



31 January 2009

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

Dear Prime Minister,

Urgent Appeal to Stop the Humanitarian Catastrophe of Tamils in Sri Lanka

The British Tamils Forum (BTF) writes to you, as the consensus voice of over a quarter of a million Tamils in the UK and as representatives of over 70,000 Tamils who have gathered today in the streets of London to urge you to redouble your efforts to stop the humanitarian catastrophe of Tamils. Whilst we appreciate you were the first world leader to call for an immediate ceasefire on 14th January 2009, we are still awaiting the cessation of hostilities.

It is a tragedy that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are the only party who has responded positively to a ceasefire whilst the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is adamant not to entertain any such prospect. The GoSL made an announcement of a 48hour humanitarian corridor yesterday while its forces continue shelling reputed safe zones which killed 28 people yesterday and another 447 since your ceasefire call. This is another overt example of duplicity, measures which the Tamil people have had to endure since independence in 1948 from successive Governments of Sri Lanka. This must be seen as yet another ploy by the GoSL to satisfy the International Community.

Over the last three decades, Tamils have made enormous sacrifices in their liberation struggle in order to justify their legitimate political aspirations. The British Tamil Diaspora, along with Tamils around the world, is determined to achieve self determination through democratic means. The current humanitarian crisis caused by the GoSL's irresponsibility in protecting its own citizens has only served to increase our resolve to play a crucial role in securing Tamils' legitimate rights.

The British Tamil Diaspora has been distressed and horrified by the reports and images through the Tamil media. However, the International community has been unable to witness these atrocities which are incomparable to the recent Gaza crisis, primarily due to the sanctions placed on the international media in the conflict zone by the GoSL.

As members of the British public and as Tamils, we urge you to act in fairness and justice to enforce an immediate ceasefire utilising all the possible tools at the disposal of the British Government. The situation in Sri Lanka is no longer an internal conflict but is now under the jurisdiction of international law as a consequence of the gross human rights infringements that of 500,000 innocent civilians as reported by ICRC and other UN agencies. There must be no confusion that these violations are not simply the causality of a civil war but rather explicit contraventions of the UN charter by the GoSL. As a result, we feel that there must be multilateral action, led by the British Government supported by the UN, to facilitate an immediate and lasting ceasefire and supply humanitarian aid.

We sincerely hope and pray our kith and kin back home will breathe freedom and democracy soon with the help of great men like you. Once again we humbly urge you to redouble your diplomatic efforts to bring an immediate ceasefire to dampen this escalating humanitarian crisis and as the first step to bring sustainable peace in Sri Lanka.

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kumar
Chairman