



Tamil Americans United
Political Action Committee

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US Congress Members Propose Referendum for Eelam Tamils Based on Self-determination to Resolve Sri Lanka Conflict - Paradigm Shift in the US Approach

Washington, DC, March 29, 2024 – Today, a coalition of Members of the House of Representatives of the US Congress has collectively called on the US Administration to back a referendum for Eelam Tamils, based on their right to self-determination as a means to settle the protracted dispute between Sri Lanka and the Eelam Tamils.

In a [joint letter](#) addressed to the Secretary of State Blinken, dated March 28, 2024, the signatories reminded the administration that 15 years have passed since the end of the ethnic war, which resulted in up to 170,000 Tamils being killed or disappeared. They criticized Sri Lanka's failure to cooperate with the UN Human Rights Council in addressing the root cause of the conflict and bringing justice for the violations. Describing the Tamils' homeland as a "non-self-governing territory," the letter highlighted the ongoing land appropriations by Sri Lanka in traditional Tamil areas as further eroding the Tamils' homeland.

The letter asserted that Sri Lanka lacks both the willingness and capability to resolve the conflict and urged Secretary Blinken to offer the Eelam Tamils the same support that had been extended to Ukraine, Kosovo, East Timor, and South Sudan, where solutions were found based on self-determination. It is important to note that independence referendums were conducted in these countries to permanently and successfully resolve their respective conflicts. The letter emphasized the significance of enabling the Tamils to democratically determine their future in accordance with the UN Charter and US principles, as per international laws. It recommended the universally accepted referendum process based on the rights of Eelam Tamils to self-determination to resolve the conflict in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region, a major global

shipping route where the island is located. Additionally, the letter called for an investigation into genocide.

In response to the joint letter, the President of Tamil Americans United Political Action Committee, Ms. Meena Ilancheyan stated, "We sincerely thank the Congress Members for calling for the Eelam Tamils' right to self-determination per international law. It's high time that the US understands the real origin of the Eelam Tamil issue and supports their legal rights to exercise self-determination in their own homeland." She added, "It's so comforting to know that, at last, we have some lawmakers in the US Congress who understand the issue and support the solution that the Tamils have been seeking for so many years. The oppression must end, and establishing permanent peace is essential to avoid future conflict and violence."

The General Secretary of the Tamil PAC, Dr. Siva Thamotharpillai said, "The Eelam Tamils lost their sovereignty exactly 405 years ago, and they haven't regained their independence since. The British transferred the sovereignty of the Tamils to the Sinhalese in 1948 without the Tamils' mandate, resulting in an improper and incomplete decolonization. The Tamil genocide by Sinhala Sri Lanka has made it an urgent issue for the Tamils. It's time the rightful sovereignty of Eelam Tamils is restored and legitimized via an Independence Referendum." He called for more international support to fully restore the Tamils' sovereignty, lost to the Portuguese in 1619, and urged Portugal and the United Kingdom to assist and support this approach as well, due to their historical involvement.

The joint letter has been signed by ten members of the House of Representatives, led by the Honorable Don Davis from North Carolina.

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