



PRESS RELEASE: October 05, 2023

Tamil Judge Resigns and Seeks Asylum Amidst Threat from Sri Lanka; Permanent solution that recognizes self-determination of Tamils must be pursued before it's too late

The Tamil Judge T. Saravananarajah has officially resigned from his post in Sri Lanka and has reportedly fled the island claiming political asylum in another country to escape threats to his life from the Sri Lankan officials and Sinhalese nationalistic politicians. The judge, in the Tamil region of Mullaitivu was dealing with cases related to the land-grab of Tamil areas by the Sinhalese, mass-graves of Tamils, and the rights of Tamils to commemorate their leader Col. Thileepan who had died of hunger strike demanding the rights of the Tamils. It has been reported that the Sri Lankan authorities have reduced the security protection to the Judge and the members from the notorious Criminal Investigative Division began to follow him after he ruled against the building of Buddhist Temple by the Sinhalese who had destroyed the Tamil Hindu temple in the same site. The judge has also ruled against the Sri Lankan authorities who tried to prevent the Tamils from commemorating Col. Thileepan's 36th anniversary that took place on September 23, 2023. The Sinhalese nationalistic leaders also publicly threatened the judge.

The Tamil judges in Sri Lanka often face undue pressure from Sinhalese officials, Buddhist monks and Sinhalese politicians. Judge Saravananaraja has been at the receiving end of continuous threats, particularly after his rulings in the high-profile Mullaitivu Kurundurmalai land-grab and building of Buddhist temple case, Kokkuthoduvai mass graves case, and the Thileepan commemoration case. He had issued stern judgments against the Buddhist temple being built at Kurundurmalai with the protection of the Sinhalese occupying forces and subsequently issued a statement claiming that judicial orders were being ignored. Popular Sinhala politician, retired admiral, former Minister of Public Security, and current Member of Parliament, Sarath Veerasekara, openly criticized Judge Saravananarajah for his judicial rulings stating, "These Tamil judges do not have the right to question the archaeological Buddhist heritage of Kurundurmalai" and warned, "he needs to understand that Sri Lanka is a Sinhala-Buddhist nation." It was reported that the Sri Lankan Attorney General Sanjay Rajaratnam summoned the judge on September 21, 2023 and pressured him to reverse his rulings. The judge resigned on September 23, 2023 claiming threats to his life.

The Tamils do not believe or expect any justice under Sri Lankan system and have been demanding international tribunal like Nuremberg trials or to take Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court for the war-crimes, crimes against humanity and Genocide committed by Sri Lanka. The UNHRC resolution 30/1 in 2015 especially mandated a hybrid court that included judges and prosecutors from commonwealth countries for the international crimes committed at the end of the war in 2009. We urge the international community including the UNHRC to neither recognize the Sri Lankan judicial system nor recommend any internal justice for Tamils. We also call for Sri Lanka to be brought to the global court for the genocide committed against the Tamils.

This government-led incident against the Tamil judge further demonstrates that no political system under Sri Lanka can treat Tamils fairly or equitably, and the Sri Lankan system is neither sustainable nor effective. Sri Lanka has unequivocally rejected the UNHRC's efforts to ensure accountability. The genocidal Sri Lanka disregards international norms and instead enacts and manipulates its own laws to oppress the Tamils. After winning the war in 2009, Sri Lanka has been rapidly engaging in land-grabs, and building of Sinhalese temples and settlements in the Tamil region with the intent to transform the whole island as a mono Sinhalese Buddhist country.

The Tamil people are losing their homeland at an alarming rate and they are appealing to the International Community to intervene and protect their existence. Sri Lanka has neither the mandate nor the moral authority to rule over the Tamils. The Tamils' inalienable right to self-determination must be recognized, and we urge the international community to acknowledge the Eelam Tamils' right to self-determination and facilitate an Independence Referendum, allowing them to democratically and peacefully determine their homeland's political future. Only by the active involvement and leadership of the International Community, can a permanent and sustainable peace and stability be brought to the region.

Joint Press release from the following Tamil Organizations:

1. Federation of Global Tamil Organizations (FGTO); info@fgto.org
2. Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA); contact@fetna.org
3. Ilankai Tamil Sangam; president@sangam.org
4. People for Equality and Relief in Lanka (PEARL); contact@pearlaction.org
5. Tamil Americans United PAC; info@tamilamericansunited.com
6. Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE); pmo@tgte.org
7. World Thamil Organization; wtogroup@gmail.com

###