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## **FCO contradicts No 10 on Tamils Plight in Sri Lanka**

British Tamils Forum (BTF) strongly condemns the statement of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on 21 January 2009, which could be perceived as condoning the sustained programme of genocide of Tamils by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL).

BTF is startled at the apparent contradiction between the FCO's statement and the position taken by the Prime Minister during Prime Minister's Question Time on 14 January, when he said "I agree with [Mr. Vaz] about the terrible violence happening there, I also agree with him about the need for a ceasefire, I will be talking to President Sakorzy and Chancellor Merkal and this will be one of the issues I shall be raising with them". FCO's statement blatantly avoids in calling for a ceasefire.

In direct contrast the German Foreign Minister has said and we quote "They have been completely cut-off from international aid for more than ten days....The most important thing now is to negotiate a ceasefire, to enable aid deliveries and medical care for the civilians in the disputed areas".

"FCO's convenient usage of terms such as 'rooting out terrorism in Sri Lanka' attempts to hide the reality, that an unprecedented human tragedy is unfolding in the Vanni region, while some of the Western countries provide diplomatic cover to the GoSL" said a senior member of the BTF.

This untimely and misguided statement is presumed to have been timed to coincide a day after the new administration is sworn in, at the United States.

The BTF, an umbrella organisation, which represents the aspirations of over 200,000 Tamils in the United Kingdom, is deeply concerned at the behaviour of the FCO. This shocked the Tamils all over the world and seriously undermined the credibility of HM's Government and its impartiality in its engagement.

The FCO's statement states that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) lacks democratic mandate. British Tamils want to humbly remind the FCO that the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which accepted the LTTE as the sole legitimate representatives of the Tamil people in their manifesto, won a landslide victory in the Tamil area in the 2004 general election. Further, the Tamils of Sri Lanka had given a mandate for re-establishment of the Tamil Nation (Tamil Eelam) in the general election of 1977.

# British Tamils Forum

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We the British Tamils, urge HM's Government to no longer hide behind the now discredited "War on Terror" approach, which had only served to strengthen tyrannical regimes around the world, of which GoSL is a perfect example. 66 civilians have been killed in Theavipuram and Vallipunam in the Vanni region within the last 3 days due to indiscriminate bombing and shelling by the Sri Lankan armed forces. Today, as a perfect demonstration of state terrorism and in contravention of Geneva Conventions, the military bombed a hospital in the "secure zone" killing 5 civilians and injuring 15. Vital lives saving equipments were destroyed in the attack.

The BTF requests urgent humanitarian action to pressure the GoSL to stop the war and to send humanitarian relief to the Vanni region. We also urge the FCO to be sensitive to feelings of HM's subjects and to avoid releasing ill advised statements in the future.

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## **Notes to Editors:**

**British Tamils Forum** exists to harness the skills and the knowledge of the members of the forum, well-wishers and significant others including mainstream decision makers in the UK with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Tamils community in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self determination within a democratic frame work under pinned by international law, its covenants and conventions. The forum was set-up in 2006 when, with the support 88 British Tamil community organisations, it also published an open letter in the Times newspaper. For more information [admin@tamilsforum.com](mailto:admin@tamilsforum.com) and/or visit: [www.tamilsforum.com](http://www.tamilsforum.com)