



PRESS RELEASE

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ICPPG CALLS UPON ALL THE TAMIL DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS TO UNITE ON THE 12TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE MULLIVAIKKAL GENOCIDE AND URGE THE UK GOVERNMENT TO PROVE ITS COMMITMENT TO DELIVER JUSTICE TO THE TAMIL VICTIMS BY TAKING STEPS TO SANCTION GENERAL SHAVENDRA SILVA

London: The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) urgently calls upon all the Tamil Diaspora Organizations in the UK to unite on the 12th Year Anniversary of the Mullivaikkal Genocide and urge the UK government to take serious steps to sanction the Sri Lankan war criminals, including General Shavendra Silva, which would be significant step towards accountability and proves the UK government's commitment to deliver justice to the Tamil victims.

On 01st May 2021, on behalf of the victims living in the UK and abroad, the ICPPG made urgent representations to the UK government calling to take steps to sanction the Sri Lankan war criminals, including General Shavendra Silva, who is the current Acting Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of the Sri Lankan Army¹ under the United Kingdom's Global Human Rights (GHR) Sanctions Regime established on 6 July 2020².

The ICPPG pointed out that on 12th April 2021, the ITJP, an independent human rights organization compiled and submitted a 50-page dossier to the Sanctions Department of the UK's FCDO on General Shavendra Silva. The submission details Silva's role in the perpetration of gross human rights violations including of the right to life when he was 58 Division commanders during the final phase of the civil war in 2009 in the north of Sri Lanka. It draws on searing eyewitness testimony from Tamils who survived the government shelling and bombing of hospitals and food queues in the No Fire Zones, many of whom now reside in the UK as refugees³.

The ICPPG also highlighted that General Shavendra Silva and his family were designated by the US Government in 2020 because of credible information of his involvement, through command responsibility, in gross violations of human rights⁴.

“The British High Commission in Colombo alongside other European partners expressed concern regarding the appointment of Shavendra Silva as Commander of the Sri Lankan Army due to the allegations of grave human rights and humanitarian law violations against him and UK Government also expressed concern at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. However, the UK government has not taken any real action which is very disappointing and frustrating” said Miss Subatharsha Varatharajah, the Youth Team Leader of the ICPPG.

¹ <https://www.army.lk/commander#:~:text=General%20LHSC%20Silva%20WWV%20RWP,General%20with%20effect%20from%20the>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-global-human-rights-sanctions>

³ <https://itjpsl.com/assets/press/Final-english-press-release-shavendra-magnitsky.pdf>

⁴ <https://2017-2021.state.gov/public-designation-due-to-gross-violations-of-human-rights-of-shavendra-silva-of-sri-lanka-under-section-7031c-of-the-department-of-state-foreign-operations-and-related-programs-appropriations-a/index.html>



The ICPPG further reported that,

1. A survey of the Sri Lankan press conducted by the Journalist for Democracy in Sri Lanka (JDS) reveals at least 50 abductions have been reported in the media during 2016, 2017 and the first half of 2018 (in 26 months).
2. The ICPPG has documented over 100 cases of torture and sexual abuse of Tamils which took place between 2019 and 2021.
3. The ICPPG continues to receive credible evidence that the torture and sexual violence are still used against the Tamils in Sri Lanka on a systematic and widespread manner by the security forces who operate under the command of General Shavendra Silva.
4. Subject to the consent of the victims and under strict confidentiality protocols, ICPPG is willing to share the testimonies with FCDO and/or any other relevant authorities to verify the on-going torture committed by the armed forces in Sri Lanka under the command of General Shavendra Silva.

On this basis, the ICPPG fully supports the statement made by Yasmin Sooka, the head of the ITJP, that ***“UK’s designation would be another significant step forward in terms of accountability and would be in line with the recent UN Human Rights Council Resolution passed in Geneva for which Britain was the penholder”***.

While we mourn the 12th Year Anniversary of the May 18 Mullivaikkal Tamil Genocide, the ICPPG would like to remind everyone that at least we owe the victims the courtesy of taking real steps towards accountability and justice. Thus, the ICPPG requests everyone to unite during this most painful time and set practical targets towards justice, though small, which can be achieved each year. It would be the real tribute to the victims rather than letting the years pass with memorial events with empty speeches from the politicians. Accordingly, the ICPPG believes that getting the Sri Lankan alleged war criminals designated would be a fitting tribute for this year and therefore calls upon all Tamil Diaspora Organisations and other Human Rights organisations to unite and urge the UK government to the Sri Lankan alleged war criminals, including the country’s notorious General Shavendra Silva. This would also give the opportunity to the UK government to prove its commitment to deliver justice to the victims of Genocide in Sri Lanka.

We also hereby launch the signature campaign initiated by the Youth Team of the ICPPG in this regard and we request everyone to sign the petition on the following link and share it widely show your support. <https://www.change.org/p/time-for-the-uk-to-sanction-sri-lanka-s-army-commander-war-criminal-shavendra-silva>

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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 reconciliation⁵.

The operational strategy was designed under the guidance of Professor Muthucumaraswamy Sornarajah LLB (Ceylon), LL.M (Yale), LL.M, PhD, LLD (London) is CJ Koh Professor at the Faculty of Law of the National University of Singapore. He is Visiting Professor at the Centre for Human Rights, London School of Economics. He was the Tunku Abdul Rahman Professor of International Law at the University of Malaya at Kuala Lumpur. He was Head of the Law School of the University of Tasmania, Australia. He studied law at the University of Ceylon, the London School of Economics, King's College, London and the Yale Law School. He remains as an independent advisor and we to operate with his blessings.

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 Geneva⁶. 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 authorities⁷. In the basis of this report, we continue to work with international prosecutors with a view to bringing criminal and civil prosecutions.

⁵ <http://icppg.org/about/>

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/oisl.aspx>

⁷ https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/.../A.HRC.30.CRP.2_E.docx