



வடக்கு கிழக்கு மனித உரிமைகள் செயலகம்
North East Secretariat on Human Rights - NESoHR

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The High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),
Geneva,

Your Excellency,

Urgent restoration of basic human rights

While appreciating Your Excellency's expressed desire to visit the Wannu, we do realize the ground reality pertaining to government restrictions that prevent such a visit and understand it in the right perspective.

In the absence of an opportunity to meet with Your Excellency and discuss matters relating to human rights, we wish to submit this memorandum that briefly addresses the most urgent needs of the Tamil people vis-à-vis human rights. Listed below are matters that NESoHR consider requiring UN's special attention:

- Institutionalizing a Human Rights Monitoring body in Sri Lanka, having jurisdiction all over the island and continue its function until such time a permanent political solution is found to the decades old political conflict. We firmly believe that a politically alienated people cannot expect their natural human rights without an acceptable political solution in place. The unabated rise in the number of killings, abductions, disappearances and threats that force people to seek judicial refuge with the Human Rights Commission are matters that justify the positioning of a neutral human rights body.
- Bring to book immediately, all the armed elements that function as Para-militaries, for it is common knowledge that these are the agencies that indulge in terrorizing the civilian population as appendages of the occupying military.
- Re-opening without any further delay, the main entry/exit point to the Jaffna peninsula on the A-9 highway that is being kept closed for over one year now. This has placed the entire population of the Jaffna peninsula in a very difficult situation, cutting them off from the mainland and in fact from the rest of the humanity elsewhere. With the main supply route closed, the people find themselves almost imprisoned within a heavily militarized zone with very much limited access to basic essentials and a restricted freedom of movement. Stoppage of a free flow of goods and people has its impact on the life of nearly 500,000 Tamil civilians. This is also the case with the passenger checkpoint at Uyilankulam that is kept closed for over a month now. Parts of Mannar, including the Holy Catholic Shrine at Madhu Church are inaccessible now.
- Lifting of the curfew that is in place throughout the Jaffna peninsula during different times in different locations for about one year now. This is seriously impacting the day-to-day livelihood activities of the people, more specifically fishing.

- Aerial bombings on civilian habitats and frequent military operations that displace hundreds of thousands of people, making them refugees overnight should be halted. NESoHR is of the opinion that military subjugation of a people is not helpful in finding a peaceful resolution to a political conflict.
- Immediate steps should be taken to resettle civilians who have been made refugees in the districts of Batticaloa and Trincomalee consequent to military operations. Their resettlement must be without coercion and free of fear from military harassment after resettlement.
- Stopping the issue of special identity cards including family photographs insisted upon by the military in the occupied Jaffna peninsula is causing panic and makes the people feel as a subject race selectively targeted for 'different' treatment.
- Cause effective inquiry procedures into the killings that take place on a daily basis. Appointment of Commissions of Inquiry into selected cases of killings has not brought forth any tangible results and it is our studied opinion that every killing, irrespective of the status of the victims, be subject to a definite judicial procedure in conformity with accepted norms and standards.

Thanking Your Excellency,

We remain,

Yours fraternally,



Rev. Fr. M. X. Karunaratnam
Chairman, NESOHR