

May 18 Declaration - Mullivaikal

This year marks the tenth year since the Mullivaikal massacre in May, 2009. The unitary Sri Lanka state that is constructed on Sinhala-Buddhist ideology perpetrated structural genocide against the Tamils phase by phase since its independence in 1948, and this still continues in the post-Mullivaikal setting. As we commemorate the deaths of tens of thousands of lives who were massacred, we too retain their dream. The Tamils all over the world commemorate not only the death of our brothers and sisters who were killed but the history of resistance and its sacrifice for the collective cause of the Tamil people.

The struggle for the collective political rights of the Tamils was dubbed as 'terrorism' by Sri Lanka and its local and global powers, who aided the genocide of the Tamil people. The call for retributive justice in the post-Mullivaikal era via different forms was significant manifesting the resistance against oppression. The Tamils were killed, tortured, raped, enforced disappeared, forcibly displaced (enforced displacement) for the fact that they were Tamils. Sinhala-Buddhist supremacists have for decades portrayed Tamils as settlers from outside and they imagine Sri Lanka primarily as a Sinhala-Buddhist country. Since the colonial powers departed from Sri Lanka, Sinhala-Buddhist supremacists have been able to execute their genocidal hatred of the Tamils through the unitary state, the highpoint of which was in Mullivaikal.

We, the Tamils are saddened to see that the UN and the International community remain as only the observers while the structural genocide on Tamils continues in different forms. The Tamils, who as victims and survivors have been calling for an international investigation for the crimes perpetrated for the last ten years, know that there is little progress made to give them justice.

The post-Mullivaikal era has marked by Sinhala-Buddhisisation and militarization of the North-East provinces. The traditional lands have been deprived for the Tamils by the armed forces under the guise of Mahaweli development projects, archeology and forest department

works. The Sinhala state is using collective psychological operations to thwart any resistance thus planting fear psychosis among people. After the end of armed struggle arrests, threats and surveillance continue to take place. The space for freedom of speech in the North-East has been curtailed.

The right to memory has been denied for the victims and survivors. Denying the right to memory of victims is to deny the crimes perpetrated against them. The Sri Lanka state has institutionalized denialism, refusing to acknowledge the truth. Denial of truth is to refute the legitimacy of the victims, who are the witnesses of the crimes, portraying them as liars. The perpetrators of genocide and war crimes on the other hand have been portrayed as heroes of the nation.

In as much as it is the inalienable right of every nation to enjoy full political freedom without which its spiritual, cultural and moral stature must degenerate, and in as much as the Tamil People in Sri Lanka constitutes a nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every fundamental test of nationhood, firstly that of a separate historical past on this island at least as ancient and glorious as that of the Sinhalese; secondly by the fact that there being a linguistic entity entirely different from that of the Sinhalese, with an unsurpassed classical heritage and a modern development of language which makes Tamil adequate for all present day needs, and finally, by reason of their territorial habitation of the north and east of this island, and because it is this very existence that the Sri Lanka State wishes to destroy through the genocide and structural genocide of the Tamils.

As we have gathered to commemorate the Mullivaikal massacre on its tenth year, there is a historical need to mobilize memory as a form of social resistance movement. 'People power' is the driving force of the liberation struggle, and the commemoration of the dead is a social resistance movement for the living, against the oppression. We make the following call:

- To strengthen the call to refer Sri Lanka to the International criminal court (ICC) for the crimes perpetrated by the Sri Lankan state, especially genocide;
- To demand for the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, the recognition of the Tamil nation and its inalienable right to political autonomy on the basis of our people's distinct sovereignty and inalienable right to self-determination;
- To call for the North-East merger, the territorial habitation of the Tamils because it is this very existence that the Sri Lanka State wishes to destroy through the genocide and structural genocide of the Tamils;
- To prevent the structural genocide unleashed on the collective existence of Tamils;
- To strengthen social structures in the North-East in order to take the struggle for Tamil collective rights forward;

Mobilizing 'people power' as non-violent social resistance movement against structural genocide is the need of the hour. Using Tamil National Memory, let us be united to take the struggle forward.

We would like to declare today as the Awakening Day of Tamil Nation against Genocide and we declare year 2019 is a year to heighten the international support for political justice and campaign against Genocide.

Mullivaikal Remembrance Public Forum (North-East)