



## PRESS RELEASE

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021

### ICPPG URGES THE UK GOVERNMENT TO PROVE ITS COMMITMENT TO DELIVER JUSTICE TO THE TAMIL VICTIMS BY TAKING STEPS TO SANCTION GENERAL SHAVENDRA SILVA ON THE 38TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLACK JULY 1983 TAMILS GENOCIDE

**London:** The International Centre for Prevention and Prosecution of Genocide (ICPPG) has submitted a petition to the UK Prime Minister on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 2021 at No.10, Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA. The petition urges the UK government to sanction the notorious war criminal General Shavendra Silva, who is the current Acting Chief of Defense Staff and Commander of the Sri Lankan Army<sup>1</sup>.

On 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 the 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 recognised refugees<sup>2</sup>.

The ICPPG further reported that,

- In August 2019, British High Commission in Colombo and other European Partners have expressed their concern regarding the appointment of Shavendra Silva as the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army.
- General Shavendra Silva and his family were designated by the US Government in 2020.
- The ICPPG continue to receive credible evidence regarding the torture and sexual violence which are still used against the Tamils in Sri Lanka.
- 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).
- The ICPPG has documented at least 150 cases of torture and sexual abuse of Tamils which took place between 2019 and 2021.
- The most recent victim documented by the ICPPG was in March 2021 who was abducted after participating in peaceful demonstrations.
- ICPPG have received reports regarding the increasing number of mysterious death of Tamils.

On this basis, the ICPPG fully supports the statement made by Yasmin Sooka, the head of the ITJP, that **"Now the UK has the requisite legislation. The remit of the UK sanctions regime works is broader and includes his role in the shelling of hospitals and other protected civilian sites during the military offensive. This is important in terms of recognizing the full extent of the violations, as well as supporting the US action"**

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://itjpsl.com/assets/press/Final-english-press-release-shavendra-magnitsky.pdf>



While the Tamils mourn the 38<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of the Black July 1983 Tamil Genocide, the ICPPG urged that the UK government, the penholder for the latest UN resolution 46/1 in Geneva which mandated the collection of evidence, **“to develop possible strategies for future accountability processes ... and to support relevant judicial and other proceedings, including in Member States, with competent jurisdiction”**<sup>3</sup>. These strategies should include the use of targeted sanctions against individuals like General Shavendra Silva. ICPPG urged the FCDO to sanction the Sri Lankan alleged war criminals, including the country’s notorious General Shavendra Silva, under the UK’s Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.

The present is thus inextricably linked to the past and the past will also define the future. Until there is accountability for the mass atrocities against the Tamil people, until justice – the bedrock for any lasting peace - emerges, until Tamils are recognised as a people with equal rights and a rightful place in their homeland, the island’s North and East, Sri Lanka will remain synonymous with ethnic strife<sup>4</sup>.

Mrs. Ambihai K Selvakumar, director of ICPPG said “it’s time for UK government to act. UK government not only have a historic duty to correct their mistakes but also as a penholder to lead on implementing the recommendation of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet”. She also pleaded with all human rights supporters to support the signature campaign launched by the Youth Team of the ICPPG by signing and sharing the petition on the following link. <https://www.change.org/p/time-for-the-uk-to-sanction-sri-lanka-s-army-commander-war-criminal-shavendra-silva>.

**End**

#### **For Further Information:**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G21/064/41/PDF/G2106441.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/remembering-black-july-1983-1>



## **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>6</sup>.

The operational strategy was designed under the guidance of Professor Muthucumaraswamy Sornarajah LLB (Ceylon), LL.M (Yale), LL.M, PhD, LL.D (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 Geneva<sup>7</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>8</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>6</sup> <http://icppg.org/about/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/oisl.aspx>

<sup>8</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)