



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 2

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

**Joint written statement\* submitted by the Association des étudiants tamouls de France, ANAJA (L'Eternel a répondu), Association Bharathi Centre Culturel Franco-Tamoul, Association Burkinabé pour la Survie de l'Enfance, Association pour les Victimes Du Monde, Association Solidarité Internationale pour l'Afrique (SIA), Society for Development and Community Empowerment, Tourner la page, 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.

[13 February 2017]

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

GE.17-02875(E)



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## **Sri Lankan government Structural Genocide on education against Tamils\***

Tamil Youth Organisation from across the World, On behalf of Association Etudiants Tamouls de France, would like to inform to the Human Rights Council Members on Tamil Educational Genocide in Tamil Eelam. Since Sri Lanka's independence Tamils have been subject to systematic attacks orchestrated by the Sri Lankan state and the genocide of Tamils continues to date.

The Sri Lankan government's war against Tamil is ongoing nearly Four decades and is one of the longest running civil wars and Colonization of Tamils Lands in Asia. The crucial influences of this war caused catastrophic damage to the Tamil social lives. A large number of people lost their lives due to this terrible conflict. In this pathetic situation various researchers have attempted to decipher the grass root reasons which contributed towards the Tamil youth uprising and the establishment of the LTTE during the 1970s.

### **Special Features of Sri Lankan Education after Independence**

Since Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948, Sri Lanka was ruled by the Sinhalese majority based government. The Sinhala Buddhists expected more rights and privileges under the majority Sinhalese governments. Education opportunities were broadly scattered after the independence. In 1956 the Sri Lankan government replaced English with Sinhala as the official language of Sri Lanka. The medium of education also changed to Sinhala and Tamil.

Towards the beginning of the 1970's the number of Arts graduates that were produced was vast however the UF government failed to provide satisfactory job opportunities for such a large number of Arts graduates. Owing to this the mental and social depressants of unemployment caused the rural youths to take up arms on the 5th April 1971 against the government. More than 10,000 Sinhala youths participated in the uprising of 1971. However the April uprising was totally suppressed within a month by the government.

### **Standardization Policy**

After the 1971 riots, a variety of policies were introduced by the Sri Lankan government to solve problems of the Sinhala youths. The standardization policy was a very important measure which UF government took during this period.

The Government hoped to create similar representations in the science faculties of universities according to the racial representations of total population, through this policy. So due to mass education facilities of the Northern province, the government implemented a policy which stated that Tamil students should take higher marks compared to the Sinhalese students, in order to enter the science faculties of universities. Eventually the Tamil percentage within the science faculties of Sri Lankan universities decreased after the introduction of the standardization policy. But still the Tamils were able to establish 30 percent of the total number of students in the science faculties of universities. Therefore upon comparison of the ratio of the Tamils to Sinhalese of the total population, it was apparent that the general level of Tamil representation in Sri Lankan science faculties had held a prominent place even after the standardization policy.

Even though S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, who was prominent Tamil leader, pointed out that the current education policy would create high barriers of education for the Tamils.

### **The District Quota System**

Due to Tamil oppositions, the standardization policy was terminated by the government and implemented a new policy called the District Quota System. Educational facilities were spread out unequally over the country in that period.

Tamil representations of Universities had decreased drastically. Representation of Tamils in science faculties had decreased up to 20.9% in 1974. (They were made 25.9% in 1973 and 35.3% in 1970). Similarly their percentages of engineering and medical faculties had decreased up to 16.3% and 25.5%. In 1973, 337 Tamil students qualified to enter the science faculties of universities. Even though in 1974, that limit had been decreased up to 294. This situation worsened in 1975. Their percentages of science and medical faculties decreased up to 14.2% & 17.4% in that year. Their overall representation of science discipline had been decreased up to 19 % in same year.

Due to decrease in previous representations of Tamils, the variety of opposing movements was organized by the Tamil leaders against the District Quota System. They expressed their strong oppositions over current standards of Sinhalese students of Universities. The Sinhalese saw the current changes 'as reversing the discrimination they had been subjected to in the past'; while the Tamils felt they were being deliberately discriminated against. They thought that the Sinhalese had stolen their previous opportunities.

Actually overall the Tamil representation of the Sri Lankan universities had decreased through these policies. So indeed the majority Sinhalese acquired the maximum educational opportunities automatically due to their ratio level. Even among the Tamil community, only over privileges educational rights of high class Jaffna Tamils were decreased due to the above educational policies.

### **Tamil Discrimination**

Active programs for the destruction of the Tamils and their displacement from their homes, their jobs and their land followed the Sinhala Only Act. These pogroms over the years – in 1956, in 1958, in 1977, in 1983 – followed a sinister pattern of letting loose the Sinhalese mobs in Sinhalese dominated areas on previously disarmed Tamils. In addition, the army was also dispatched to the Tamil dominated areas with full license to conduct themselves as they please – to kill, rape and pillage.

Discrimination in other phases of activity continues. Colonization of Tamil areas where the Tamils have been a majority with a view to alter the ethnic composition, dilute the distribution of Tamils and reduce them to a minority was inaugurated even before the attainment of independence. In the allocation of foreign aid and local funds for development, education disparities exist. The irony is even when foreign funds were offered for the rehabilitation of the war ravaged North and East, efforts were made to divert these funds to the Sinhalese dominated areas

Today the towns of the Tamil lie in ruins, their economy destroyed and most poignantly of all their educational system is in shambles. How great the damage that has been brought about by this inequality may be gauged from the fact that when then the results of the GCE O examination (the examination taken after 10 years of schooling) were published it was found that a single Sinhala girls' school produced more students who had obtained distinctions than all the students in the heavily-Tamil populated North and East provinces combined. The school has a population of not exceeding 10,000 while the combined school population in the areas of the North and East likely exceed 100,000. Not only do many Tamils believe that teaching facilities in the North and Eastern portions of Sri Lanka are not merely inadequately funded but wilfully destroyed. For example in the occupation of Jaffna district in the early 1990s, after the Tamil population fled to the mainland to escape the advancing Sinhala army, the soldiers are reported to have gone from house to house, apart from looting the contents, also systematically destroyed the text books and even the note books of the departed students. This indicate not individual lust or greed but an unofficially sponsored policy of the Sinhalese intelligentsia.

There is also a vigorous censorship of news of the extent of the suffering in Tamil areas imposed both officially and privately. When certain Sinhalese and Tamil Tigers attempted to focus the media spotlight on several cases of outright discrimination against the Tamil people, attempts were made to suppress such claims. The internationally known example of this policy of ethnic and cultural genocide is the burning of the Jaffna Library by the Police and Army in 1981. Many Sinhalese have privately lamented this action, and even the President of Sri Lanka has publicly accused prominent Sinhala politicians of this outrage.

The UN report of 2012 states that many as 40'000 civilians were killed only on last day. There has been released various proofs against Sri Lankan war crimes acts by Channel 4 Media. And the on going protests like the current one going in Koppapulavu shows the current militarization in Tamils homeland even after 7 years. The statistics of the Tamils homeland prove the ethnic cleaning process.

With the facts in hand, the HRC must fulfil its duty by establishing an international independent judicial process under UN auspices. We do not intend to spell out the specifics of such a mechanism, including its possible location, however at a minimum it must entail:

- Application of international criminal law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide;
- Referendum for the Eelam Tamils in Sri Lanka, so that we can decide our political destiny.
- Consultation on the mechanism's design with all affected groups, especially victims;
- Independent operation and adequate funding;
- Guarantees of witness protection;
- Finally, and most importantly, it must entail the appointment of independent and competent personnel by the UN to constitute a significant majority in key positions – prosecutors, judges, and investigators – and jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute the alleged atrocities committed by Sri Lankan Military and Sri Lankan Paramilitary groups.

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\*Tamil Youth Organization – Switzerland, NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.