



General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 June 2021

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-seventh session

21 June–9 July 2021

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by ASSOCIATION CULTURELLE DES TAMOULS EN FRANCE, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 May 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



History of acts Genocides against Tamil by Sri Lankan state

It is of no doubt, that Sri Lanka has tainted its history with the blood of the innocent. After gaining independence from the British we turned our attention towards, quite literally, “killing each other”. Some call it nationalism, some ethnic cleansing and some pure mundane madness. Whatever it may be, it is essential that we as a people understand the true events that led to an unwarranted war that claimed the lives of the very same we sought to enrich.

The Gal Oya First Act of Genocide

The year is 1951. True to its conservative ideals the UNP and its constituents continued in free market policies and economic empowerment of the local middle class after gaining independence. Acquainted to this fiscal philosophy, but alienated from the communal social conservatism, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike strayed on to begin the left to centrist SLFP, holding nationalist ideals, empowering rural anti-establishment views, supported by the Buddhist clergy. Brewing this theory over the next five years, while amassing a four-party leftist coalition, Solomon was able to capture power through a landslide victory in 1956. Fulfilling its electoral promises, the legislature started debates on the ‘Sinhala Only Act’ in June of 1956, which dethroned English as the official language, while denying the same privileges to extend for the Tamil language.

Debated and accepted on 5 June 1956, with overwhelming support in the Parliament, the Sinhala Only Act was incorporated into law. Opposing this motion, Chelvanayakam and his colleagues of over 200 from ITAK engaged in a satyagraha in front of the capital. This event was quickly disturbed by a Sinhalese mob that eventually went on a looting spree of Tamil merchants in Colombo. While none could speak of the true intentions of this piece of legislature, it is rather undeniable that the Sinhalese majority took this opportunity to exert its dominance in the national political fraternity. It is this tension that embodied violence after six days in Gal Oya.

Act of Genocide of 1958

Upon the unsatisfactory outcome of the Gal Oya riots, Solomon Bandaranaike defaulted to accept Tamil as an administrative language in the North and East, which was commonly known as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact in 1957. Yet, due to the ongoing pressure exerted by the clergy (who helped in electing the SLFP) and the doctrinal shift towards populist nationalist views by the UNP under J.R. Jayawardene (demonstrated by the march on Kandy in '57), the Government withdrew from this pact.

The riots started in Polonnaruwa on 22 May 1958, with the destruction of the railway station and the stack on the train from Batticaloa to Vavuniya, which rumoured to carry Tamils to a convention. To the surprise of the mob, the train did not carry as many Tamils as they hoped and so, they turned their attention to the sugar cane farms in the area. Tamil workers who hid themselves in the farm were flushed out when the farms were lit alight, where most did meet their unfortunate end. Witness accounts predominantly state of mass desecrations and mutilations of the dead. Yet to the surprise of everyone, the Government failed to take this riot, which originated in the same region as in 1956, seriously, which could have prevented further bloodshed.

On 27 May, the Government declared a state of emergency, introducing the military in play. Order was restored within two days, while the government banned the activities of the Marxist JVP and ITAK, leading to multiple arrests from both sides. Tamil refugees who fled to Colombo were resettled in the north, while a miniature version of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact was signed on 3 September. Official numbers for the clash account for deaths between 300 and 1,500. This riot was the first all-island pogrom of its kind, which is said to have shaped the political ideology of the LTTE and its leader.

1959-1976

With the banishment of ITAK, and the constant disparagement of the Tamil people, social leaders of the north and east were polarised towards a separate state. Propagating these extreme views the ACTC under Chelvanayakam pushed for a political settlement through the parliament, while militant groups like the LTTE and TELO resorted to communal separatism often displaying violence through attacks on the local military units.

Still it was the latter that stirred up separatist views back again. When Ceylon became a republic under Sirimavo, the Tamil ministers, then a part of ACTC, failed to confine themselves to the idea of a unified nation, where Sinhalese was the official language and Buddhism was the state religion. Thus, with the coalition of all minor Tamil parties, the TULF was born in 1974 aiming for a separate Tamil state, commonly referred to as the Vaddukoddai resolution of 1976. Little did they know that the elections that followed paved the way for a UNP Government hellbent on extreme nationalist principles.

It was also during this time that 1974 conference incident took place. The World Tamil Research Conference, took place in Jaffna, despite the constant invitation by the government for it to be held in Colombo. In retaliation, the Government sent a troop of 40 policemen to disturb the conference leading to the death of nine and injuring more than 50. The SLFP Government not only denied any investigation into the matter (which would only perjure itself), but ironically promoted the officers involved in the attack.

The riots of 1977

Unlike before, the riots of 1977 started out as a State-sponsored revenge play. The UNP won the elections in July 1977, and sought to destroy its opposition by propagating anti-left hysteria. Supporters of the SLFP, LSSP and the CPSL were attacked and looted whereas nearly 9,000 families were left homeless on 12 August.

Conspiracies relating to this incident often cite the attack to be pre-planned, which served the UNP of both decapitating its opposition (i.e. certain leftist parties were banned) and nullifying the threat of a rouge state. Finally, on 20 August, the State deployed the military to enforce curfews and quell the riots. Casualties of more than 300 have been reported.

It is after this that the LTTE and TELO became active militant organisations, as their constitutional counterpart, the TULF, failed to resolve this cause through constitutional means. Moreover, Uma Maheswaran, formerly of the TULF, switched sides to the LTTE, where he was made the chairman of the organisation, after this incident.

Burning of the Jaffna Library in 1981

A piece of art, the Jaffna Library was brought to life in 1933. It housed over 97,000 manuscripts in the '80s and was one of the largest libraries of Asia. The institution became a hub of literary scholarship attracting researchers from India and around the world to envisage its collections. So, what really happened?

On 31 May 1981, the TULF held a rally in front of the library which led two dead and one injured. Unfortunately, these men were Sinhalese policemen, and subsequently led to malicious retaliation by the same on 1 June. The attack was carried out by the police, para-military units and angry mobsters, all under the auspices of two cabinet ministers of the then UNP Government. The library was torched, together with the TULF headquarters and the random bloodshed of four civilians.

1983: Black July

On 23 July 1983, the unit was ambushed by a 25-man LTTE squad, in retaliation for the rape and murder of Tamil schoolgirls by Government forces. The attack left 13 of the 15-man Army unit dead, while the LTTE suffered one casualty.

As shown in the timeline, violence ravaged the country for six days. The rioters targeted Tamils using voter registrations (lessons learnt from misidentification in 1958). The Police were unable (or unwilling) to implement control until the deployment of the military, who acted in the same manner. It was similar to medieval Egypt, while Israel lived in peace, Egypt was plagued by God. Only here, I don't believe God intervened. On the 28th, JR addressed the nation, calling for the cease of violence, blaming the TULF and LTTE for igniting the issue by spreading a separatist propaganda. Casualties accounted between 3000 and 4,000, while more than 50,000 suffered injuries. The sites of mutilated corpses were ambiently similar to primitive cannibalism.

As stated before, many believe that the riots of 1983 could have been avoided if it weren't for the complicity of JR and the Government. In a statement, two weeks before the incident, JR is quoted saying "...I am not worried about the opinion of the Jaffna people now ...if I starve the Tamils, Sinhala people will be happy..." Many international periodicals openly suggested that this riot was never a spontaneous outburst of communal hatred, but a well-orchestrated series of events.

Mulliyavaikal May 2009

Sri Lanka military killed over 150000 peoples in short period of 6 months and over 147000 Tamils are unaccounted.

Gouvernement en Exil du Tamil Eelam, GLOBAL TAMIL MOUVEMENT, ASSOCIATION DES ANONYMES ET PERSÉCUTES DU GÉNOCIDE TAMOULE, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.