



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PREVENTION AND PROSECUTION OF GENOCIDE

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Former Sri Lankan Military Attaché, Brigadier Priyankara Fernando Face Prosecution at Westminster Magistrates Court on Monday, 21 January 2019**

The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) initiated a high level diplomatic campaign urging UK Government to declare the Sri Lankan Military Attaché, Brigadier Priyanka Fernando, a "Persona Non Grata", the known War Criminal, for committing criminal offences under the British law, by gesturing death threats to the Tamil Political activists by gesture at the public demonstration on opposite the Sri Lankan High Commission Office in London on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2018 which marks the 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of Sri Lanka and 70 years of Genocide of Tamils.

Number of ICCPG witnesses and volunteers were also directly affected by the threat and made complaints to the British Police to arrest him. However, given the British Police refused to arrest him on the basis of the diplomatic immunity, the ICPPG encouraged the victims and assisted them to seek legal advice and open a private prosecution under the guidance of our legal advisor Geeth Kulasegaram. Accordingly, Mr. Majuran Sathanathan, Mr. Palliya Guruge Vinoth Priyantha Perera, and Mr. Gokulakrishnan Narayanasamy, filed a private prosecution at the Westminster Magistrates Court. An honourable British Judge who carefully considered the merits of the case on 09<sup>th</sup> November 2018 gave permission to proceed and issued a summon demanding the Brigadier Priyanka Fernando to attend Court in order to give him an opportunity to respond. After satisfactory evidence was submitted to Court to confirm that the summon was duly served on the Brigadier Fernando, the Court agreed to list the trial. Accordingly, the trial is to be heard at 10.00 AM on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 at the Westminster Magistrates Court, London.

The case will rely on the statements of Mr. Majuran Sathanathan, Mr. Palliya Guruge Vinoth Priyantha Perera, and Mr. Gokulakrishnan Narayanasamy who are the complainants of this lawsuit. The video taken by Mr Sabeshraj Sathiyamoorthy will be the key evidence. He and Mr Sockalingam Yogalingam, MP & the Deputy Minister of TGTE will contribute as witnesses in these proceedings. **Paul Heron** and **Helen Mowat** of **Public Interest Law Centre** will represent the complainants at the hearing. We anticipate the Court to issue an arrest warrant against Brigadier Fernando and sentence him for abusing his position and violating the British domestic law. Despite the outcome of the hearing, we hope this opportunity will help us to expose the Sri Lankan Government's attempt to protect the war criminals by appointing them in decorative high-profile diplomatic positions abroad.

The ICPPG also wish to take this opportunity to thank Geeth Kulasegaram for his support and guidance in making this high-profile lawsuit possible.

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