



**Tamil  
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Committed to Human Rights and Community Development

## TIC PRESS RELESE

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### Lest we forget: Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day

On 18 and 19 May 2021, Tamils across the world will commemorate the twelve-year anniversary of the end of the war in Ilankai/Sri Lanka, which culminated in the genocidal massacre of tens of thousands of Tamils in Mullivaikkal.

During these two days, the Tamils come together to mourn the loss of their loved ones in the war and those who sacrificed their lives in the decades-long struggle for freedom and justice. Tamils across the world mark the event as the Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day.

The Tamil Information Centre (TIC) is a non-profit making human rights organisation, established in 1979. It works to promote the rights of Tamil-speaking people in the UK, Ilankai/Sri Lanka and across the world. Its aim is to create a society where individuals are treated with respect, dignity, care and love and where human rights are observed, respected and promoted. TIC joins with the victims of the war and demands truth and accountability from the Sri Lankan government. It is also working to exert pressure on the international community to hold the Sri Lankan government and alleged perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to account. In March 1998, the experts who were appointed by the TIC analysed the available evidence of crimes committed against the Tamils and declared that the International Crime of Genocide is being committed in the case of the Tamil People in Sri Lanka<sup>1</sup>. Since then, we are continuing to gather evidence and are working towards justice and accountability.

May 2009 was a period in which the Tamils faced immense violence and trauma as the Sri Lankan forces mobilised to defeat the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Catholic Bishop of Mannar Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, in his submission to the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), stated that 146,679 missing persons were unaccounted for. This was based on the information he received from the Sri Lanka Government Agent Offices of Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi. Apart from the missing, many more people were injured, displaced and detained in camps in the final months of the war and for years afterwards.

In 2009, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that 80,000 to 100,000 people were killed in the Sri Lankan civil war. The vast majority of the people killed in the war were Tamils civilians. The UN Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka reported in 2011 that an estimated 40,000 Tamil civilians may have been killed in the final stages of the war between September 2008 and May 2009. The Panel also said that the Sri Lankan armed force assault by land, sea and air on the no-fire zone where 300,000 to 330,000 Tamils had taken refuge on the instructions of the government, employed aerial bombardment, long-range artillery, howitzers and multi-barrel rocket launchers as well as small mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire, some of it at close range.

The five commissions on disappearances appointed by the Sri Lankan government since 1997 received 74,510 complaints, vast majority of them relating to enforced disappearances of Tamils. No one has been held responsible for the disappearances despite protests by the people of the north-east.

Twelve years on, there is no accountability for the enormous loss of life, crimes against humanity and war crimes, human rights abuses and the genocidal massacres. The Sri Lankan state has rejected international demands for an investigation into the killing of civilians, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Across the world, in May, the Tamil community conducts memorialisation services and activities in order to honour the dead and keep the memory of atrocity alive. The two days in May mark an important occasion for collective mourning, reflection and education. For our part, we, in TIC initiated a week of commemoration as Genocide Week in May 2011 to observe the Mullivaikkal. We also organised a two-day exhibition in 2019 to observe the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Mullivaikkal genocidal massacre. In addition, the TIC requests the Tamil diaspora community to support our efforts to establish **a permanent memorial site in a major city such as London or Toronto and to establish a Museum similar to the “holocaust museums”** established by the Jewish community in London and Berlin.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://sangam.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/TIC-Genocide-of-Tamil-People-1998-entire.pdf>