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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Le Pont, a non- governmental organization 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.

[03 February 2020]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

GE.20-02539(E)



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Kanniyaa an exemple of structural genocide of Eelam Tamils cultural heritage

Sinhala thugs confront protesters at Kanniyaa, priest, landowner subjected to “hot water assault”

I am an activist and I am self-employed from North. I would like to remain anonymous. As a witness of Kanniya protest on July 16, 2019, I would like to bring attention to the incident of assaulting the landowner, Mrs. Ganesh Kokilaramany, and the priest, Akaththiyar Adika'laar. Tamils have gathered in Kanniya to show our concerns to replacing the Pillayar temple by erecting a Buddhist statue. This is not the first time the Sinhala Buddhist tries to seize historical Tamil places. Tamils travelled from great distances to gather in Kanniya to express their concerns to the Sri Lankan government.

The occupying Sri Lankan Army and police were blocking more than five hundred peaceful protesters on Anuradhapura Road about 1 km away from Kanniya Hot Wells on Tuesday. Tamil grassroots activists mobilised to express peaceful resistance to the Sri Lankan State sponsored act of heritage genocide. Earlier in the day, the Sri Lanka Police had allowed dozens of Sinhala thugs to enter the temple site so they would be prepared to assault any Tamils who managed to reach the venue. There were heated arguments between the Sinhala police and the Tamil protesters.

The Tamil organisers of the protest urged the Sri Lankan Police to allow their representatives or a group of people to hold a prayer on the temple lands. However, the Sinhala police sophisticatedly denounced that request with the backing of Sinhala street vendors threatening the Saiva priest and the trustee of the temple with a “hot water” attack.

Finally, unable to withstand the protesters, the Sri Lanka Police allowed two representatives to proceed to the Kanniyaa Hot Wells. The Saivaist priest Akaththiyar Adika'laar and Mrs. Ganesh Kokilaramany, the landowner and trustee of the temple, were accompanied by the police. On their way, Sinhala street sellers near the entrance threw hot water at them.¹

The Sri Lankan Police brought the two representatives back to the Tamil protesters without taking any action against the attackers. The Tamil protesters at the venue were provoked when they learned about the assault.

However, the organisers of the protest managed to control their anger and urged the participants to express their resistance peacefully.

The Tamil demonstrators also witnessed masked Sri Lankan soldiers and police commandos on the street. The occupying Sinhala Army was also harassing Tamil journalist K. Kumanan. He has already been targeted by the Sri Lanka military in Vanni for his coverage of Neeraaviyadi heritage dispute. The journalist had to argue with the Sri Lanka military that it would amount to abduction if he were to be held back from the fellow travellers. The thirty fellow travellers on the bus were also subjected to strict checking by the SL military in Vanni earlier in the day. The travellers were ordered to get off the vehicle. A perfectly fine tire on the bus was punctured while the people were being checked. The Tamil activists blamed the SL military for vandalism which was intended to prohibit them from taking part in the protest.

The Sinhala thugs who were hiding inside the disputed heritage site emerged in groups when the Tamil participants started to leave at the end of the protest. These thugs acted as gangs and shouted at the Tamil protesters. Nicholas, a Tamil Christian activist, was assaulted by one of the gangs as he went to get his parked car.

Ampitiye Seelawansa Tissa Thero, an extremist monk from Velgam Vihara, had influenced the Sri Lankan Police in advance to secure an “interim order” from the Magistrate enabling them to block the Tamil protesters from rallying at the Hot Wells.² The protest was supported by almost all grassroots organisations, including the University students who come from

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=Z_eKx1IT6qc

² See attached document (in Sinhala)

Trincomalee. The protesters said they had learned a lesson on where the unitary Sri Lankan State was heading to with its “foremost place” to Buddhism clause.

ITAK Parliamentarians S Shriritharan, Seeniththamby Yogeswaran, TNP Leader Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam and former NPC Councillor from Mullaitheevu T. Ravikaran took part in the protest on Tuesday.

We request UN to research about Kanniya’s matter and protect Tamil’s historical places and their lands. This was well planned by the Sri Lankan Government and the extreme Sinhala Buddhist to seize the Kanniya the historical place from Tamils. This place is well-known as spiritually significant to Tamils in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Ganesh Kokilaramany, the landowner and trustee of the temple, accompanied with the Saivaist priest Akaththiyar Adika'laar went to this location and find out that someone is digging in the ground and dumping the soil into the drinking water well. Both of them questioning the workers and found out that they planned to erect a Buddhist statue there. The landowner pointed out that there is a stop order from the department of Archaeology and no one is allowed to dig for any reason.³ Also, the landowner had all the legal documents for ownership that land. But a monk argued with them and said he has ownership documents for this land. The Saivaist priest Akaththiyar Adika'laar raised a concern about how there could be two ownership documents for the same piece of land, and how a monk could proceed against the law by himself? It is likely that there is hidden support within the government encouraging the monk to do this. The government and the Police always support Sinhala monks even when they act illegally. Tamils are treated unjustly and suppressed by them.⁴

The Sri Lankan Police didn’t take any action towards the thugs when Mrs. Ganesh Kokilaramany and Akaththiyar Adika'laar were assaulted by the Sinhala thugs. Where is the equality?

We request UN to investigate this crime as there are perpetrators protected by the Sri Lankan Government who should be investigated and punished.

The UN should observe the situation in North and East and provide security and protect Tamils’ right. Tamils should be treated as equal citizens of this country.

We request UN to secure our rights of peaceful assembly whenever, wherever and whatever Tamils want to meet about.

The army and police should be removed from the North and East so that the citizens can enjoy the same freedoms as in the South.

The UN should ensure that the Sri Lankan government remove all illegal Buddhist structures and all Buddhist structures that were erected on traditionally Tamil lands, as well as restoring all disturbed historical sites.

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=101&v=Cxta1G1_tO8

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=43&v=End0PbQAJaE