



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Thirty-third session

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

**Joint written statement\* submitted by Association Bharathi  
Centre Culturel Franco-Tamoul, Alliance Creative  
Community Project, Association Burkinabé pour la Survie de  
l'Enfance, Association mauritanienne pour la promotion des  
droits de l'homme, Association Solidarité Internationale pour  
l'Afrique (SIA), non-governmental organizations in special  
consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 August 2016]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-15665(E)



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## Sri Lanka Interethnic Conflict and Education

Since the 1970s, access to education, particularly access to higher education has been ethnicized. In addition, many other aspects of education, including the structural organization of schools and universities, contents of textbooks and training of teachers have impacted directly on inter-ethnic conflict.

Compared to cingalais peoples in the country, Tamils have had strong cultural norms which valued education. Education was considered the most worthwhile legacy one could provide one's children because all other inheritances are material and therefore perishable. This notion was a major premise in the Tirukkural, the Tamil holy book of aphorisms.

There was also a limit beyond which Tamils could not be absorbed within the traditional land-based occupations in the arid areas where they predominated. This further encouraged many to seek employment through education. The net result of these combined circumstances was the relative over-representation of Tamils in higher education, professions and the administration in comparison to their status in the general population. By the time Sri Lanka achieved independence in 1948, Tamils constituted over 60% of government services admissions, which was substantially larger than their proportion in the general population.

In the context of this scenario, post independent Sinhala nationalism sought to curb the Tamil presence in education and thus also in the professions and civil administration. In other words, curbs on access to higher education were also perceived as a means of reducing Tamil advantage in jobs and influence. The passing of the Sinhala only Bill was one attempt in this overall process. More direct hurdles were placed on the path of Tamils' realization of educational goals since the 1970s. The constitutional provisions in the 1972 constitution of the United Front government favoring the Sinhala language and Buddhist religion convinced many Tamils that they had been perceived as a marginal community in national life.

Now after Mai 2009, The Riot against Eelam Tamil Student is increasing, but western countries continue to support Sri Lankan government. The root cause of such continued and UN-ending conflict lies not in the island, but in the 'reconciliation' paradigm coming from western. The talk of 'reconciliation' and multiculturalism, without delivery of justice and without meaningful political solution recognising nations and territories, serves only imperialist geopolitical interests. The exact meaning of 'reconciliation' in Western's English dictionary is impunity and confirmation of genocide, commented independent academic observers in Peredeniya and Jaffna.

Will the powers that are interested in conducting 'military exercises' in North-East of Sri Lanka in partnership with the occupied Sinhala military will at least stop the educational extermination of Eelam Tamils ? Tamil intellectual who have called for intense agitation in unison by all Tamil-speaking people in the island and outside.

In the post-Mu'l'livaaykkaal years, Colombo was systematically conspiring to Sinhalicise the North East Campus of Eelam Universities. First it started sending more number of Sinhala students to the Trincomalee Campus, Batticaloa, then Jaffna. Even Tamil students from Trincomalee were sent to Batticaloa. Later, the fellow Sinhala students with the backing of the occupying Sinhala military often intimidated the Tamil students who became 'minorities' in the university of their own land. Now Colombo wants to affiliate the campus of Trincomalee with the university in Anuradhapura.

The long educational traditions of Eelam Tamils in Trincomalee will totally lose their identity if the university campus goes affiliated with Anuradhapura. The Eastern University in Batticaloa has a responsibility in waging the struggle and in developing the Trinco campus into a full-fledged university. The struggle has to be waged by all the Tamils concerned in the island and outside, the civil-academic circles urged.

Trincomalee was long been a centre for Tamil scholarship and education. In the 19th century, when the Tamil classics in the palm leaves were brought to the light of print in Tamil Nadu, many of the manuscripts, including the manuscript of Chilappathikaaram, have gone from Trincomalee.

Some years ago, catering to the requirements of Tamils, Colombo was agreeable to create the South Eastern University in the Ampaa'rai district of the East. When it comes to the Trincomalee Campus, rather than making it Trincomalee University, why Colombo wants to affiliate it with Anuradhapura that too by delinking it from the Tamil university in Batticaloa, ask the civil-academic circles in the East.

This is a struggle that has to be waged at international level, especially with support of western countries, whose competitive interest on Trincomalee is prepared to abet extermination to any extent.

The Sinhala students, who have become a 'majority' in certain faculties in the universities in Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa have been deployed against Eezham Tamil students by the SL Military Intelligence in an attempt to contain the freedom of memorialization and the freedom of speech.

According to UGC's figures on student selection for the academic year of 2014-2015, there were 655 Sinhala, 642 Tamil students, selected by Colombo authorities for enrollment at the Eastern University.

There are 250 Sinhalese, 60 Tamil students enrolled at the Faculty of Science alone. Similarly, there are 188 Sinhalese, 86 Tamils selected to the Faculty of Management and Commerce for 2014-2015.

The SL Government itself had stated this year that the people could mark Mu'llivaaykkaal Remembrance. But, when the Eastern University students observed it and posted something to Facebook, a violent dispute was engineered against them at Vanthaa'ru-moolai campus.

Following the violent incident, Tamil students peacefully staged a one-hour protest. But, on the following day, a section of Sinhalese students staged a blockade against academic, non-academic and administrative staff. In response, the non-academic and administrative staff boycotted their work for one day and the academic staffs were on a 10-day protest demanding disciplinary action, Dr Kennedy said explaining the events of dispute.

#### **Recent incident against Tamil Student :**

49 Tamil students boycott studies, demand security from racial assaults in Peradeniya. Protesting the assault on Tamil-speaking students in 'surrender position' by Sinhalese students at Peradeniya University on 22 August 2016, 49 Tamil-speaking students attending the first year courses at the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences (AHS) have left the University premises on 24 August 2016 and informed the administration that they will not be prepared to return until there is a proper guarantee extended to them by the SL State and the University administration.

One of the Sinhala students, engaged in ethnic-violence against Tamil student L. Sumeskanth on 24 May 2016 was trying to secure a medical attestation from a Sinhala doctor at a rural hospital at Chanthive'li, situated 3 km away from the Eastern University in Vanthaa'ru-moolai, informed medical sources in Batticaloa told TamilNet on Saturday. With the backing of Sinhala policemen from Ea'raavoor, the Sinhala student was admitted on the following day to the hospital where a Sinhala doctor is employed. The Sinhala student was blaming that Sumeskanth had attacked him. Ea'raavoor police filed a case against the Tamil student, who was initially attacked by the Sinhala student for posting and sharing a photo on Facebook from Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day.

Nine of twelve Tamil male students attending the discipline of Siddha Medicine at Trincomalee Campus of the Eastern University were brutally assaulted on Thursday 10 March 2016, evening by Sinhalese students from the two mainstream faculties at the campus. The attacked Tamil students were also blocked by the Sinhala students from getting medical treatment. The administration of the University has been subjected to political pressure in covering up the incident not being portrayed as an ethnic assault. Although the name of 10 identified Sinhala male students have been provided to the SL Police, there has been no action against them, the affected Tamil students receiving medical treatment at Nilaave'li hospital.

All Tamil students from the first year have vacated the hostel of the Eastern University at Vanthaa'ru-moolai in Batticaloa on Saturday 22 March 2014 following a brutal attack by Sinhala hostel inmates on 1st year Tamil students who were having a birth day party on Thursday midnight. More than 45 Sinhala students, armed with batons, penknives

and iron-boxes, assaulted the Tamil students at the party causing serious injuries to 7 Tamil students. 2 Sinhala students were also injured in the clashes that followed. The Sinhala policemen at the police post had refused to intervene to stop the clash.

20 students, including 6 girls, were admitted for medical treatment at Chammaan-thu'rai hospital and SL police in Chammaan-thu'rai detained 41 students, following a clash between Sinhala and Tamil Muslim students at the Faculty of Applied Sciences in the South Eastern University in Ampaa'rai district on Thursday 03 October 2013. Sinhala students opposing the election of a Muslim as leader in the student union elections held last month, resulted in the clash, informed sources said. The University administration phrased the incident as a clash between two groups of 2nd and 3rd year students and that the faculty would remain closed until further notice. The University is situated at Oluvil in Ampaa'rai district.

Swiss Council of Eelam Tamils (SCET) Association internationale des Droits de l'Homme (France) Association Le Collectif La Paix au Sri Lanka (France) Association ABC TAMIL OLI (Seine-Sain-Denis) L'Association Culturelle des Tamouls en France (A.C.T.F.). (Paris) Association pour le Droit de l'Homme et le Développement Durable.(92700) Association internationale des Droits de l'Homme de Bourgogne. (AIDHB 58000) Association Jeunesse Etudiante Tamoule (J.E.T.). (93) Association LE PONT (93300 Aubervilliers) Association Tamil Uzhagam (78310 Maurepas) Association Thendral (94470 Boissy-Saint-Léger) Maison du Tamil Eelam France (France) L'Association Mondiale des Droits de l'Homme (A.M.D.H) (Suisse). NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

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