



His Excellency President Maithripala Sirisena  
President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Your Excellency,

**Re: Families of the Disappeared meeting on November 16**

Today is the 270<sup>th</sup> day since we began our continuous protest demanding answers about our disappeared loved ones. It has been over five months since we first met with you on June 12, 2017, and yet you have still not fulfilled the promises you made to us that day. In Kilinochchi alone, five mothers have passed away. We are extremely frustrated that despite meetings with yourself and many other government officials, we still have come no closer to finding out the fates of our disappeared loved ones, and have been let down repeatedly by broken promises.

Time and again we hear of announcements in relation to operationalising the Office of Missing Persons (OMP), but as we have said repeatedly, before we can consider engaging with the OMP, it is imperative that the promises you made us to in our meeting of June 12, 2017, be kept. Most importantly, that the lists of surrendees, detainees under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), and all other indefinite detainees, be released. We ask that our requests for these lists be attended to urgently, and at the latest within 20 days of this meeting. The imperative rests with the government to rebuild our confidence and demonstrate its political will to actually address the issue of enforced disappearances, which includes the releasing of these lists. The release of the lists will send us an assurance that the Government is serious about giving the political space to the OMP to function independently.

With regards to the OMP, we ask that the process of appointments of commissioners be made more transparent and accountable to families of the disappeared. It is not enough to merely put out a call for applications for the commissioners. It is important that the selection process be made public and that the families of the disappeared are involved as a stakeholder in the selection process. As we have stated on a number of occasions, if the OMP is to be seen as even baseline credible, then the Constitutional Council must take our views seriously and include at least two representatives of the families of the disappeared and four Tamil-speaking commissioners on the

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OMP. Further, provisions must be made for the OMP to be monitored by independent credible international experts.

As we have raised on many occasions in the past a major concern with the OMP Act is that it is de-linked from any potential accountability process. It is extremely important to us that alongside any truth-seeking mechanism into the issue of the disappeared, there is a credible prosecutorial mechanism. Without such a mechanism it is hard for us to see how the OMP will work effectively, and also how we will ever receive justice for the horrific crimes that occurred. Your Excellency must publish your government's plan as with regards to a special prosecutorial office as a precursor to the establishment of a hybrid court in parallel to the appointment of commissioners to the OMP.

We are deeply frustrated by the continued inaction with respect to truth and justice around disappearances and your failure to follow through on promises made to us. This is now the third time we are meeting with you, and we hope that this meeting unlike our previous ones will deliver results. Your Excellency it is not enough to be seen to be engaging. It is important that you start delivering some results.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance  
North, East Association