

Issued for Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE – PRESS RELEASE – PRESS RELEASE

“The Exhibition makes a clear case for Self Determination for Tamils & We Build a Nation” – British Government Members of Parliament

Yesterday, 16 July 2008 a photo exhibition depicting ‘Sixty Years of Oppression of Tamils in Sri Lanka’ was held in the British Houses of Parliament premises. This is one of many events that the British Tamils Forum has organised to mark the twenty fifth anniversary of communal violence that took the lives of more than 3,000 Tamils. It also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the riots that took place in 1958. The event was organised by Tamils who have been displaced because of the violence in Sri Lanka. The exhibition was sponsored by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Tamils. Hon Virendra Sharma MP who is also the Chairperson of the APPG for Tamils said that he fully supports the Tamil struggle both within the Parliament and outside.

Hon Ms Joan Ryan MP who officially opened the exhibition said that not enough has been done by the international community to resolve this horrendous situation in Sri Lanka for the Tamil community. In her final comment she said that this is a humanitarian crisis that needs a political solution and the world must be alerted.

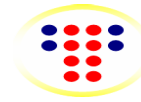


Hon Andy Love MP in his speech said that it is far too long that the international community has left this conflict which has claimed many lives. He also said that the Foreign Minister Lord Malloch Brown who is currently visiting Sri Lanka will share the concerns both Britain and the international community has regarding the level of human rights violations particularly against the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The exhibition was attended by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Home Office Rt. Hon Vernon Coaker MP, a large number of Members of Parliament from major parties (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democratic and Social Democratic & Labour Party), Members of House of Lords, Former Cabinet Ministers and many other dignitaries including Mayors, Councillors, University students, and representatives of many other international & UK organisations.

Three members of Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Hon Ms Padmini Sithamparanathan MP, Hon Jayananthamoorthi MP and Hon Gagendran MP from Sri Lanka and a representative of His Excellency Nihal Jayasinghe, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in London also attended the exhibition.

British Tamils Forum



Hon Minister Coaker said that he hopes that there would be negotiations leading to a political solution in Sri Lanka.



Lord Naseby who is an ardent supporter of the government of Sri Lanka said the display was interesting and that he will continue to work hard for a political solution in Sri Lanka. He further reiterated like he did at a meeting in the parliament on 25 February 2008 with the Foreign Minister Lord Malloch Brown, that when you bomb from the air it is inevitable that there will be innocent civilians being killed. This is in response to photographs which highlighted the Sri Lankan Air Force indiscriminate aerial bombardment.

Minister for Africa, Asia and United Nations Lord Malloch-Brown's quotation "there is always a case for freedom and self determination" was also displayed at the exhibition. Lord Malloch-Brown has openly criticised Sri Lanka both in the United Nations Human Rights Council and House of Lords for its appalling human rights record. Government of Sri Lanka was expelled from the United Nations Human Rights Council in May 2008 because of gross violations of human rights.



Photos of some of the Sri Lankan leaders both past and present who were responsible for structural and physical violence were displayed. Amongst them Late Mr. S.W.R.D Bandaranaike, husband of the first woman Prime Minister in the world Late Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and father of the last President Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. S.W.R.D Bandaranaike implemented the 'Sinhala Only Act' in 1956 to gain nationalists support at the elections. Mrs. Kumaratunga's photo was also displayed. Under her command a number of rapes of Tamil women and disappearances took place in Tamil areas.

British Tamils Forum

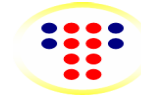


Photo of Late Mr. D.S. Senanayake who was the first post independent Prime Minister and who was responsible for planned colonisation of Tamil areas was displayed. Late Mr. J.R. Jayawardena who refused to protect the Tamils during the 1983 riots that claimed the lives of more than 3,000 Tamils was also displayed.

Photo of the current President Rajapaksha was used to highlight the shame he has brought to the people of Sri Lanka by his government's conduct which made the most trusted international body, United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to evict Sri Lanka from the 47 members panel.

Rt. Hon Lord Waddington QC who was the Home Secretary under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1983 who granted asylum to thousands of Tamils who fled the country said that he attended the exhibition to educate himself of current problems in Sri Lanka.

Hon Neil Gerrard, Member of Parliament for Walthamstow said that the exhibition makes a clear case for self determination.

Hon Barry Gardiner, Member of Parliament for Brent North and a member of the APPG for Tamils as a final comment wrote 'We build a Nation'.

- Ends -

Media Contact:

Suren Surendiran Tel: +44 (0) 7958 590 196

Email: surensurendiran@tamilsforum.co.uk

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 and/or visit: www.tamilsforum.com