



PRESS RELEASE

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

2nd February 2021

The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) Strongly Urges the MPs and House of Lords of UK Parliament to Support Amendments to the Trade Bill Which Will Stop the UK Government Agreeing to Trade Deals with Countries Committing Genocide or Other Human Rights Violations.

London: The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) strongly urges all Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords to support the amendments to the Trade Bill which will stop the UK Government doing deals with countries committing Genocide including Sri Lanka.

The ICPPG is aware that after lengthy debates on the rules covering future trade deals in the House of Commons, the debate has now moved to the House of Lords. The Labour Party, with some help from other opposition parties, is trying to force the UK Government to agree to allow the high court restrict trade with Nations who are committing Genocide or other Human Rights Violations. There are two amendments which are integral to achieving this goal, these are¹:

- **Lords amendment 3, from Lord Alton**, which would permit UK judges to determine whether a country is committing genocide or other Human Rights Violations, then forcing a decision from Parliament before agreeing any trade deal.
- **Lords amendment 2, from Lord Collins**, which forces Ministers to report any crimes, or alleged crimes, against humanity perpetrated by any Nations the UK has trade agreements with. This will force a determination on whether the Government should continue with such agreements.

The above much-needed amendments will limit the ability of UK Government to trade with Nations committing Genocide and other human rights abuses. The discussions far have largely focused on the Chinese Government's treatment of Uighurs and human rights abuses in Cameroon. **Although the debate has not focused on the situation in Sri Lanka, there are obvious parallels. The ICPPG hope this will also prevent trade with Sri Lanka and other Nations with human right abuses.**

The successive governments of Sri Lanka have committed and continue to commit human rights violations against innocent indigenous Tamil civilians with impunity since it's independence. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet said that *"Sri Lanka remains in a state of denial about the past, with truth-seeking efforts aborted and the highest state officials refusing to make any acknowledgement of past crimes"*² and also, she said that *"clear early warning signs of a deteriorating human rights situation and a significantly heightened risk of future violations, and therefore calls for strong preventive action"*³. In it's Report January 2021, Human Rights Watch (HRW)

¹ [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/58-01/164/5801164\(c\).pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/58-01/164/5801164(c).pdf)

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sri-lanka-un-rights-idUSKBN29W28W>

³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/29/sri-lanka-un-rights-chief-decries-mounting-abuses>



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criticised the worsening human rights situation in Sri Lanka and called on the international community to speak out to prevent a return to "*the bad old days of rampant human rights violations*".⁴

We believe that if enough support is given in the Lords today, 02 February 2021, these amendments are scheduled to return to the House of Commons on the following Tuesday, 9th February 2021, where MPs will have the opportunity to enshrine these amendments in the UK Government's Trade Bill.

The ICPPG strongly urges all Members of UK Parliament and Members of the House of Lords to support the above amendments to the Trade Bill on behalf of the Tamil Community and other victims of Genocide and human rights violations across the globe. We also call upon all the Tamil Organisations and other Human Rights Organisations to ask them to support the above amendments to the Trade Bill which will help to build pressure on the Government to support these hugely important amendments.

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About the ICPPG:

The formation of the International Centre for the Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) in London was initiated by Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). The ICPPG, however operates as an independent body, serving all people who have been affected by or threatened with genocide. Its immediate focus remains the genocide that occurred in Sri Lanka. The ICPPG remains as an International Non-Governmental Organisation and an Independent Legal Body and one of our primary objectives is to collect evidence against perpetrators of genocide and work towards justice, peace, and reconciliation⁵.

We began assisting the Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) investigations on Sri Lanka by submitting testimonies and organising victim interviews in 2014. In its resolution [A/HRC/25/1](#) adopted in March 2014 on "Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka", the UNHRC requested the UN

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/13/sri-lanka-return-threats-fear>

⁵ <http://icppg.org/about/>



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High Commissioner for Human Rights to “*undertake a comprehensive investigation into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes by both parties in Sri Lanka during the period covered by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), and to establish the facts and circumstances of such alleged violations and of the crimes perpetrated with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring accountability, with assistance from relevant experts and special procedures mandate holders*”. The Council requested the High Commissioner to present an oral update at its twenty-seventh session and a comprehensive report on the investigations at its twenty-eighth session. In accordance with this mandate, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights established the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL), based in Geneva⁶. The final report of the OISL commission was published in September 2015 confirming the serious violations, abuses of human rights and war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan authorities⁷. In the basis of this report, we continue to work with international prosecutors with a view to bringing criminal and civil prosecutions.

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/oisl.aspx>

⁷ https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/.../A.HRC.30.CRP.2_E.docx