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ATC Meets His Holiness Dalai Lama

“We are all human beings. We have the same desire and right to be happy. Today’s new reality is that we are all deeply interdependent, therefore it is our responsibility to care for each other.”-

Dalai Lama

Australian Tamil Congress representatives received an exclusive invitation to a reception with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Adam Bandt, Federal Member for Melbourne, at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre on June 10.

It was a great privilege and honor for the ATC to represent the Australian Tamil community and to meet His Holiness and listen to his message of peace. Australian Tamil Congress representative Adrian Sinnappu attended the function and expressed our solidarity with the Tibetan people.

he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems. His Holiness has travelled to more than 62 countries spanning 6 continents. He has met with presidents, prime ministers and crowned rulers of major nations. He has held dialogues with the heads of different religions and many well-known scientists. Adam Bandt MP hosted the event. The leader of the Australian Greens, Bob Brown, State Green MPs, Local council Greens Councilors and Human Rights activists attended the function.

For more information refer to the website Australia Tibet Council - www.atc.org.au

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a man of peace. In 1989



Adrian Sinnappu (ATC Victoria) with His Holiness Dalai Lama

“ All of us have the ability to show our inner values, such as compassion, through our common experience of the love we receive from our mother. It is then by use of our human intelligence that we further develop these qualities”

-Dalai Lama 19 June 2011

Public Relations Team's report

Sound of Silence Exhibition at the Federal Parliament

This month, ATC partnered with documentary photographer [Shelley Morris](#) to help exhibit [The Sound of Silence](#), a collection of photographs taken by her. In late 2010, she had the privilege of visiting the northern parts of Sri Lanka, an area that was previously controlled by the Tamil Tigers, until their bloody defeat by the Sri Lankan military last May. Shelley was able to attain unprecedented access to some of the war-affected areas of the region, areas that have been closed to foreigners and the media since the end of the war. She was both deeply shocked and saddened by what she saw and the stories she heard. Upon re-

turning Shelley felt compelled to raise the awareness of the needs of these people, and feels it is important to tell others their stories.

Through her photographs, Shelley was able to depict the human suffering of the Tamil people and the desperation they faced in Sri Lanka. In Sydney, ATC co-hosted the event which was held at the Mori Gallery from 2 June till 5 June. The exhibition was also shown at Federal Parliament House, Canberra and was well attended by Members of Parliament and Senators, with Cabinet Ministers also attending. The exhibition had a profound effect on all those who attended with two MPs, [Ms. Michelle Rowland MP](#) and [Mr. Ed Husic MP](#) and [Hon. Nathan Rees](#), specifically highlighting the exhibition and the work ATC does regarding the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP with Dr Sam Pari



Hon Gary Gray MP, Mr. Daryl Melham MP and other representatives



Ms Shelly Morris with host Ms Michelle Rowland MP, Mr. John Murphy MP, Hon Gary Gray MP with representatives

Public Relations Team's report cont...

Sri Lanka's Killing Fields

This month saw many reports which helped to highlight the issue of war crimes and the Australian government's silence on the matter. ABC 7.30 Report's story, [Atrocities in Sri Lanka](#), and opinion pieces [Silence on Sri Lanka screams of duplicity](#) published in SMH and The Age, and [Getting away with murder in Colombo](#) published in the National Times stood out this month. Internationally, the Channel 4 investigative piece [Sri Lanka's Killing Fields](#) shocked the world.

A consistent voice for Tamil rights has been that of Antony Loewenstein. This month Antony wrote on the importance of boycotting the Galle Literary Festival. His three pieces include [The politics of literary boycotts](#) and [Boycotts and literary festivals](#). For an interview of Antony on this issue click [here](#).

Our latest campaign calling on our government to speak up on the issue of war crimes against Tamils in Sri Lanka was also launched and can be accessed on the [ATC website](#). We encourage you to participate and publicise it.

<http://www.australiantamilcongress.com/en/petition.html>

After Rwanda the world said

“never again”

but in early 2009, the world watched in silence allowing the slaughtering of thousands of Tamils.

It is time for all of us to take a stand. While accusations of war crimes are continually being denied by the Government of Sri Lanka, evidence of such crimes are constantly surfacing. To date Australia has remained silent on this issue. We call on the Australian government to join other western nations in pushing for an international independent investigation into war crimes in Sri Lanka.

Please click on the link below and fill in your details. Your letter will be sent to the Foreign Minister and your Federal Member of Parliament.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Please forward this email to your friends.

An initiative of the Australian Tamil Congress (ATC)



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE! From The Australian Tamil Congress

Australian Bureau of Statistics



2011 அவுஸ்திரேலிய குடிசன மதிப்பீடு Australian Census of Population and Housing

நாம் எம்மைத் தமிழர் என்று அடையாளப்படுத்துவோம் Say we are Tamils

ஐந்து ஆண்டுகளுக்கு ஒருமுறை, அவுஸ்திரேலியாவில் நடைபெறும் குடிசன மதிப்பீட்டு விபர சேகரிப்பு, இவ்வருடம் ஆகஸ்ட் மாதம் நடைபெறவுள்ளது. அவுஸ்திரேலியாவில் வாழும் ஒவ்வொரு தமிழரும் இப் பத்திரங்களைப் பூர்த்திசெய்யும் போது, அதிலுள்ள கேள்விகளில் மூன்று கேள்விகளுக்குப் பின்வரும் பதில்களையளிப்பதன் மூலம், நாம் எம்மைத் தமிழர் என்று அடையாளப்படுத்துவதுடன், இங்கு வாழும் எமது தமிழ்ச் சமுதாயத்திற்கும், எமது வருங்கால சந்ததியினருக்கும் பல சலுகைகளையும் பெறமுடியும்.

அவுஸ்திரேலிய தமிழர் பேரவை, குடிசன மதிப்பீட்டு அலுவலகத்தினரோடு கலந்து ஆராய்ந்து பெற்ற ஆலோசனைகளின் பிரகாரம் இவற்றை உங்களுக்கு அறியத் தருகிறோம்.

Question 12 - Country of Birth

Answer - If you were born in the island of Sri Lanka please write **"CEYLON"**

நீங்கள் பிறந்த நாடு எது என்று கேட்கிறார்கள். இலங்கையில் பிறந்தவர்கள் இலங்கை என்றுதான் பதிலளிக்க வேண்டும். பதிலை 'SRI LANKA' என்று எழுதாமல் 'CEYLON' என்று எழுதுங்கள்.

12. In which country was the person born?

• Remember to mark box like this: —

Australia ▶ Go to 14
England
New Zealand
Italy
Viet Nam
Scotland
Greece

Other - please specify

CEYLON

Question 16 - Does the person speak a language other than English at home?

Answer - "TAMIL"

நீங்கள் வீட்டில் ஆங்கிலத்தைத் தவிர வேறு ஏதாவது மொழியில் பேசுகிறீர்களா என்று கேட்கிறார்கள். ஆம் தமிழர் நாம் தமிழில் பேசுகிறோம் என்பதைத் தெளிவாகச் சொல்லுங்கள். 'TAMIL' என்று எழுதுங்கள்.

16. Does the person speak a language other than English at home?

• Mark one box only.
• If more than one language other than English, write the one that is spoken most often.
• Remember to mark box like this: —

No, English only ▶ Go to 18

Yes, Italian
Yes, Greek
Yes, Cantonese
Yes, Arabic
Yes, Vietnamese
Yes, Mandarin

Yes, other - please specify

TAMIL

Question 18 - What is the person's ancestry? - Answer - "TAMIL"

This question relates to our heritage. Tamils have a long and colourful heritage.

உங்களது பூர்வீகம் என்ன என்று கேட்கிறார்கள். நாம் தமிழர், எமது பூர்வீகம் தமிழ் என்பதைத் தெட்டத் தெளிவாகச் சொல்லவேண்டும். எனவே 'TAMIL' என்று எழுதுங்கள்.

18. What is the person's ancestry?

• Provide up to two ancestries only.
• Example of Other - please specify are: GREEK, VIETNAMESE, HAWAII, DUTCH, KURDISH, MAORI, LEBANESE, AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER.
• See page 7 of the Census Guide for more information.
• Remember to mark boxes like this: —

English
Irish
Italian
German
Chinese
Scottish
Australian

Other - please specify

TAMIL

மேலதிக விபரங்களுக்கும், மதிப்பீட்டுப் பத்திரத்தை பூர்த்தி செய்வதற்கு உதவி வேண்டுமாயினும் எம்மைத் தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்.

If you have any queries or need assistance to complete the form, Please call us on **1300 799 515**

Political Team's Report

ATC Representatives met Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Commonwealth Officials

Foreign Minister Hon. Kevin Rudd met Tamil community representatives in the Parliament House on 22nd June 2011. He joined the bi-annual meeting Tamil representatives had with senior officials from Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Dept. of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and AusAID. He was present in the discussions for about 40 minutes (the entire meeting lasted for two hours) to discuss Australian foreign policy directions on Sri Lanka. Eight Tamil representatives participated in this forum (four represented ATC, and six were ATC members), which was attended by fourteen Commonwealth Officers representing the government agencies. The meeting was cordial and friendly, and all eight Tamil representatives adopted similar and consistent stand on all issues discussed.

Foreign Minister was keen to know about the current ground-political situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka, and the Tamil representatives briefly articulated the evolving political history of Tamils, with particular focus on post-May 2009. The topics addressed included militarisation of Tamil areas, continuing human rights violations, colonisation/demography changes, and the absence of genuine attempt to arrive at political solution. The key message conveyed was the need for the International Community to play an active role in arriving at a political outcome that will benefit all the people of Sri Lanka. Public statements from US and UK regarding the importance of internationally acceptable accountability measures in Sri Lanka and the comparative silence maintained by Australia were also stressed.

Foreign Minister's responses to the issues discussed could be briefly summarised as follows:

Foreign aid constituting an important part of Australia's foreign policy towards re-settlement and development of the affected people, and the willingness to continue with significant aid programs.

Awareness of the past failures on search for a political solution, and that Australia will follow all developments in this area very carefully (Note: The Australian Government wants to study the terms of

reference for the recently announced Parliamentary committee initiative).

Australia expects Sri Lanka's Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to address the issues raised in the UN panel report (though the GoSL has already rejected it), and Australia's future policy direction on accountability will be set following the release of the LLRC report towards the end of the year. FM maintained that there was no difference between Australia's policies and those followed by US and UK, and also expressed his willingness to meet us in six months to discuss these issues and take stock.

Two other issues discussed with the Commonwealth Officials were:

Foreign Aid: This is considered an important component of Australia's foreign policy setting. AusAID officials stressed that our feed-back from the previous meetings have been taken into consideration, and most of their projects are focused on N-E Sri Lanka (lagging regions), helping with resettling/housing IDPs, education, Health, support to widows and disabled people, assisting fishing communities etc (as a case study, employing Tamil women for mine clearing activities was also mentioned).

AusAID officials are willing to accept proposals from us, and to seriously consider and approve based on the tangible benefits such projects will deliver on the ground. This area needs our serious attention. We could initiate discussions with AusAID officials with the objective of developing good and effective proposals, and then to follow-up depending on the success of a proposal.

Refugee Issues: All issues including delays with Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) checks, separation of families inside and outside detention camps, accepted cases with adverse security findings, rejected cases and country situation, and concerns about Malaysian solution were discussed.

On security clearance related queries, the Immigration officers did not answer as they felt that they could not comment on the ASIO matter and felt that the delay was even affecting their work. The officials indicated that steps were being taken to accelerate processing of refugee claims. However, the main outcome on this issue is that the officers were willing to discuss about the country situation with us, and this then could impact their 'country assessment outcome' with flow-on benefits for refugee claimants during decision making.

Political Team's Report...cont

Foreign Minister meeting Tamil community representatives is a significant event, and ATC played a key part in achieving this outcome. The consistent and reasonable political positions and advocacy methods adopted by us and the trusting relationships our hard-working volunteers have painstakingly built with several Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Officers over time have made this possible. Australia's foreign

policy towards Sri Lanka is determined by several factors, and the input we provide could be just one of them. On several occasions we will continue to be disappointed with Australia's foreign policy direction as have been in the past. However, the fact that we are in a position to readily articulate our concerns at very senior levels among the decision makers is an achievement we all can be satisfied with.

Mr. Yamunarajan, Dr Mano Mohan, Dr Raagavan, Father Jegasothy, Mr. Lesly G



Foreign Minister Hon Kevin Rudd
with Tamil Community



ATC's work commended in the Federal Parliament

ATC's political team's tireless lobbying with Parliamentarians resulted in two powerful speeches in the Australian Parliament calling for International Independent Investigations into war crimes.

Michelle Rowland – [Full Speech](#)

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (16:14):

[.....]

Recently, the UK's Channel 4 News continued this awareness raising regarding the Sri Lankan civil war when it screened extended footage of executions of Tamils by the Sri Lankan military and other crimes against humanity. This footage was shown during the most recent United Nations Human Rights Council session with the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Christof Heyns, announcing that the evidence in the footage amounted to 'definitive war crimes'. In light of this we must look to move Tamil relations and justice for Tamils forward in a constructive and meaningful way. The federal government has consistently maintained that accountability will be a crucial part of reconciliation and lasting peace in Sri Lanka. While the Sri Lankan government has commenced some initiatives to improve conditions in parts of the country, there must be an external examination of atrocities committed by military forces on both sides. Australia

must now join other Western nations in pushing for an international independent investigation into war crimes in Sri Lanka. With the persecution of people in Sri Lanka causing thousands of people to flock to Australia in search of asylum, peace and stability in the island of Sri Lanka will also benefit Australia. [.....]

Mr. Ed Husic MP

Chifley Electorate: Tamil Community Chifley Electorate: Fairtrade Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (22:20):

[.....][Full Speech](#)

While in this place we as representatives seek to advance and promote the interests of the electorates we serve, it is incumbent upon us to consider and alleviate the plight of those in terrible situations. While much is made of the fact that a fierce conflict within Sri Lanka has abated, there are still civilians—men, women and children—who continue to suffer. Many remain stuck in internment camps. If they emerge from the camps, the opportunities they have to rebuild their lives are sparse and constrained. There is a critical need to support Tamil resettlement within Sri Lanka. Through AusAID we should extend whatever assistance we can to ensure that peace in Sri Lanka is made more durable through a fair, equitable spread of resources to enable a smoother, faster resettlement process.

New South Wales Report

Sound of Silence Exhibition

ATC NSW proudly to co-presented “ The Sound of Silence”, a Charity Photo Exhibition in Sydney on 3 June 2011.

The guest speaker at the event was former UN Spokes Person Mr. Gordon Weiss. Ms Lee Rhiannon (Greens Senator) ,Hon Nathan Rees (Member for Toongabbie), Dr John Whitehall, Mr. Paul Power (Refugee Council of Australia) and several other dignitaries attended the event.

The exhibition was also accompanied by a public art project and everyone who attended left their own im-

pression on a mixed media wall mural hosted by the Mori Gallery.

NSW Political Team-

ATC mentioned in the Australian Parliament

Please see the attached speeches in the Political report. NSW political team’s hard work was evident with Ms Michelle Rowland MP and Mr. Ed Husic MP mentioning ATC in their speeches calling for International Independent Investigations into War Crimes in Sri Lanka.

[Hon. Nathan Rees](#), Member for Toongabbie who attended the event also spoke at the NSW Parliament on Tamil Community’s request for a independent investigations.



Former UN Spokesperson Mr. Gordon Weiss– opening night on 2 June 2011



Public art project at the exhibition

ATC's work on Refugee Affairs

General Background

The war between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam intensified in the second half of 2008, and reached a decisive end in May 2009. The Sri Lankan state machinery used all its resources through its armed forces, police, special task forces, intelligence agencies and paramilitary groups, in an attempt to break the resolve of the Tamil people. Based on the estimation of independent experts, over forty thousand civilians were killed, and many tens of thousands were seriously injured. Recent evidences convincingly proved that the members of the armed forces raped and tortured Tamil youths with impunity. Over three hundred thousand Tamil people were taken to internment camps and kept under atrocious conditions. During these activities, thousands of Tamil people left the Island of Sri Lanka to save their lives from the Sri Lankan armed forces and the auxiliary groups.

People arriving by boats are allowed to apply for humanitarian protection in Australia. The claims for refugee status are assessed against the UN Refugee Convention by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The health, behaviour and potential security risk of the applicants are also assessed. Among the recent arrivals to Australia, the first boat (code named Randwick, with 194 people) was taken to Christmas Island on 28 June 2009. At present, over 650 people of Tamil background are held in a number of Immigration Detention Centres (IDCs) throughout Australia. Over 210 Tamils are detained in the Scherger IDC in North Queensland. Curtin IDC in Western Australia detains about 120 Tamils. IDCs in Leonora, Darwin, Inverbrackie (Adelaide) and Villawood (Sydney) hold nearly 55 to 60 Tamils each. There are few dozens of Tamils in Christmas Island, Perth and Marbyngong (Melbourne) IDCs. Few families and young people under 17 years old have been allowed to live in community detention. Tamil refugees arrived by the Randwick boat have completed 24 months in detention.

There are a number challenges for these detainees in terms of immigration advice, legal support, interpretation, access to documents, and access to news. Further, many of them suffer from mental and physical health issues, in addition to physical and mental wounds sus-

tained from the conflict they fled in Sri Lanka. There are many women and children as well in this uncertain environment.

Indefinite detention of those who have adverse security assessments

There are at least 32 Tamils, including a woman and three children, who have been held in these IDCs. This is despite them being mandated as convention refugees by the Australian Government and the UNHCR. As genuine refugees, they cannot return to Sri Lanka, and cannot be allowed to settle in Australia due to the adverse security assessment. Among them is a child who was conceived and born in detention, and a man who has been separated from his wife and four year old son. The potential court cases are unlikely to resolve this as the Australian Security and Intelligence Agency (ASIO) does not have to reveal the reason for their adverse assessment. Hence, the only option opened to these refugees is finding a third country that is willing to absorb them. Refugee advocates are expecting this number to increase by a few dozens in the coming weeks.

Long term detention of those who await security assessment

Nearly 150 Tamils, recognised by the Australian Government as genuine refugees, have been detained for a long time for a decision regarding their security assessment. A number of them have completed over 12 months in detention since they received their refugee status. Refugees and refugee advocates believe that one year is a very long time to detain convention refugees just for security clearances. They are also concerned about many refugees with severe injuries sustained from torture and trauma during the conflict in Sri Lanka being given inadequate treatment. Many of these refugees were held in internment camps in Sri Lanka. Some of them have young families in Sri Lanka.

Rejection of many Tamil asylum seeker claims

A large number of asylum seeker claims have been denied recently by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, including claims from UNHCR mandated

refugees. There are asylum seekers who bear physical scars from torture and gunshot injuries, among the rejected. These rejected applicants have to go through multiple appeals and a judicial review of the administrative process, and face a potential deportation.

Australian Tamil Congress

Australian Tamil Congress is in touch with these detainees. Members of ATC regularly visit the IDCs in the major cities. In terms of the IDCs in remote areas, Dr. Bala Vigneswaran (Executive Officer for Refugees and Migrants) travelled to

Darwin in April and Scherger in June 2011. Mr. Krish Illunko (Director Queensland) also visited Scherger in June. Dr. Bala Vigneswaran assists the detainees with adverse decisions. ATC works closely with broad range of other refugee activists. ATC is committed to continue its work with the humanitarian protection applicants in Australia. Further details regarding the needs of these applicants, ways to assist ATC and the applicants in their applications can contact Dr. Bala Vigneswaran on 0 404 404 777 or bala.vigneswaran@hotmail.com

Tamils appeal from Scherger Immigration

When ATC representatives visited the Scherger Immigration this letter of appeal was given by a Tamil asylum seeker. To read the scanned letter please click [here](#)

Dear Scattered People and associated kindred spirits,

Day 2 for us at the Detention Centre saw our relocation to the outdoor dining area – chairs were brought, the people gathered including a number from Virginia Palms who were not present last week. Greetings were less awkward – some of the women embraced Yani and Aleathea while the men were enthusiastic with their hand-shakes. Easier it seems to shake hands with one that has just been carrying a guitar. The new faces included a seventeen year old high school student who took a ‘sickie’ from school to be at the rehearsal – an act which should qualify him for automatic Australian citizenship.

A brief introduction before launching into ‘Need One Another’. This time we battled with competing noise – construction work both inside and outside the centre – nail guns and electric saws being used for additional accommodation blocks. Located directly under the flight path from the airport, there were many moments when we were just inaudible to one another. It was a little irritating for us (the musicians) – the residents did not seem overly concerned. They’ve been through worse.

Yani surprised the gathering with greetings in Farsi which she had just learnt from the interpreter. Stunned silence quickly followed by raucous clapping and “who whoos”. Little things become big. Then the warm-ups – co-ordinated stamping with the feet while clapping, mimicking sounds (a child’s tantrum, belly laughing, motorbikes progressing through the gear changes, noisily chewing something delicious etc). It was fun – maybe even a little challenging and embarrassing for some but inhibitions were dissolving.

Simon and Aleathea re-introduced ‘Precious Water’ describing once again the origins of the song as coming from African refugees and asylum seekers we have worked with. Translations had been made available courtesy of SERCO. We broke into groups and worked on our harmonies – then brought them together. It was sounding impressive:

In my heart I hear the sound, precious water underground thirsty country need to flee, will you make some room for me?

I noticed Scattered People member Paola with her arm around the shoulders of one of the Iranian women as they practised their harmonies. It was spontaneous. It was a sample of Latin American warmth reaching out to a Persian sister.

With the assistance of the interpreter, we explained our commitment to harmonies and getting them right – different vocal lines sounding beautiful when sung together. We described Australia at its best as being a fine-sounding blending of differences noting that within our small team here today, we represented Greece, Israel, USA, Germany, Ireland, Lebanon and Colombia.

We then offered ‘the stage’ to the residents. As a group they sang with passion. We didn’t understand the words but picked up on the feeling. The interpreter assisted – “this is a song about a Persian woman who had to leave her country and each year ached to return home. Each year in her country however the political situation deteriorated. She eventually died in exile – never having the opportunity to return to her beloved homeland.” Nostalgia and sadness were in the air. Quick change of mood – some of the men began dancing with vigour until all of us were laughing again.

One of the young women gave us her poem in Farsi. She asked if we could turn it into a song. I looked at Simon. He looked at me. We will do our very best. The two hours were up – we decided to conclude with the increasingly familiar ‘Need One Another’. An unexpected bonus though – one of the young men added a rap section in Farsi in between the verses. It was very skilful – people loved it. The song will never be the same again. Next week we will have name tags and song books. Matthew promised to contact the airport and ask them to postpone all flights between 10am and 12 noon on Thursdays. That other universal language (humour) is being used sensitively as we become more comfortable with one another. We are feeling our way.

SERCO provided lunch for all of us which included a specially prepared vegetarian dish for Yani. We were grateful. Best wishes,
Brian

We need our Nuremberg

Roy Ratnavel

Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, General Dwight Eisenhower, found the victims of the death camps and he ordered all possible photographs to be taken, and for the German people from surrounding villages to be ushered through the camps and even made to bury the dead.

He said: "Get it all on record now — get the films — get the witnesses — because somewhere down the road of history some bastard will get up and say that "this never happened."

Channel 4's film — Sri Lanka's Killing Fields — goes a long way in meeting his statement. This is now a matter of Sri Lanka's history. No bastard can deny it. And to that end it should be included in Sri Lanka's school curriculum for all children to read so the cycle of violence crippled that country for decades will not be repeated. In addition, Ratko of Sri Lanka — Rajapakse, should be brought to justice so the reconciliation can begin.

The parallels between the crimes against humanity in Serbia and Sri Lanka are far greater than the differences. In both cases, the evidence abundantly demonstrates that a small clique of extremists planned and organized the bureaucratized elimination of a group planned at various meetings and based on a well-developed, pseudo-ethnic ideology.

It was to be expected in Sri Lanka, of course, where denial and geopolitics diverted attention from the well documented involvement of Sri Lankan government and the military in the ethnic cleansing of Tamils. To be consistent with human history, as usual hereto are deniers of atrocities and this one is no exception.

Tamils told the world, contrary to claims; safe zones are anything but safe. We told the world, contrary to claims, that Sri Lanka had no constitution to protect Tamils. We told the world, that Sri Lanka is a murderous, scurrilous state. We told the world, that the Sri Lankan invasion of Tamils' homeland would not be the beginning of the end of war, but merely the beginning of end of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Western governments should not feign surprise when Sri Lankan dictatorial regime that they have tacitly supported committed such reprehensible acts on Tamils and take some blame for Sri Lanka's unrefined, brutish and phobic behaviour. Mistakenly, the West thought that perhaps Sri Lankan extremism would just go away after the elimination of Tamil Tigers — small-minded bullies like Rajapakse would tire, but the truth is there are not going anywhere.

Unless the West forcefully stands up against state sponsored violence and injustice against Tamils in Sri Lanka, the provocateurs who like to play with matches in the tinderbox of racial and ethnic confrontation will roam free.

But Tamils must not blindly hope that this film will yield justice. Road to justice will be long and an arduous one. Anytime now, with clockwork predictability the useful idiots of Sri Lankan terror apparatus around the globe with overwhelming confidence will deny such a thing ever took place.

The truth is the very opposite. Deniers have no case whatsoever, as all the evidence makes incontrovertibly clear. Channel 4's documented stories reveal horrifying tales of killings, torture and abuse; of innocent Tamils. Even if it were ever to be proved that it was done to eliminate terrorism — which has never been the case — the fact of war crimes and crimes against humanity remains indisputable.

We know the kind of people who deny the Holocaust. What interest anyone has in denying the suffering of Tamils remains to be discovered.

Sri Lankan state, its proxy killers and apologists cannot explain away Sri Lankan atrocities. Everywhere we turn; there are reminders of the demons that have been unleashed by Sri Lanka in the name of fighting terrorism.

This revolting display has since become a major reference point for many — especially Tamils around the globe. Channel 4 film has shined the light on Sri Lanka's institutionalized intolerance at its most absurd and most dangerous. Revealing Sri Lanka's hate and racial feelings against Tamils and presenting the view of sick minds at work.

West must speak up against Sri Lankan savagery and bring the perpetrators to justice. It is the only position that is consistent with its own democratic ideals. Sri Lanka can't move forward as a democracy unless it addresses its past wrongdoings.

The war turned innocent Tamils into numbers. Now, it is for the West to turn the numbers back into people. If the West can't do that, then the Sri Lankan tyrants have shaped not only the Tamils' view of the world, but their humanity itself.

Diaspora Tamils also need to make hard choices and take a symbolic stand against Sri Lanka. We must stop buying Sri Lankan products. We can't expect much from the world when are wearing Sri Lankan made garments while our stomachs are full of Rajapakse's groceries, tea, and planning a vacation to Sri Lanka — sometimes even on Sri Lankan Airlines. It's unconscionable. We must put an end to such hypocrisy.

The vibrant, dedicated, resourceful and capable Tamil Diaspora should never forget that Sri Lanka has killed many thousands of our children, and most of them died before they even knew that they were Tamils. At the moment, for the survivors of the Sri Lankan savagery, it seems there can be no closure, no dignity, and no respect.

Now, we should demand our Nuremberg trials.

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ATC

SRI LANKA'S KILLING FIELDS

AN ACCLAIMED DOCUMENTARY IN ABC TV "FOUR CORNERS" PROGRAM

After Rwanda the world said "Never again".....

but the world watched silently, when tens of thousands lost their lives from January to May 2009 in the final phase of Sri Lanka's civil war.

Earlier this month, UK's Channel 4 Television screened a documentary "SRI LANKA'S KILLING FIELDS" with shocking insights and credible evidence, watched by over 1million viewers in UK alone.

This documentary was also shown exclusively to UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) delegates in Geneva and UN diplomats in New York by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, both of whom have appealed for an independent international investigation into the alleged war crimes.

During the war, reporters were barred by the Sri Lankan Government in an attempt to hide the death and destruction of Tamil civilians from the eyes of the world. But in this era of mobile phones and digital satellite technology, hiding the truth is virtually impossible.

ABC TV's - 4 Corners program will be screening "SRI LANKA'S KILLING FIELDS" film for the 1st time in Australia next week due to the immense international interest and impact the film has made so far.

In the name of humanity, we kindly appeal to you to spare 45 mins of your precious time to watch this poignant film.

What really happened and how? Watch and judge for yourself!

Channel	Day	Time (EST)
ABC TV 4 Corners	Monday, July 4th	8.30 pm
	Tuesday, July 5th	11.35 pm
ABC News 24	Saturday, July 9	8.00 pm
Web video - http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/		



This film does contain some distressing scenes – viewer discretion is recommended

UN warns of action in absence of Lanka probe

By AFP—Thursday 30 June 2011

The UN's human rights chief Thursday warned Sri Lanka not to take too long in probing war crimes allegations, saying failure to carry out a credible inquiry could lead to international action.

"There is now a high level of expectations expressed by member states that Sri Lanka should seriously inquire into these allegations" of prisoner executions and assaults, said Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

"But this should not be an open-ended process," she stressed, noting that a previous Sri Lankan internal inquiry "failed to complete its task, never published its report and never led to a single prosecution."

"If that should be the case again, there is an intention for the international community to take further action. I certainly believe that the Human Rights Council should actively consider this matter," said Pillay.

Pressure has mounted on Colombo since Britain's Channel 4 broadcast a documentary that showed what it said were prisoner executions and bodies of female Tamil fighters who appeared to have been sexually assaulted.

A recent UN report accused government forces of war crimes, alleging that they executed rebel leaders who had surrendered.

An estimated 100,000 people were killed in the nearly four-decade-long Tamil separatist conflict, which began in 1972.

Pillay's remarks echoed that of the United States, which on Tuesday urged Sri Lanka to move quickly to address allegations of war crimes.

Colombo has questioned the authenticity of the Channel 4 footage but said that a local panel, known as the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, would take action if the allegations are proven.

Memorandum on the lies and misleading statements of the SL High Commissioners and Govt

The Sri Lankan government has vehemently denied any civilians were ever killed during its final offensive against the Tigers. The Government has claimed that it has embarked upon several initiatives in the areas of resettlement, rehabilitation, economic development, reconstruction and reconciliation to benefit those whose lives were affected by 30 years of conflict. In addition it claims considerable action has been taken by the government to facilitate the restoration of normalcy in the lives of the returning IDPs (internally displaced persons). To support the returnees to their original areas of habitation, a large number of houses have been constructed in the former theatre of conflict and distributed among the resettling IDP families. With regard to rehabilitation, former child combatants have been rehabilitated and have been beneficiaries of educational programs including vocational training.

A working visit of three Malaysian MPs Datuk Johari Abdul (Sungai Petani), Suadara Manoharan (Teluk Intan) and Senator S.Ramakrishnan with 2 other activist from the 1st June to 6th June 2011, has found that about 300000 innocent civilian victims mostly women and children, of the war are still held in IDP camps, the LTTE cadres including suspected youths both male and female are held in detention camps. Many family members do not know the whereabouts of these youths including whether these youths are actually alive or not. Women head most households in the affected areas and nearly one third of households in the Kilinochi (North East of island) area alone are run by women. As single parents, widows or those whose male family members in detention are vulnerable to several social conditions, disadvantages and atrocities. exploitation, resettlement, youth development and security. and north eastern province. [FULL RPT](#)

Genocide in Sri Lanka– A Review

Compiled and published by International Tamil Centre (ITC), New York, USA; the book of 186 pages printed on black glossy paper and bound in hard cover presents the story of Genocide in Sri Lanka from the time of independence in 1948. In the book, in every page, the facts are substantiated with reference materials; the presentation is excellent and professionally done. The way the book captures the imagination of everyone, the book will be like a bible in the hands of every Tamil activist; the story told will tell the truth of Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka over six decades. Dr Winston Panchacharam and others who worked with him to bring about this excellent publication have to be warmly congratulated; they have done yeoman service to the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka.

The book starts with an appeal from Dr Panchacharam, President of ITC to world leaders followed by an Introduction from Prof. Francis A Boyle on “How to stop genocide by Sri Lanka against the Tamils at the International Court of Justice and the United Nation Security Council”. The introduction will give guidance to organizations which wish or planning to pursue or take action against Sri Lanka for genocide of Tamils. The book covers the definition of genocide and eight stages of genocide: classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, extermination and denial. Each of the stages is defined and remedy is given; for few stages, examples of remedy are given, .In the case of Tamils in Sri Lanka, we are at the last stage of Denial by Sri Lanka.

The book gives an introduction to globally recognized genocides in the 20th and 21st centuries with photographic evidence which would be very useful in evaluating what happened in Sri Lanka. Twenty six pages of genocide of

Armenian, Nanking, Holocaust, Darfur, Cambodia, Srebrenica and Rwanda are given. Comparison of what happened with the evidences which are emerging out of Sri Lanka will justify pursuing genocide against Tamils or making it aware worldwide.

Disenfranchisement of Tamils, state sponsored colonization, anti-Tamil pogroms, marginalization in employment and education, premeditated murder of Tamil leaders and political prisoners, devastation of Tamil properties, dishonouring of past agreements with Tamils and foreign governments, numerous massacre of Tamils, destruction of places of worship, aerial bombardment of hospitals and no fire zones, barricading Tamils in Nazi-style concentration camps etc, are substantiated with high quality photographic evidences and very well documented making others task much easier. One hundred and twenty pages of photographic evidence with references prove beyond doubt that Genocide occurred in Sri Lanka.

Book ends with thirteen pages of statement from variety of world leaders of different persuasion and their reactions to what happened in Sri Lanka. The book concludes posing a question:

If this is not Genocide, then what is it?

In addition to the great service done with publication of this excellent work, will someone consider a paperback publication with the same material to give wider publicity to the material in the book on Genocide in Sri Lanka
Kamal Nathan Ph D

Disclaimer : *The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ATC*

Condemn attack on TNA



The “New Social Equality Party” held a protest in front of the Fort Railway station today against the attack on TNA MPs in Jaffna recently. The picture shows Dr. Vikramabahu Karunaratne during the protest. Pix by Kithsiride de Mel

[More](#)



By **DAVID MILIBAND** and **BERNARD KOUCHNER**

Published: June 20, 2011

2009, we travelled together as foreign ministers to Sri Lanka, as 25 years of fighting between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers neared its end.

The remaining fighters were trapped in the northern most part of the country — along with large numbers of civilians. U.N. estimates put the numbers of civilians there in the last few months of the war at over 300,000.

Our purpose was simple: to draw attention to the human suffering, to call for humanitarian aid and workers to be allowed in, and to call for the fighting to stop.

We visited refugee camps that had been created to house Tamil refugees from Jaffna. Their stories were brutal and shocking. Random shelling in areas of fighting — including after the government had announced an end to fighting. Men and boys taken away from refugee camps — and now out of contact. Tamil life treated as fourth or fifth class. If foreign policy is about anything, it should be about stopping this kind of inhumanity.

When we met President Mahinda Rajapaksa and members of his government, we argued that his government had legal obligations to its people, whatever the heinous tactics of the Tamil Tigers.

We also urged a recognition that to win the peace, President Rajapaksa needed to reach out to Tamil minorities to make real the constitutional pledges of equal treatment for all Sri Lankans.

Restrictions on journalism meant that there was a war without witness in Sri Lanka. But in March 2009 the U.N. secretary general, Ban Ki Moon, visited Sri Lanka and wrenched from President Rajapaksa a commitment to independent investigation of alleged human rights abuses.

The agreement was subsequently denied by the president, but in 2010 the secretary general set up his own independent Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka. The damning report, compiled by three leading and independent figures, was published on March 31, 2011.

It reports that tens of thousands of people lost their lives in the space of three months at the beginning of 2009, most as a result of government shelling. The government shelled on a large scale in three no-fire zones. It shelled the U.N. hub and food distribution lines. It “systematically shelled hospitals on the frontlines.” Meanwhile the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or L.T.T.E., refused civilians permission to leave, using them as hostages, and shooting point blank those who attempted to escape. The panel of experts found credible allegations of serious violations of international law by the Sri Lankan government and the L.T.T.E., some of which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. It says that the conduct of the war represented a “grave assault on the entire regime of international law.” It says the Sri Lankan government’s Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission fails standards of impartiality and independence, is deeply flawed, and does not satisfy the joint commitment of the Sri Lankan president and the U.N. secretary general to an accountability process.

The report constitutes a serious test for the Sri Lankan government. Will it realize the error of brushing wrongdoing under the carpet? Will it recognize that the continued detentions under “state of emergency” laws undermine Sri Lanka’s claims to a normal place in the international community? Will it recognize that the continued failure to resettle Tamils in an equitable way, and give them economic opportunities as well as social rights, is a dangerous cancer at the heart of Sri Lanka’s future?

But the report is also a test for the U.N. system and the wider world community. In 2005 the U.N. unanimously embraced the doctrine of “Responsibility to Protect.” It must not be honored in the breach rather than in the observance.

The U.N. report calls for the secretary general to take further action, including establishing an independent, international mechanism to monitor Sri Lanka’s reconciliation efforts, and to conduct independent investigations into alleged violations. The U.N. human rights commissioner, Navi Pillay, supported this at the opening session of the Human Rights Council this year.

It seems to us essential that this process is taken forward. As the report says, accountability is a duty under domestic and international law, and those responsible, including Sri Lanka Army commanders and senior government officials, would bear criminal liability for international crimes.

The integrity of the international system in addressing human rights abuses is rightly under scrutiny as never before. And when peaceful, diplomatic initiatives to hold accountable those who abuse human rights run into the sand, they only fuel the arguments of those who want to take the law into their own hands. So this decision about the handling of this report matters for Sri Lanka but it also matters more widely.

Kofi Annan has said that the international community cannot be selective in its approach to upholding the rule of law. We therefore call on our governments to set a deadline, soon, for satisfactory response from the Sri Lankan government, and if it is not forthcoming to initiate the international arrangements recommended by the report.

Reports like the one compiled for the secretary general must not stand on the shelf. They must be the basis of action. Or the law becomes an ass.

David Miliband and Bernard Kouchner were foreign ministers, respectively, of Britain and France from 2007 to 2010.

Australian Tamil Congress

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In the past, only a fraction of Tamils have participated in politically active groups. Today the need is for a united and concerted action. We need to draw the silent majority and fresh blood into political awareness to convey the collective view of our community effectively.

We have some major projects and we cannot succeed without membership numbers and the funds that can generate! We are aware that a strong membership base is paramount to have a viable platform to make an impact. We earnestly request your help at this critical time to join our efforts. Being member of ATC, you will be entitled to participate in various ATC working groups and influence the direction.

You can contribute in various ways to our long-, medium- and short-term activities in humanitarian, legal, political, community, and communication fronts.

Please join us in our crusade for peace and justice by having your family and friends join ATC!

Articles and feedback to the National Newsletter

Please send us your views and creations to be included in our Newsletters to

newsletter@australiantamilcongress.com

Disclaimer : *The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ATC*

Australian Tamil Congress: On a Crusade for Peace and Justice

Vision

“Australian Tamil Congress is formed in order to create a congress of our people, for our people and by our people based on the principles of justice and peace amongst ourselves, and to provide for a common voice in promoting our general welfare, prosperity, independence, equality, security and peace”

Mission

“The Australian Tamil Congress encourages the positive participation of Tamils in Australian society, highlights issues of importance to Tamils, upholds core Australian values and engages other communities, governments and organisations in addressing the socio-cultural and political concerns of Tamils.”

Objective

“As part of an international Tamil human rights and political organization dedicated to generating change through ‘Collective Global Tamil’ action to institute and educate people on Tamils’ right to survival and self-determination, and to promote the safety, welfare, economic development of Tamils worldwide; and to teach the lessons of the Tamil Genocide in Sri Lanka for future generations.”

