



URGENT

10th September 2008

TAMIL WRITERS GUILD

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Unfolding Dire Humanitarian Crisis in the North of Sri Lanka and the immediate requirement for a UN administered safehaven in Kilinochchi

We are an organisation in the UK with members of professional standing who seek to represent the cause of the Tamils of Sri Lanka and to rebut misrepresentations and falsehoods about their struggle.

We are writing to request your urgent attention and action to stop the unfolding disaster of death and human misery of displaced Tamil people due to the current on-going war in the North of Sri Lanka that has been cynically kept away from the attention of the world media and other organisations by the Sri Lankan government.

The current actions of the Sri Lanka Govt. - the ongoing denial of humanitarian aid and the usage of food and medicine as weapons of war - are violations of the International Humanitarian Law as set out in the Geneva Conventions. Currently, the Sri Lanka government is blocking the above-mentioned aid to North in order to starve and force the battered civilians out of their homes and into government held area against their will. Ironically, in government held Tamil areas, the Tamils live in an open prison, fearful of their lives and is rampant with murder, kidnap, ransom, rape, detention camps for refugees and other forms of dehumanisation. It was only recently that Tamils were forcibly evicted out of their homes in the capital city of Colombo and driven 150 miles away to the Vanni as a part of the government's repugnant ethnic cleansing programme. Further, the current embargo on medicine to the North has long been used as an undeclared means to limit the survival of a number of new born babies in the Tamil area. The world has remained silent to the genocide of the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

In addition to the restrictions on humanitarian relief such as food, medicine, fuel, tents etc, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has denied all access to the Tamil Vanni region for the local and international media as well as NGO's and INGOs in order to black out from the international community the prevailing humanitarian crisis and gross human rights abuse. Consequently, the current level of human suffering in the Vanni has not received any meaningful coverage in the international media. You will understand that the constant and indiscriminate firing of artillery and shells by GoSL forces has caused deep trauma particularly among the young and old in the Vanni region but also among the 600,000 Tamils in Jaffna - the government held district, where they are mentally and physically scarred and require specialised medical attention that they do not receive.

There are over 249,612 Tamil children, mothers and elderly who have been displaced in the last eight weeks. They are in addition to the 850,000 previously internally displaced persons living in abject conditions, and the over 1 million Tamils who had to flee the country out of the total of a population of 4million Tamils. These displaced refugees have been on the constant move and have walked over 70km as the theatre of war shifts. The young and old have been sheltering in the open, under the trees, in forests and bunkers often whilst the seasonal rain results in many dying of disease, snake bites and sheer exhaustion.



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In a series of wars undertaken with ruthless military efficiency over 25 years, the Sri Lankan government has now launched a cruel military onslaught in the Tamil heartlands supplied by China and Pakistan, in terms that it describes as its *final solution*, to bring the Tamils into submission and to forestall their cry for freedom. The war is fought in Tamil areas with such ferocity to bring untold destruction to the livelihood of the people and their property.

The Tamils have just rebuilt their lives during the few years of the Norway led peace process only for it to be destroyed again. It is only the International Community that can bring an end to the suffering of Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

We call upon all good men to raise their voices to save their fellow human kind. It is absolutely vital that you use your good office to ensure that UN monitored humanitarian aid is sent to Vanni region and the safe haven of Kilinochchi for refugees does not become part of war spoils. The heartless Sri Lankan government is once again forcing over 300,000 Tamil refugees and residents of Kilinochchi to move again as it never had any regard for Tamil suffering.

BBC reported yesterday that the Sri Lankan government had announced a ban on foreign aid workers and many of their local colleagues from working in Tamil-rebel held areas in the north. In the past, such a ban in the east had preceded the carpet bombing by government forces of Tamil areas that led to much death and destruction. Aid agencies have been helping some of an estimated 250,000 people displaced by the fighting in the north. They have voiced concern for tens of thousands of people who have fled the frontline and sought refuge from the violence deep inside rebel-held territory. The United Nations has expressed their serious concerns about the situation of these displaced people.

It is imperative that URGENT action is taken now, as it was done in Kosovo and Darfur to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. It is also of paramount importance that this matter is brought expeditiously to the notice of the highest echelons of international authority (the UN and the EU), with power to enforce a humanitarian remit and to declare and protect Kilinochchi as an internationally administered safe haven for Tamil refugees.

The Tamils are renowned to be a cultured and educated people who are peace-loving and industrious. Over 5000 years, they have contributed enormously to the passage of world civilisation from the time of the proto-Dravidian Indus valley civilisation to modern times with an ancient language, philosophy and religion and are possessed of classical literature of international acclaim. Will you let these people be decimated by racist oppression of the worst kind in the modern world?

We appeal to you to spend some time getting to know the facts and then to do your best to stop this genocide that has been so cleverly covered up by the Sri Lankan government. Please move now to let Killinochchi be the last stand of the international community to save the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Yours sincerely

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Chairman