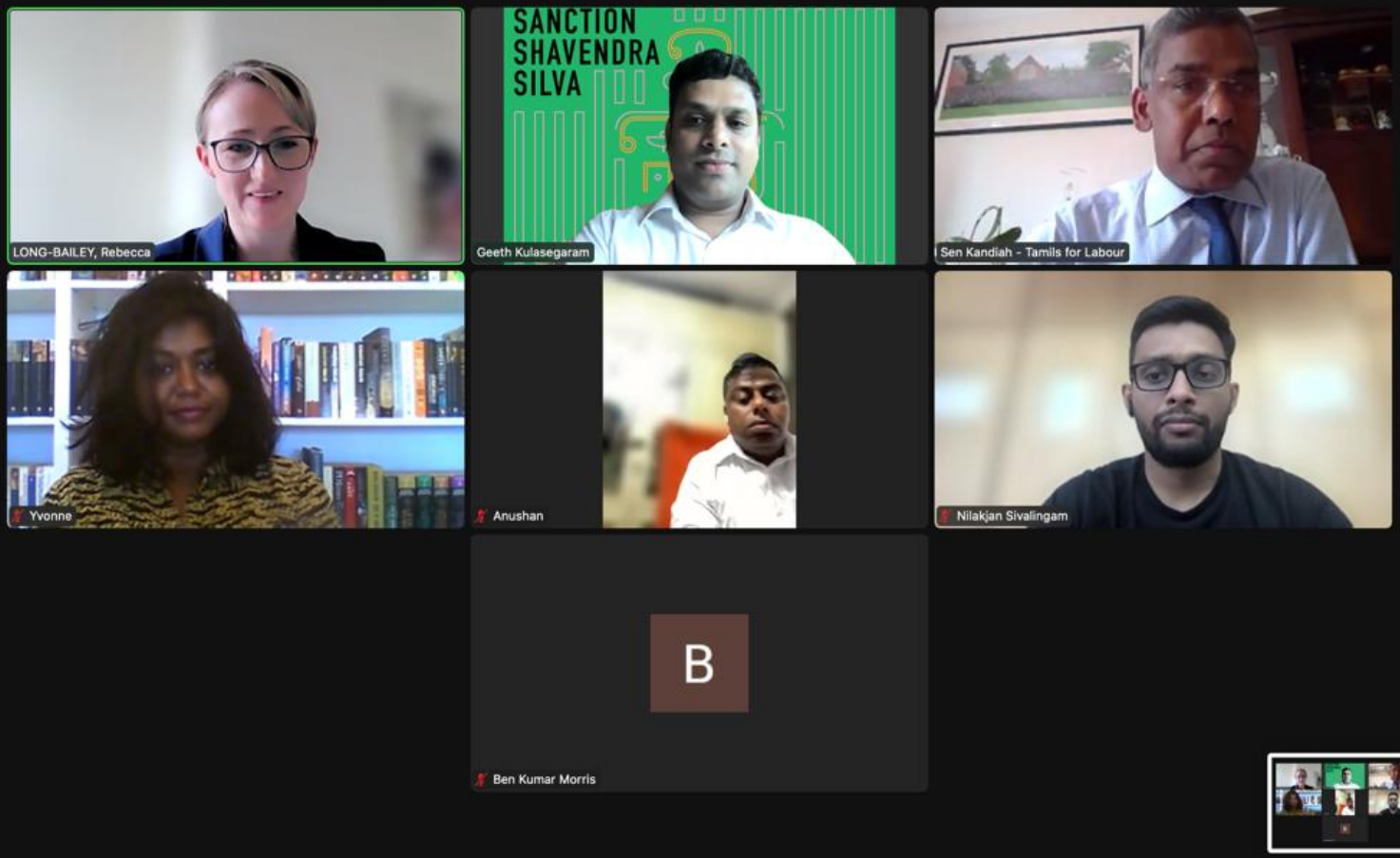
Today, the campaigners launched a video compiling the public statements made by the British politicians in support of the call to sanction Sri Lankan war criminals including Shavendra Silva, the Chief of the Sri Lankan Army.

https://youtu.be/8RMTM_d3k2s

British MP Rebecca Long Bailey Expresses Full Support for Ban on Shavendra Silva!



Rebecca Long Bailey, the Member of Parliament for Salford and Eccles and also the Shadow Minister for Education, has emphatically called upon the British government to take decisive action to ban Sri Lankan Army Commander General Shavendra Silva, alongside other individuals implicated in war crimes, through the Global Human Rights Sanction Regime. In a momentous virtual meeting held on Friday, August 11, 2023, at 12:00 noon, Long Bailey engaged with various stakeholders on this critical issue.



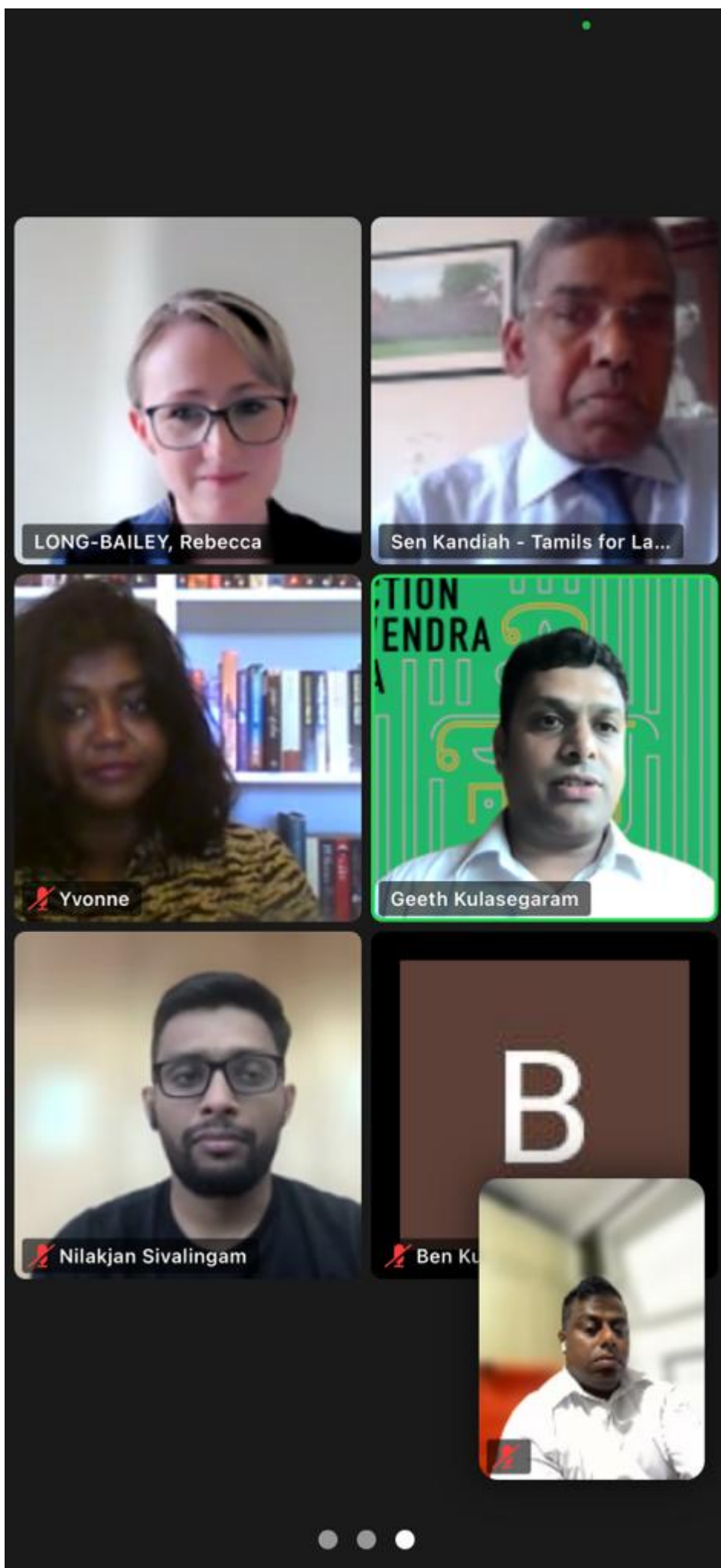
The virtual meeting, led by legal expert and human rights advocate Mr. Geeth Kulasegaram, brought together significant figures including Sen Kandiah, President of Tamils For Labour; representatives from The Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice (SLC), including Campaign Director Benjamin Kumar Morris, Yvonne Schofield, representing the International Legal Center for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (ICPPG), Mr. Nilakin Sivalingam, and Anushan Balasubramaniam, a direct survivor of torture.

Geeth Kulasegaram addressed the meeting, tracing the historical context of Sri Lanka and underscoring the exhaustive evidence already submitted by organizations like ITJP and ICPPG to warrant the ban of Sri Lankan Army Commander Shavendra Silva. Silva's role in the loss of countless innocent Tamil lives during the final war in Sri Lanka demands immediate action, and despite this evidence, the British Foreign Office (FCDO) has not yet taken decisive measures. Additionally, Kulasegaram highlighted the ongoing atrocities under the command of Shavendra Silva, including human trafficking and torture, urging the FCDO to stand in solidarity with the affected Tamil community by banning the Sri Lankan Army Commander.

Yvonne Schofield, representing SLC, emphasized the compelling evidence of war crimes, mass graves, and genocide attributed to General Shavendra Silva in Sri Lanka. She asserted that these actions demand a ban on all war criminals, including Silva.

Sen. Kandiah echoed the sentiment, pointing out that Shavendra Silva's involvement in war crimes had been documented by the United Nations, and both the United States and Canada had imposed travel bans on him. He expressed disappointment in the FCDO's lackluster response to over 50 parliamentary requests for the ban, and he called for improved

engagement between the British foreign ministry and the Tamils.



Rebecca Long Bailey, actively engaged and receptive to the stakeholders' perspectives,

expressed gratitude for the Eelam Tamils' insights and experiences, noting that this marked their first meeting. She acknowledged the gravity of the genocide against the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and requested further information to enhance her understanding.

Anushan Balasubramaniam, a victim of the atrocities, shared his own experience and regretted the lack of previous engagement between the Tamil community and local parliamentarians. Long Bailey assured her unwavering support for the affected individuals and aligned herself with the four core demands presented by Geeth Kulasegaram. She committed to advocating for the FCDO's action to ban Shavendra Silva on behalf of her constituents, joining the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Tamils (APPGT), and participating in the All Party Parliamentary Group for Magnitsky Sanctions (APPG for Magnitsky Sanctions). Additionally, she pledged to create a video message advocating for the ban of war criminal Shavendra Silva.

Regrettably, the absence of prior engagement between the Tamil community and local parliamentarians, despite the significant Tamil population in the Manchester area and the presence of various Tamil organizations, is a sobering realization.

Tamil Youth Rally Support at Labour Party's Fundraising Dinner



A passionate group of Tamil youths recently attended a fundraising dinner organized by the British Labour Party's election campaign. During the event, they seized the opportunity to engage with visiting Labour Party MPs and prominent political figures, voicing their demand for a British ban on Shavendra Silva, the Sri Lankan army commander accused of genocide. Their aim was to urge the attendees to take action with the British government in addressing this critical issue.



In April 2021, the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP), led by Yasmin Sooka, presented substantial evidence to the British Foreign Office, calling for a ban on Shavendra Silva. Silva had commanded the 58th Division during the final war in Sri Lanka, and this division was held responsible for the deaths of numerous innocent Tamil individuals.



Regrettably, no action has been taken by the British Foreign Office thus far. Consequently, the youth group and survivors of torture have been actively conducting a series of meetings with British Members of Parliament. They have garnered support from lawyers, human rights activists, and second-generation Tamil individuals, all of whom are diligently exerting pressure on the parliamentarians.

During the fundraising dinner held on July 4, a group of impassioned youths engaged with prominent figures of the British Labour Party, utilizing the occasion as a platform to campaign against Shavendra Silva. The Shadow Minister of External Affairs, Hon. David Lammy, addressed this matter in his speech, expressing the Labour Party's awareness of the challenges faced by the Tamil Sri Lankan people. He further assured the audience that, if elected as Foreign Secretary in the upcoming election, the Labour Party would instil confidence in the community and safeguard their welfare.



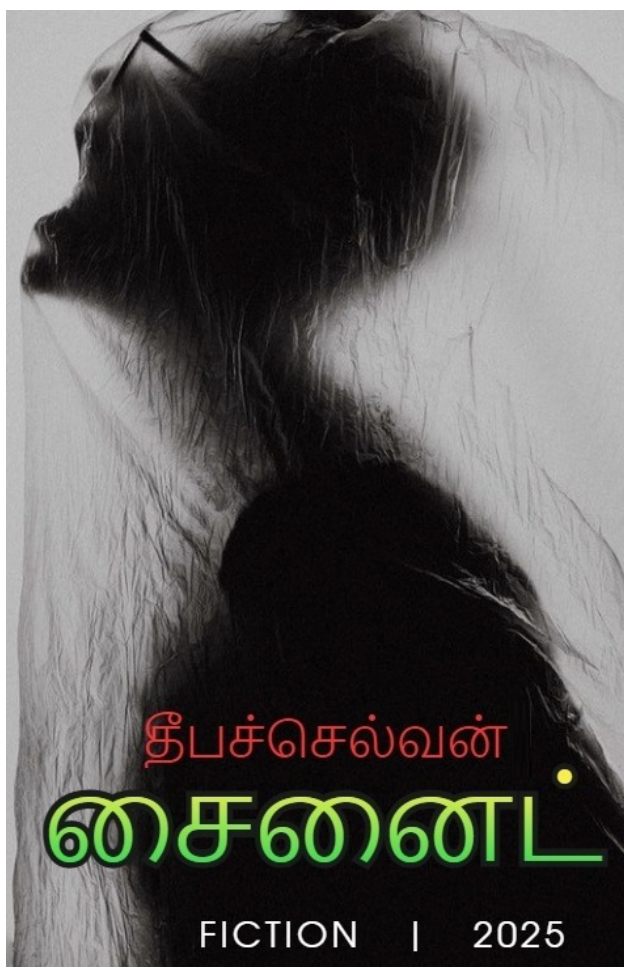
The campaign to ban Shavendra Silva also received support from notable individuals such as Rose Carrot, leader of Merton Council, Mike Brunt, Mayor of Collierswood, Merton Councillor Carolyn Cooper, and Stephen Alambridis, another Merton councillor, who held a banner proclaiming "Ban Shavendra Silva."



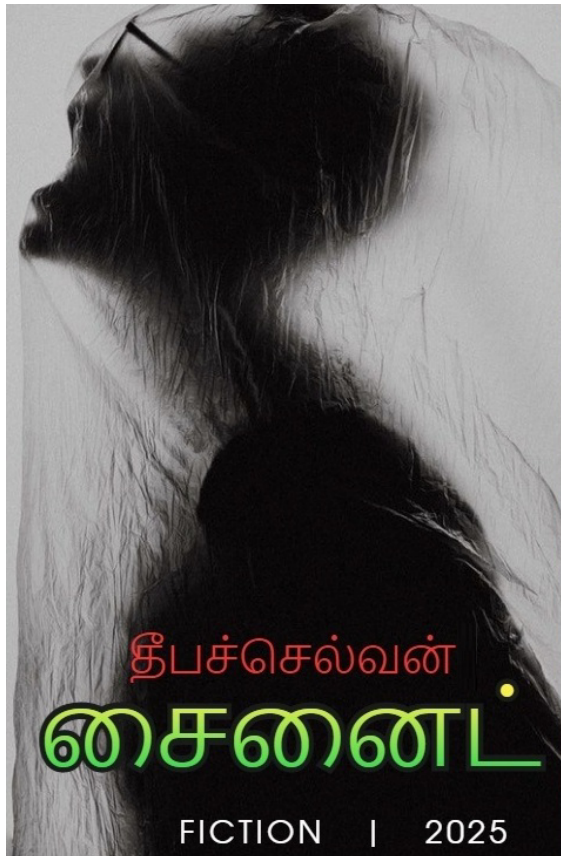
It is worth highlighting that the head of Tamils for the Labour Party, Mr. Sen Kandiah, led this campaign, with activists Mohamed Nifras Mohamed Nawfer, Vijay Vivegananthan , Nishanthan Nithiyananthan, Amalraj Jayakumar, Thevarasa Kajan, Kanagasabapathy Karthigesan, Manoj Prasanna, Vaheesan Visagaratnam, Ronistan Antonys Uthajakumaran, Rajasekar Ramakrishnan, Saseeskanna Nadarajah, Senavirathna Bandara, Nagarathnam Sandilyan and Vithura Vivegananthan playing instrumental roles. This accomplishment marks another significant victory for the determined youth leading the charge.



Theepachchelvan's Article Sheds Light on the Perpetual Struggle of Displacement: The Plight of Sri Lankan Refugees



In an insightful article in Namathu Eelanadu monthly, titled “We Are Still Becoming Refugees: The Perpetual Struggle of Displacement,” Mr. Theepachchelvan draws attention to the ongoing challenges faced by refugees and highlights the specific plight of Sri Lankan refugees, particularly the Eelam Tamils. With International Refugee Day serving as a timely reminder, the article emphasizes the urgent need for global collaboration to address the root causes of displacement and ensure the fair treatment and safe return of refugees.



The article points out that the causes of forced displacement, such as racism, political strife, religious conflicts, violence, poverty, and unemployment, continue to fuel the refugee crisis. Despite the efforts of organizations like the United Nations and its refugee agency (UNHCR), the number of displaced individuals worldwide continues to rise. Sri Lanka, even after a decade since the end of the war, continues to experience waves of displacement due to conflicts and political pressures.

Mr. Theepachchelvan highlights the distressing situation faced by Sri Lankan refugees including those residing in refugee camps across different countries. In Tamil Nadu, India, approximately one hundred thousand Tamil individuals seek asylum in refugee camps, while an estimated forty thousand unregistered refugees face additional hardships exacerbated by the economic crisis and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The article calls on the Tamil Nadu government to recognize these individuals as temporary refugees and provide necessary support.

The author further highlights the challenges faced by Eelam Tamils residing in Australian refugee camps, where the constant threat of deportation looms. These individuals fled their homeland due to various forms of peril, including the confiscation of their lands and belongings, leaving them stateless. The article emphasizes the impossibility of their return, given the prevailing threats and lack of a safe environment.

The article stresses that the struggle of Eelam Tamils has endured for three decades, resulting in increased numbers seeking refuge in Tamil Nadu and European countries. It emphasizes the deep yearning and dreams of Eelam Tamils for justice and the liberation of their motherland, using their refugee existence as a weapon to prevent future generations from enduring a similar fate.

Mr. Theepachchelvan's article underscores the need for immediate action to address the plight of refugees globally. It calls for governments and societies to work together to restore refugee rights, ensure fair treatment, and create a compassionate and inclusive world where forced migration becomes a thing of the past. By recognizing and actively working towards resolving the suffering of refugees, we can move towards a future where no individual is left behind, and the devastating experience of being a refugee is eradicated.

Theepachchelvan (born 24 October 1983) is an Eelam poet, writer and freelance journalist. He has written important poems about the war in the fourth phase and continues to record the life of the wetland in his poems. Widely known at a very young age, he is considered one of the most powerful voices of our time.

Recognizing the Genocide in Sri Lanka: Uncovering the Truth of 2009



- **SUKIRTHAN**

A call has been made to the United Kingdom urging the country to officially acknowledge the genocide that took place against the Tamil population in Sri Lanka in 2009. Advocates are also requesting British intervention to establish a political solution in Sri Lanka through a referendum. In a recent conference held in Britain, human rights lawyer Patrick Lewis led discussions on the ongoing structural genocide and the persistence of systemic racism in the Tamil homeland. The event, which took place in a special hall of the British Parliament, saw the participation of political activists from the Tamil homeland, British political leaders from various parties, and British Tamil activists.



During the conference, Rev. Thavathiru Velan Swamy, the coordinator of the People's Revolution Movement, and VSS Dhananjayan, a lawyer and civil society activist, delivered compelling speeches highlighting the ethnic hatred prevalent in the Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka and proposed approaches for an international resolution. Ms. Kisani delivered a welcoming speech on behalf of British Tamil Youth, and Selvan Sarveen delivered a special address.

Prominent Members of Parliament and Ministers who attended the conference, including Mr. John MacDonald MP, Mr. Virendra Sharma MP, Sir Ed Davey MP, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, Ms. Sarah Jones MP, Shadow Minister of State for Police and the Fire Service, Mr. Sam Tarry MP, and Mr. Gareth Thomas MP, Shadow Minister for International Trade, expressed their commitment to push for a resolution on the issue in Parliament.

V.S.S. Dhananjayan, the lawyer and civil society activist, drew attention to the ongoing militarization, Buddhistization, and land encroachments in the Tamil homeland in the North East. He highlighted that despite 14 years passing since the end of the war, the presence of the military in the region remains significant, with one soldier for every two civilians. He also emphasized that soldiers not only occupy private lands but also engage in agriculture, exerting immense pressure on the local population. Dhananjayan further criticized the construction of a Buddhist temple on Kurundur hill, which violated a court order from Mullaitivu, and accused government agencies of biased operations in the North-East, particularly citing the arbitrary actions of the Archaeological Authority.

Rev. Thavathiru Velan Swamy, a conference participant from Thailand, delivered a keynote speech condemning the systematic ethnic cleansing taking place in the name of Buddhistization in the North East. He revealed that individuals, including Members of Parliament and religious leaders, are arbitrarily arrested without court warrants if they advocate for Tamil rights in the region. Rev. Swamy called upon British MPs to intervene and halt the genocide being perpetrated in the Tamil homeland under the guise of Buddhistization. He also urged the UK to follow Canada's example and officially recognize that the Sri Lankan government committed genocide against the Tamil population in their homeland. Human rights barrister Mr. Patrick Lewis and human rights activist Janani Demokram, Director Chair of Together Against Genocide, also addressed the conference.

Following the conference, Rev. Thavathiru Velan Swamy emphasized that a lasting solution for the Tamil population can only be achieved through a plebiscite, and he urged Britain to take necessary steps in this regard. He also asserted that the events of May 2009 constituted a genocide against the Eelam Tamils and called for recognition of this fact by the UK government.

Geneva: The Dismaying State of Victims' Families



The Editorial of Namathu Eelanadu Monthly - June 2023

The 53rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council is scheduled to commence on July 19th and conclude on July 14th. During this session, on Wednesday the 21st, at 3 pm Geneva time (6.30 pm Sri Lanka time), High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Derk, presented an oral report on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.



This report assessed the progress made in terms of reconciliation, accountability, economic

crisis, and corruption scandals, as outlined in Resolution 51(1) titled 'Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka'. While concerns were voiced by member states, it is unlikely that any new resolutions will be passed on Sri Lanka.

The composition of the Sri Lankan delegation has changed since the last session, with Himali Arunathilaka, the Permanent Resident Representative of Sri Lanka in Geneva, leading the current delegation. These developments suggest that Sri Lanka is not giving due attention to this issue.

Furthermore, it appears that Western countries, including the United States, will not take significant measures against the present government led by Ranil. As usual, various political leaders, affected parties, and diaspora organizations will likely attend side events, representing the affected side.

Regrettably, it is unlikely that substantial progress will be made beyond these actions, not only in this session but also in the foreseeable future. This essay explores the reasons behind this stagnation and its potential consequences.

The absence of new resolutions against Sri Lanka indicates a reluctance among member states to exert strong pressure on the country. Despite concerns being expressed, no concrete measures are expected to be taken. The international community's hesitance to address the ongoing issues highlights the limited effectiveness of the United Nations Human Rights Council in enforcing change.

During the last session, a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Sabri and Minister of Justice Vijayadasa Rajapaksa represented Sri Lanka. However, the current delegation is led by the Permanent Resident Representative of Sri Lanka in Geneva, Himali Arunathilaka. This shift in representation suggests a lack of priority given to the matter by the Sri Lankan government. It also implies that the government led by Ranil is unlikely to face significant consequences for its actions.

Considering the current political landscape, it is highly probable that the Ranil-led government will maintain its position of power. Even if a change in leadership were to occur, the new government would likely align itself with America, India, and Western nations. This underscores the dominance of global politics exerted by these powerful players. Consequently, the Geneva Conference serves merely as a forum for affected parties seeking justice, with little hope for substantial resolution.

The persistence of this situation is likely to lead to an impasse, rendering the dilution of matters even more challenging. Victims and those seeking justice may face frustration and a sense of hopelessness as their concerns go unresolved. Without substantial action and accountability, the pursuit of reconciliation and human rights in Sri Lanka will remain stagnant, perpetuating a cycle of injustice and suffering.

The 53rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva presents a disheartening picture regarding victim relations in Sri Lanka. The lack of international pressure, political dynamics, and the foreseeable future dominated by similar circumstances contribute to the perpetuation of a dire situation.

The Geneva Conference, although providing a platform for affected parties to voice their concerns, is unlikely to yield significant outcomes beyond this symbolism. As a result, a troubling impasse may ensue, prolonging the suffering and hindering progress towards reconciliation and human rights in Sri Lanka.

Call for Ban on Shavendra Silva from British Labour Party Election Campaign Event



A group of passionate Tamil youths recently rallied support from members of parliament attending a dinner event organized for the election campaign of the British Labour Party. The group took this opportunity to elucidate their demand for the British government to impose a

ban on Shavendra Silva, the Sri Lankan army commander accused of perpetrating genocide, and urged the attending Labour Party MPs and prominent political figures to take action.



In April 2021, the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP), led by Yasmin Sooka, presented substantial evidence to the British Foreign Office in support of banning Shavendra Silva. Silva, who directly commanded the 58th Brigade during the final war in Sri Lanka, has been implicated in the deaths of thousands of innocent Tamil individuals. Regrettably, no action has been taken thus far by the British Foreign Office in response to these allegations. Consequently, the group of Tamil youths, along with survivors of torture, have initiated a series of meetings with British Members of Parliament, exerting pressure on them to address this critical issue. Notably, lawyers, human rights activists, and second-generation Tamil community members have also joined forces to amplify the campaign.

Taking advantage of the fundraising dinner for the British Labour Party's election campaign on the 8th, the aforementioned group of youths utilized the occasion as a platform to raise awareness and garner support against Shavendra Silva. The Shadow Minister of External Affairs, the Honorable David Lammy, and the Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, the Honorable Steve Reed, engaged in discussions regarding this matter.



Within the realm of British politics, the activists also met with Ben Taylor, a Labour Party candidate running for South Croydon in the upcoming election. During the meeting, they advocated for the banning of Shavendra Silva, and Taylor expressed his support for their campaign. He eagerly expressed his willingness to collaborate with the group in the future, and in a symbolic gesture, posed for photographs while holding a green banner designed by the ITJP that read "Sanction Shavendra Silva."

Leading the campaign under the banner of "Tamils for the Labour Party," Mr. Sen Kandiah headed a dedicated team comprising activists Vijay Vivekanandhan, Dilukshan Manorajan, Aravinthan Vasanthi, Sinthuya Jayan, Anusan Balasubramaniam, Vageesan Visakaretnam, Kanakasabapathy Karthikesan, Vithura Vivekananthan, Muhammad Chapik Afrin Muhammad, and Chesan Fernando Varnakulasuriya. Their efforts to address the issue at hand have been commendable and noteworthy.

Britain Restates No Ban on Tamil Eelam National Flag



The Tamil Eelam national flag faces no restrictions in Britain, according to a reaffirmation made by British authorities. High-ranking police officials have confirmed that the flag can be freely displayed without hesitation.



The confirmation was made during a protest organized by diaspora Tamils outside the IHG Continental Park Lane Hotel in Britain, held in opposition to the visit of Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

President Wickremesinghe is currently on an official visit to Britain and France, marking his first visit to the two countries. Following his visit to Britain, he is scheduled to attend a conference on the new global financial agreement in France on the 22nd and 23rd.

Earlier today (19), a large-scale protest was conducted at two different locations in Britain by the diaspora Tamils residing there, expressing their opposition to President Wickremesinghe's visit.

During a demonstration held in front of the president's residence, over a thousand diaspora Tamils gathered and raised the Tamil Eelam national flag, while chanting slogans denouncing Ranil Wickremesinghe as a murderer of Tamils.

Foreign attendees falsely informed the stationed British police officers that the protestors were carrying prohibited flags. Consequently, the police initially prevented the display of Tamil Eelam national flags. However, following objections from the protestors, senior authorities intervened, conducting an investigation into the matter. It was then revealed that the Tamil Eelam national flag is not banned in Britain and can be freely utilized. The police acknowledged that they had been initially misinformed.

This incident serves to reiterate that there is no ban on the Tamil Eelam national flag in Britain. Today, a senior British police officer has reconfirmed the position previously clarified by the former Home Secretary in a letter dated August 2021, affirming the absence of a ban on the Tamil Eelam national flag in Britain.

Mullivaikkal Memorial Week Commemorated at Jaffna University



The first day of the memorial week, dedicated to the remembrance of Mullivaikkal, commenced today (Sunday) at the University of Jaffna, known as the cultural hub of Jaffna.

The Mullivaikkal memorial week, which honors the lives lost during the final phase of the armed conflict in 2009, began today (Sunday) as the day of remembrance.

The inaugural event of the Mullivaikkal Memorial Week took place near the Mullivaikkal Memorial Flame, located close to the University of Jaffna campus.



With a minute of silence and heartfelt gratitude, the commemorative event saw the participation of students and intellectuals from Jaffna University, who paid their respects and lit candles.

During this event, wreaths were laid, and floral tributes were offered by students and speakers who expressed their thoughts and sentiments.

As the memorial service unfolded, it evoked deep emotions among the participants, with tears shed in remembrance of the lives lost. The unveiling of a memorial plaque, which was prepared by students, was also a significant highlight.

At present, the Mullivaikkal Genocide Monument, which was constructed by students, stands tall as a symbol of remembrance.

The memorial week serves as a platform for reflection, remembrance, and paying homage to the lives that were lost during that dark period. It also aims to raise awareness and foster unity among the student community, ensuring that such tragic events are never repeated.

In conclusion, the offering of Mullivaikkal Kanji (a traditional rice porridge) by students marked the culmination of the memorial week, ensuring that the memory of Mullivaikkal and the sacrifices made will forever remain alive.

Serious Concerns Raised by International Observers Regarding Counterterrorism and Reconciliation Laws in Sri Lanka



International observers have expressed concern over the counterterrorism and reconciliation laws recently proposed in Sri Lanka, raising alarms about the potential impact on human rights and fundamental freedoms. In a letter addressed to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the observers have called for attention to the matter.

The letter emphasizes the need to uphold the principles of freedom of expression, belief, association, and faith, as well as the rights enshrined in these laws. It asserts that the new counterterrorism law can hinder progress towards a just and lasting peace and impede efforts to create an inclusive society.

The observers have stressed the importance of ensuring that these laws comply with international standards and are aligned with the country's obligations under global conventions. They have highlighted the significance of safeguarding true freedom, preventing restrictions, censorship, and undue surveillance, and refraining from enacting legislation that undermines transparency.

To effectively utilize the provisions of these laws, it is essential for the Sri Lankan government to adhere to international norms and provide assurance of its commitment. The observers have called for the involvement of the judicial system in maintaining true justice, eliminating barriers, and implementing actions that are not perceived as discriminatory.

The principles of a fair trial, prevention of arbitrary detention, protection of privacy, and an absence of disappearances should be upheld. The authorities must take measures to ensure that actions are transparent, non-discriminatory, and do not infringe upon the principles of human rights.

The international community expects Sri Lanka's government to utilize the opportunities provided by the reconciliation law to address various challenges in the political landscape. However, it is important to note that certain provisions in the law fail to address crucial issues, as highlighted by the observers.

These observations reinforce the urgency for the reconciliation law to align with international human rights standards and obligations. They also emphasize the need to refrain from enacting legislation that could potentially hinder progress towards sustainable peace, impede freedom of expression, and undermine efforts to achieve true reconciliation.

The principles outlined in the reconciliation law should be implemented in close coordination with international human rights laws and responsibilities. This alignment is vital to ensure that the law effectively addresses key challenges while upholding the rights and freedoms of all individuals.

It is essential for Sri Lanka's judiciary to play a significant role in interpreting and applying the provisions of the reconciliation law, taking into account various perspectives and avoiding any perceived bias. This approach will lead to the creation of a fair and just society, which respects

and protects the rights of all its citizens.