



வலிந்து காணாமல் ஆக்கப்பட்டவர்களின் உறவுகளின் சங்கம்

வடக்கு கிழக்கு மாகாணங்கள்

Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearances  
North & East Provinces

**We strongly urge that this exhumation be conducted under international supervision and in compliance with international rules and standards.**

05.06.2025

We, the Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearances in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, raise our serious concerns regarding, and share our position on, the mass grave exhumation currently being undertaken at the Chemmani Siththupaththi in Jaffna.

In the past, more than 22 mass graves have been discovered in Sri Lanka, predominantly across the Tamil areas of the North and East. Some examples include the Mannar SATHOSA mass grave, the Thiruketheeswaram mass grave, and the Kokkuthoduvai mass graves. Many mass graves are yet to be fully exhumed. Even in the case of those that have been exhumed, neither truth nor justice has been served. The truth has not been delivered to the next of kin and society, and the perpetrators have not been held accountable. The legal process has been tardy and disappointing.

Because of these failures, we, as the families of the disappeared, no longer trust the domestic mechanisms, including domestic legal mechanisms, to deliver truth or justice. For this reason, we continue to demand international support and fair legal processes for investigations into disappearances and all mass grave exhumations.

At the Chemmani Siththupaththi, more than 14 human remains have been exhumed so far, some of which belonged to young children. These findings show that many people were killed mercilessly and buried together.

According to international law, any burial site containing the remains of multiple individuals often associated with unlawful killings should be considered a mass grave. We therefore urge the authorities to officially designate this site as a mass grave and to expand the exhumation to the rest of the cemetery and surrounding areas.

In previous court cases, such as the murder of the schoolgirl Krishanthi Kumaraswamy, and in statements given to commissions on disappearances, it was revealed that many people were killed and secretly buried in Chemmani during the armed conflict. This is not just an isolated incident, and its investigation and exhumation could help reveal the larger truth about war crimes and crimes against humanity. We believe that more mass graves may be found in different parts of Chemmani.

Our Main Demands:

- 1) The exhumation at Chemmani Siththupaththi should be officially referred to as a mass grave investigation and exhumation.
- 2) The exhumation must be conducted under the supervision of international experts and adhere to international standards.
- 3) All evidence must be protected, and the exhumation must be conducted openly and transparently.
- 4) Journalists and families of the disappeared must be allowed to freely observe and report on the exhumation.
- 5) The UN Human Rights Commissioner, who is expected to visit Sri Lanka soon, should also visit Chemmani and help ensure that truth and justice are delivered.

We believe that the truth about our disappeared loved ones will only come out if these mass grave exhumations are done openly, transparently, and with international participation.

Thank you.

President



Secretary

