

24th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
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Item 9: General Debate

Organization: Pasumai Thaayagam

Presenter: Dr. Anpumani Ramadoss

Pasumai Thaayagam condemns all forms of racism and related intolerance. There are many repercussions of racism, ranging from the daily oppression of an intolerant society, to outright genocide. Unfortunately, the latter is happening in Sri Lanka today.

Genocide is defined as the intentional destruction of a people. Under Article 2 of the Convention Against Genocide, one method of genocide is the imposition of measures intended to prevent births within a group.

Recent reports from local human rights groups in northern Sri Lanka have documented the use of coercive population control against Tamil women. Women in three villages in the north were told to come to the Veravil government hospital to receive a vaccine. At the hospital they were manipulated into allowing long-term birth control to be injected into their arms. They were told if they did not receive the birth control, then they may not receive any other treatment at the hospital in the future.

Wikileaks also captured a report from the U.S. State Department in 2007 reflecting forced abortions being performed on Tamil women. These forced abortions were performed by a doctor from a paramilitary unit affiliated with the Sri Lankan government.

Forced sterilization and forced birth control are flagrant violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. I, as a physician and former Health Minister of India, am outraged that at a time when basic health services are vitally needed by a vulnerable population, they are being subverted for coercive population control. These allegations must be investigated by the UN.

These violations are only the most recent in Sri Lanka's genocide against Tamils. The atrocities peaked in 2009, with the massacre of tens of thousands of Tamils. Up to 146,000 Tamils are still unaccounted for, after the Sri Lankan government corralled and bombed the Vanni population in so-called No Fire Zones.

Human rights violations are still ongoing, as the government continues with a campaign of enforced disappearances, militarization, Tamil land grabs, and remains intolerant of political dissent and press freedom.

We call upon this Council to establish an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate Sri Lanka's past and present war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against Tamils.
