

## **Issued for Immediate Release**

### **PRESS STATEMENT – PRESS STATEMENT – PRESS STATEMENT**

#### **British Tamils Walk for Justice**

British Tamils once again embarked on a rally through London on Friday, 23rd July 2010 calling for justice for victims of war crimes in Sri Lanka. In a symbolic yet solemn show of unity and hope, a “midnight vigil” was held from 9pm commencing from opposite Westminster Abbey to Downing Street.

The first of its kind to be held by a minority group in London, thousands of Tamils and non-Tamils gathered carrying candles, placards, banners and hoisting flags appealing to the UK establishment and the UN to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sri Lanka. Westminster Council, the Mayor’s Office and the Metropolitan Police offered tremendous support to enable this momentous vigil to take place.

The commemorative vigil marks the 27th anniversary of Sri Lankan state sponsored anti-Tamil pogroms in which thousands were slaughtered and serves to remind us that the injustice continues today.

The midnight vigil inaugurated a “Walk for Justice” from the heart of British Parliament, through France and Switzerland to the UN Human Rights Council offices in Geneva. Mr. Sivanthan, a British Tamil youth, will be joined by supporters and well-wishers on a two-week walk to raise awareness and amalgamate support for calls to the:

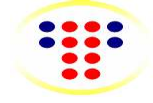
1. UN to initiate an independent international probe into war crimes committed in Sri Lanka
2. Allow access to Prisoners Of War
3. For all internally displaced persons to be resettled into their own homes. A memorandum is to be handed to the UN in Geneva on 6th August 2010
4. Boycott of Sri Lanka until it respects international laws

The walk for justice to the UN coincides with the recent appointment of a UN advisory panel by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. The Sri Lankan government has shown clear opposition to any prospect of independent monitors investigating war crimes in Sri Lanka. Government backed blockade outside UN office in Sri Lanka, threats to UN staff and possible denial of visas to the appointed UN advisory panel reflect a hostile reaction to a body that only has an advisory role. Sri Lanka must be reminded it is a democratic country which has subscribed to UN covenants and Geneva Conventions and is obliged to comply with the obligations to which it has signed up to.

Community leaders and well-wishers signed the war crimes book to pledge their support for the calls to the UN. The two-week walk to the UN aims to unite Tamils across Europe hope and the wider community to join calls to highlight the need for UN to uphold international laws to ensure that justice is universal and to set precedents for other rogue states.

British Tamils reiterated calls for boycott of Sri Lanka until it respects international laws. An international day of boycott is taking place on Saturday 31st July 2010 across US, UK, Canada, Australia and Europe to take forward this campaign.

# British Tamils Forum



The event concluded at 11:30pm with speeches from representatives of Tamil organisations and other community leaders. A memorandum containing the 4 basic and fundamental humane and humanitarian demands to the UK Prime Minister will be handed at 10 Downing Street on Monday 26th July.

- Ends -

**Media queries please contact:**

**Tel:** +44 (0) 20 8808 3224

**Email:** [media@tamilsforum.com](mailto:media@tamilsforum.com)

**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 Tamil community in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self determination within a democratic framework underpinned by international law, its covenants and conventions. For more information [admin@tamilsforum.com](mailto:admin@tamilsforum.com) and/or visit: [www.tamilsforum.com](http://www.tamilsforum.com)