

NEWS

JNU panel condemns Sri Lanka war crimes

TamilNet

"[C]ONDITIONS in Sri Lanka cannot improve unless the Tamils are given a respectful place in society as equal citizens. Unfortunately, that is not happening," said Rajinder Sachar former Chief Justice on Delhi High Court in a conference on Sri Lanka's war crimes held at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Thursday, April 15, a summary report of the convention issued by the organizers said.

The convention concluded with passing a resolution condemning "the genocidal war crimes perpetrated by the Sri Lankan government on the Tamils," and demanding that the war criminals in the Sri Lankan government be brought to justice, Tamils who have been forcefully detained in camps be released and settled in their native homes, an immediate end to colonization, and suspension of military aid by India.

Convention summary report follows:

Rajinder Sachar, former Chief Justice of High Court of Delhi, said that conditions in Sri Lanka cannot improve unless the Tamils are given a respectful place in society as equal citizens. "Unfortunately, that is not happening" he said. He also pointed out that the Tamils may be forced to take other courses of action if in the immediate future the Lankan government did not give them an equal and respectful place.

VR Krishna Iyer, former Judge of the Indian Supreme Court, seconded Sachar's point by adding that the concept of human rights was absent for the Tamils suffering in Sri Lanka. Mr. Iyer, who could not attend the convention owing to health reasons, had sent in a recorded video statement.

Prof. GN Saibaba, Vice-Chairperson, International League of Peoples' Struggles, drew a link between what is happening in Sri Lanka and what is happening in other parts of South Asia. He said that pressure must be put on the international community to prevent the extermination of the Tamils. Terming the war on the Tamils as "one of the biggest genocides of the 21st century," he said that if the international community failed to save the Tamils, they would be unable to intervene in the case of repression in Kashmir, the North-Eastern states or on the Adivasis of the Indian

heartland. "The most immediate task that all of us have to do is for all nationalities facing similar situations to come together and raise a voice."

Syed Ali Shah Geelani, All Party Hurriyat Conference, Kashmir, expressed his solidarity with the struggle of the Eelam Tamils against state repression and said that the people in India should extend their support to the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Pointing how state terrorism made life miserable for the people of Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine he said that "all humanity should unite against state terrorism." Ajit Singh Bains, former Judge, Chandigarh High Court, also spoke on the issue of state terror. "When the state has become terrorist, there is no rule of law." He argued that a UN commission must be appointed to probe the atrocities of the Lankan government.

Kolathur Mani, president, Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam, said that the genocide which was carried out by the Lankan government with help from international forces was "part of a systematic programme and should also be investigated for the context of the patterns." Accusing the Indian govt. of aiding Sri Lanka in its war crimes, he said that as 'Indians', "our hands are soaked in blood." He also lamented the pathetic conditions of the Eelam Tamils in the refugee camps in India. Kavita Krishnan, from CPI(ML) Liberation, said that much of the Indian media has gone overboard in selling Rajapakse 'final solution' as an ideal model. She said that talks of peace in Sri Lanka was a joke considering that lakhs of Tamils were languishing in camps under sub-human conditions. "We will have to stand in solidarity with the Tamils' movement for self-determination and justice," she said.

Prof. Jagmohan Singh, editor, World Sikh News, was of the opinion that there was a pressing necessity for a permanent mechanism to provide for a unity for various struggling peoples. As far as the Tamils were concerned, he said that it was time for a next phase of action to be launched. Lauding the struggle for Tamil Eelam, he said that "we need to recall the historic and heroic role of all Tamil Eelam fighters." Many speakers expressed their

admiration for Prabhakaran and the Tamil Eelam movement.

Varavara Rao, revolutionary poet, sent in a written statement where he condemned the Indian government for its support to the genocide of the Eelam Tamils. "This genocide of the Eelam Tamils under the leadership of V. Prabhakaran was orchestrated, supported and directed by the Indian government." He also criticized the major political parties in Tamil Nadu for doing nothing more than shedding crocodile tears for the Eelam Tamils. In his statement, he also remarked that "Prabhakaran will not die" to show that the ideas of the Tamil Eelam movement would regenerate in newer struggles. A poem written by Varavara Rao in honour of the LTTE leader was also read out.

SAR Geelani, Committee for Release of Political Prisoners, said that India intervening in Sri Lanka to bring about a positive solution is most unlikely considering that the Indian government has not even bothered about the welfare of Tamils in camps in its own territory. "It is the responsibility of concerned people to raise these issues and to make them a public debate." Stating that defeat itself is not so harmful as the sense of defeat, he said that the sense of defeat should not get into the psyche of the Tamil community. "The martyrdom of Prabhakaran does not signal the end of the struggle for self-determination" he said.

Viraj Mendis, International Human Rights Association, Germany, said that "if not for the position that India took on the Tamil struggle, the international perception about the oppression of the Tamils would not have occurred." He argued that the role of India and other international powers in the Sri Lankan conflict needed to be critically examined. Alleging that India turned 180 degrees as regards to the Tamil question in Sri Lanka, he said that "without this change the genocide would not have happened." He also criticized the international powers for their role in the collapse of the peace talks in Sri Lanka. Mr. Mendis, who is Sinhalese by origin, is a renowned human rights activists and is one of the main organizers of the Tribunal. He was denied a visa by the Indian embassy in Hamburg as they did not get



We cordially invite you for a convention on

The Unspoken Genocide: War Crimes in Sri Lanka

&
Accompanied by the Release of the People's Tribunal's Report on the war on Tamils

Participants

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| Viraj Mendis, International Human Rights Association, Germany | Justice. Rajinder Sachar, Former Chief Justice of High Court of Delhi | GN Saibaba, Vice-Chairperson, International League of Peoples' Struggles |
| Justice. Ajit Singh Bains, Former Judge, Chandigarh High Court | Syed Ali Shah Geelani, APMC, Kashmir | Prof. Jagmohan Singh, Editor, World Sikh News |
| Varavara Rao, Poet, Revolutionary Writers Association | SAR Geelani, Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners | VR Krishna Iyer, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India |
| Kolathur Mani, President, Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam | V. Suresh, State President, PCC, Tamil Nadu | KG Kannabiran, Former National President, PCC |
| Gajendra Kumar Pansambalan, Member of Parliament, Kerala | Kavitha Krishnan, CPDM, (Bharat) | Dr. Mrigank, MPP, New Delhi |

A colossal tragedy - with a preventable one - played out in Sri Lanka last year. Casteist, because in its brutal offensive in the name of eliminating the Tamil Tigers, the Sri Lankan state massacred thousands of civilians and carried out the worst of genocides in 21st century South Asia. In its so-called 'war against terror', the Lankan armed forces committed every type of human rights violation imaginable. Between January 08 and May 09, over 40000 civilians were killed on race, ethnic, class and religious grounds. The aged, the disabled, women and children were not spared. Civilians, including school, hospital, camps and orphanages were deliberately targeted. Some prisoners like chemical bombs, thermobaric bombs and cluster bombs were used. Rape was deployed as a weapon of war. Sexually harassing Genocide-definition practices, processes of war were killed by the Sinhalese soldiers. Recently UN sources have confirmed the reality of a tape that shows naked, bound Tamil captives being shot by Sinhalese soldiers. It is not without reason that Human Rights Watch named the situation in Sri Lanka as the genocide that happened in Rwanda.

The renowned People's Tribunal consisting of internationally renowned judges including Nobel Laureates, held a hearing in October 2009 where it found the Sri Lankan govt. guilty of crimes against humanity. The report brought by the Tribunal also concluded that charges of Genocide needs further investigation, besides urging the international powers for their full support to Sri Lanka. At this crucial juncture, there is a pressing necessity for a convention to discuss and deliberate on this issue. There is a need not only for sympathetic ears, but also for necessary, to condemn the brutal repression on the Tamils and their political aspirations. The worldwide Lankan/Tamil diaspora is not only because of the numerous hardships the Tamils are enduring in the concentration camps, but also because of the chilling similarities with the Indian state's war on people in Kashmir, North-east and other areas.

Venue
Speaker Hall
Constitution Club
Rafi Marg
New Delhi

Date - 15-04-2010,
From 2:00 PM

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Delhi Tamil Students Union-Democratic Students Union

The JNU panel found genocidal war crimes were committed in Sri Lanka during the last stages of the war last year

'approval' from their counterpart in Colombo and thus, he sent a recorded video statement instead.

Recorded statements from KG Kannabiran, former PUCL national president, and Janani Jananayagam, spokesperson for Tamils Against Genocide, were also received but could not be displayed owing to certain technical problems and lack of time. KG Kannabiran, who has worked on the Eelam Tamil issue since the 90s, said that the Tamils of Sri Lanka would not be content to be treated as subordinate citizens. Ms Jananayagam in her statement drew parallels between the military strategy of Sri Lanka to the well planned massacre of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica. She also made an appeal to India to apply 'Right to Protect' to Sri Lanka. Dr. Mrigank from Nauajawan Bharat Sabha and Malem Ningthouja from Manipur Students' Association also expressed their solidarity with

the struggle of the Eelam Tamils.

The convention put forth five resolutions which were passed with unanimous approval by the house.

■ The house condemns the genocidal war crimes perpetrated by the Sri Lankan govt. on the Tamils. War criminals in the Sri Lankan govt. must be brought to justice.

■ The house demands the release of all the Tamils who have been forcefully detained in camps and their settlement in their native homes.

■ The house demands an immediate end to the colonization of Tamil Eelam by the Lankan state.

■ The house demands that the Indian govt. stop providing political, military and logistical aid to the genocidal Lankan govt.

■ The house condemns the Indian state's war on the various nationalities fighting for self-determination