

Dr. Ellyn Shander's Speech at Lincoln Memorial  
First Year anniversary of Mullivaikal Massacre of May 2009  
15<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Vanakam

I want to thank the organizers of this event who invited me to speak. And say thank you to each of you who traveled long distances to pay your respects, to remember the innocent people who were killed in this terrible chapter of Tamil history.

Why do we ask for a minute of silence when we remember the dead?

Because there are no words strong enough to describe our feelings about this terrible tragedy of the Tamil genocide one year ago.

We need silence for our minds, hearts and souls, that are filled with sadness and rage.

We need silence in which to remember. Silence to process the horror of the ways people died. Silence for the wasted lives cut short by violence.

And silence to commit ourselves to change the present ongoing tragedy of the Tamils of Sri Lanka. So let us now stand together in silence and unity. ( for a moment of silence)

Today we stand united as one community remembering the Tamils of Sri Lanka who were massacred by evil.

What kind of evil murders over 40,000 civilians in one weekend? Over 100,000 Tamils in the last 20 years..

Nazis, Pol pot, Sudan and the govt of Sri Lanka. All carriers of evil!

Before their deaths, many of the murdered people begged, "Help us, save us, tell our story!!"

They sent their messages out in eyewitness videos, thru the brave doctors during the siege, and thru the occasional Tamil who escaped from the fighting. They wanted the world to know about their suffering, their horror and their sacrifice.. They held the hope until the very end that the civilized world would somehow come to their rescue. The truth of the premeditated genocide was inconceivable. They believed that the United States or India would stop the carnage.. But sadly no one came.. No one helped. No one responded to their pleas.. And no one stopped the Sri Lankan government from burning their bodies and hiding the evidence.

We extend our thanks to the brave Tamils who have spoken out, the witnesses to these war crimes, who have documented the outrage of evil wrought upon an

innocent people just because they were Tamil. Today we tell the world that this atrocity will never stay buried. This is the first anniversary of the largest massacre of the genocide of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka... but it is not the last rally.. We will never forget what happened and we will continue to tell the world until they hear us!!!

It is, 65 years since the Nazi Holocaust, which killed 6 million Jews during ww2. The world seems to have learned nothing from that horrible event. The phrase "Never again" is hollow when we see no outrage against repeated genocides... The world denied hearing the pleas of the Tamils before the ultimate killings, and now refuses to acknowledge that it ever happened. But if we have learned anything from the lessons of the Holocaust, it is that we must not remain silent and be defeated in the face of evil.

As Elie Wiesel has said; " I swore never to be silent whenever .....human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

Elie Wiesel

So although we stand in silence when we remember the dead, we will never be silent in fighting the oppression that killed them.!!

I call on the international community and the US government to rise up forcefully and call for an investigation of war crimes by the Sri Lankan government to condemn this Nazi regime. Put the Rajapaksas on trial.. Arrest them when they leave Sri Lanka. And let the evidence show in any trial the true murderous intent of these people.

The worst thing we can do right now is to let the world change the channel. Economic expansion in the North and east by the Gosl BEFORE a political solution for the Tamil people, is UNACCEPTABLE. But as we gather today, the tourist trade is increasing, and the apparel industry is making profits, and business as usual is coming back to the Singhalese in Sri Lanka.

We must stop the world indifference to the continued persecution of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. We must make empathy and human rights, drive international interactions with Sri Lanka. .Because if we do not succeed here...

It will be Tamils of Sri Lanka facing extinction today, and then any one of us, tomorrow. As Mother Theresa said so eloquently...

"If we have no peace, it is because we forget we belong to each other".

The world must be reminded that when people are no longer seen as human beings: they can be exterminated! The Tamils were not killed because of inhumanity to man. NO they were killed because of the Sri Lankan government's inhumanity to Tamils. They were not seen as human beings at all. They were killed because they were Tamils... and that is why this genocide is personal, it is

an attempt to make a race extinct. And because of that we must not let them die in vain

How ironic that President Obama said that “we must commit ourselves to resisting injustice and intolerance and indifference in whatever forms they may take—whether confronting those who tell lies about history, or doing everything we can to prevent and end atrocities like those that took place in Rwanda, those taking place in Darfur. That is my commitment as President. “

Empty words as Tamils awaited their death at the end of the war in may 2009. I ask you..why aren't the Tamil people on President Obama's radar?? Where were you Pres Obama? Where were you Sonia Gandhi? Where were you Ban ki Moon? Where were you England, Japan, Norway, the world bank? The civilized world where were you?

They were CHOOSING TO LOOK AWAY. Choosing to pretend that is was an internal affair of a duly elected democratic country fighting terrorism. And to their pretend game... I say No. With outrage I say No. With despair I say No. With impotent rage I say no. With unbelievable despair I say no.. It wasn't like that... the horror of it all was that every one of them knew. and yet they let it happen. Yes they let it happen!

They did nothing... Shame on them! .. Shame on them then! , And shame on them now!

In the words of Dr Martin Luthor King who stood here and spoke.. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The international community is cooperating with evil .They go forward as if nothing has happened. They let the IMF give loans to the murderers . They push for economic development on land that holds thousands in mass graves. They rush to compete with china's development. And it is business as usual for them. BUT not for us  
As Eli Wiesel has said.

“When the messenger has delivered the message and nothing has changed. We must then become the messenger... so as not to let them die in vain.”

What can we do? We can do plenty!

Be a messenger and join the boycott of goods from Sri Lanka!

Shout out our boycott message...

“Check the labels... if it is made in Sri Lanka.. Put it down!!”

We are on the streets once a month, boycotting Victoria secret and the Gap in over 10 cities across the country, in solidarity with the international boycotts in England, Canada, Malaysia, India and Australia. We are getting noticed. The

companies are nervous. We can and will change the economic climate towards, anything Made in Sri Lanka.

Would you buy a garment made in SL if you understood that it was soaked in blood.. Tamil blood and that every dollar spent is another dollar to kill Tamils?? We need only one big company to pull out from public pressure and it will cause a stampede out of Sri Lanka.

So we need you.. All of you extraordinary people

We need you to make a fuss

We need you to join our protests.

Hand out our postcards.

We need you to tell everyone you know about the dangers of buying clothes made in Sri Lanka.

We need you to go to the [boycottsrilanka.com](http://boycottsrilanka.com) website and pledge yourself to this call for action.

This is the way to Tamil Eelam. Make this boycott our cause, and we can overthrow this govt.

Be a messenger. Join the boycott!

What else can you do?

Tamils and friends. We must unite.

Be a messenger and join USTAPC, support the Global Tamil Forum, and the Trans national government of Tamil Eelam.

It is time to unite. Expose the murderers until justice has been served, war crimes charges have been charged, and we are on the road to a liberated Tamil Eelam.,

This is our message.. Don't let the Tamils of Sri Lanka have died in vain. Every single Tamil should now vow to take this as their personal challenge and act in unison around the world as Diaspora liberating the Tamil nation. If you are not part of the solution.. Then you are part of the problem!

The world powers will let them get away with genocide. It is our determination and hard work from every one of you that will make a difference. Join together every Tamil in the Diaspora. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Be a messenger. Join with fellow Tamils.

Tell the world and Rajapaksa and his fools..

Now hear this, the mighty nation of Tamil Eelam is not dead. !

The Tamil Nation is not defeated! The Tamil nation is world wide gathering its forces to rise up in unity and become a solid force again. It is an uphill fight.

Americans! Tamil Americans! Tamil Canadians. , the battle is now in the political arena. Don't be afraid to use your democratic right to raise your voices.

This is a free country , use your freedom of expression.

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Be a messenger! Join the advocacy movement. Join us at USTPAC.. and contact your congressmen.

Be part of the moral and legal fight, save the Tamils of Sri Lankan from extinction be in the struggle, and don't sit this one out!!

When each of us are truly the messengers of truth and the warriors against injustice, we will see the names of the martyrs on the streets of Tamil Eelam. We will see the schools open and the Tamil language taught. We will see people plowing their land and fishing again in a liberated new state of Tamil Eelam Then and only then we will say yes, they did not die in vain... And with the birth of Tamil Eelam, We will say with humility and gratitude to the people who died...

Your spirits walk with us in freedom, your spirits accompany us in the Vanni ,your spirits deepen the history of the Tamil people as they take their rightful place as a free nation of Tamil Eelam!!!

The Tigers fought for freedom from

Oppression...

We must make sure that flame is never blown out.

The dead cannot cry out for justice; it is our duty as the living to cry out for them.

So each of us must come to this call for action and redouble our efforts to keep the Tamil spirit alive, bring the economy of the Gosl down to their knees. And then build first in our hearts and then on the ground a free Tamil Eelam.

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In closing, I wanted to share my prayers for the people who died and light a candle in their memory.

To all Tamils who died in this raging violence, (say with me)

Know this we will never forget you!

To the Tamil mothers that just wanted to wake up everyday and feed their children, take them to school and walk in dignity

Know this We will never forget you!

To every Tamil fisherman, who lived to go out to sea and bring back his catch.

And to the women who waited on the beach ready to clean the fish and get it ready to sell.

Know this we will never forget you!

To the Tamil doctors and nurses killed in the bombing of the hospitals

Know this we will never forget you!

To the Tamils who can never celebrate weddings, birthdays, and celebrations

Know this we will never forget you!

To the Tamil children who used to run in schoolyards, dead now or without legs.

Know this we will never forget you!

To the Tamil elders, who have seen the years of Sinhala oppression, we say from our hearts that we wish you never lived to see this final aggression, but Know this we will never forget you!

To the Tamil babies, who never had a chance to walk, talk or live without fear. Know this we will never forget you!

To the brave fallen heroes, the Tigers that have fallen in battle, bravely fighting the evil that oppressed the Tamil people , we owe you a debt.

Know this we will never forget you!

As we gather today in the shadow of the great President Abraham Lincoln. His words continue to ring true as they did in 1858.

“Our love of liberty... is in the preservation of the spirit which prizes ( freedom) as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere.”

For all who have died: In your honor we will continue the fight for liberty, for a Free Tamil Eelam

And finally in the words of Charles de Gaulle head of the French resistance, during the darkest days of WW2, when the Nazi evil almost swallowed up this earth, he said about their time...

“It is not tolerable, it is not possible, that from so much death, so much sacrifice and ruin, so much heroism, a greater and better humanity shall not emerge.”

Today, here in Washington DC. , let us say a heartfelt prayer together, that in this lifetime, from so much Tamil death, sacrifice and heroism, what will emerge, will be, a better humanity called Tamil Eelam.

Nandri