



**INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PREVENTION AND PROSECUTION OF GENOCIDE**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -**

13<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### **The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) Strongly Condemns the Demolition of the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument at the University of Jaffna and calls upon the UN for immediate action.**

**London:** The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) strongly condemns the demolition of the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument at University of Jaffna fully support the appeals of the Jaffna University students as well as other organizations to prevent the on-going structural Genocide in Sri Lanka. We also call upon the UN Human Rights Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression for immediate action and to make a public remark.

On 8 January 2021, the University of Jaffna administration under the guidance of the Vice-Chancellor and registrar with the help of the Sri Lankan Army and Police destroyed the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument that was built to commemorate the deaths of thousands of innocent University students and Tamil civilians killed due to the genocidal war that ended in May 2009. This is not simply a building made of stone and mud, but it is the abode of emotional and the extension of memories of the students and the Tamil people a whole. The Sri Lankan Government has consistently thwarted their basic right to commemorate the deaths and this is their latest attempt to do so.

It would be wrong for the government to think that the demolition of the Mullivaikkal Monument could suppress the thirst for freedom on contrary it galvanises people to fight against the injustice. This act of demolishing the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument is also the latest in a series of deliberate provocations against the Tamils which is being used to justify a continued Sri Lankan military presence to both the national and international communities.

Successive Governments of Sri Lanka have committed genocide against the Tamils since independence with impunity while the International Community continues to fail to protect Tamil Rights under International Law. Governments of Sri Lanka have continuously destroyed the cultural and religious identities of indigenous Tamils while erecting Buddhist Viharas (monasteries) and continuing Sinhala colonization.

The government who was responsible for Mullivaikkal genocide is now in power and in the process of eradicating evidence of genocide. The demolition of the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument in the University of Jaffna is one such act of the State using its powers to destroy Tamils identity. Careful and consistent planning to remove the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument, sacking of the former vice chancellor for not cooperating to remove the Mullivaikkal memorial Monument and bringing the current vice chancellor with the prerequisite to remove the Mullivaikkal Memorial monument clearly displays the intent to destroy the Tamil cultural identities. Such acts exhibit the continued denial of the Sri Lankan government to even consider the process of truth, justice, and accountability even after nearly 12 years since the end of the war.

Whilst the ICPPG welcomes the promise by the Vice-Chancellor to rebuild the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument after the brave hunger strike by the students, lock down of shops, condemnations from all part



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of the community and the international and outcry, we remain sceptical whether the promise would be honoured. To ensure this, we call upon the relevant authorities to appoint a responsible committee and rebuild the Mullivaikkal Memorial Monument within a meaningful time.

As the ICPPG fully support the appeals of the Jaffna University students as well as all other students, academics, civil servants, politicians, human rights activists, and all other organizations in this regard, we have taken the liberty to gather their appeals and forwarded them to the UN High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression demanding immediate action. In particular, on behalf of the Tamil community and others affected minorities in Sri Lanka, we demand the UN to make a public remark condemning this barbaric act and ask the Sri Lankan government to refrain from interfering in normal civilian life, honour the commitments under the UN Human Rights Council Resolutions, such as, incorporating the full range of judicial and non-judicial measures, including individual prosecutions, ensuring accountability, serving justice, providing victims with remedies, promoting healing and reconciliation, establishing independent oversight of the security system and promoting the rule of law in accordance with international human rights law with a view to preventing the recurrence of violations and abuses.

We enclose our correspondence to the UN in this regard.

**Ends**

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### **About the ICPPG:**

The formation of the International Centre for the Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) in London was initiated by Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). The ICPPG, however operates as an independent body, serving all people who have been affected by or threatened with genocide. Its immediate focus remains the genocide that occurred in Sri Lanka. The ICPPG remains as an International Non-Governmental Organisation and an Independent Legal Body and one of our primary objectives is to collect evidence against perpetrators of genocide and work towards justice, peace, and reconciliation<sup>1</sup>.

We began assisting the Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) investigations on Sri Lanka by submitting testimonies and organising victim interviews in 2014. In its resolution [A/HRC/25/1](#) adopted in March 2014 on “Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka”, the UNHRC requested the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to “*undertake a comprehensive investigation into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes by both parties in Sri Lanka during the period covered by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), and to establish the facts and circumstances of such alleged violations and of the crimes perpetrated with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring accountability, with assistance from relevant experts and special procedures mandate holders*”. The Council requested the High Commissioner to present an oral update at its twenty-seventh session and a comprehensive report on the investigations at its twenty-eighth session. In accordance with this mandate, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights established the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL), based in Geneva<sup>2</sup>. The final report of the OISL commission was published in September 2015 confirming the serious violations, abuses of human rights and war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan authorities<sup>3</sup>. In the basis of this report, we continue to work with international prosecutors with a view to bringing criminal and civil prosecutions.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://icppg.org/about/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/oisl.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/.../A.HRC.30.CRP.2\\_E.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/.../A.HRC.30.CRP.2_E.docx)