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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Joint written statement submitted by Association pour le
Droit de l'Homme et Le Développement Durable, ABC Tamil
Oli, Action De La Jeunesse Pour Le Développement Durable,
Action Sri Lanka, Tourner La Page, non-governmental
organizations 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.

[10 August 2025]

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



Tamil Journalist under Threat by Occupying Sri Lankan Security Forces: The Case of Tamil Journalist Kanapathipillai Kumanan

Despite the end of the genocidal war against Eelam Tamils by Sri Lankan government, the human rights environment continued to deteriorate in a climate of impunity against Eelam Tamils. Serious human rights violations, such as abductions, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture and sexual violence against Eelam Tamils were still reported from Tamil Eelam.

Tamil's homeland remains heavily militarized; in addition to checkpoints blotting the region, the military also ran businesses, farming and development projects, and controlled civil society activity in these areas.

In the recent case the Sri Lanka's Counter Terrorism and Investigation Division (CTID) has summoned leading Tamil journalist and rights defender Kanapathipillai Kumanan to appear for an "inquiry" at its occupying Alampil sub-station in Mullaitivu on 17 August.

The summons marks yet another instance of state intimidation directed at the veteran reporter, who has been repeatedly targeted by the Sri Lankan security forces for his coverage of military land grabs, protests, disappearances, and environmental destruction in the North-East.

Kumanan has faced years of harassment and surveillance. He has been summoned and questioned multiple times by Sri Lankan police, physically assaulted while covering protests, and blocked from reporting by Sri Lankan navy and forest officials.

The pattern of harassment includes:

In May 2019, he was assaulted by the police officer in charge of the Kokkilai police station in Mullaitivu after he went to Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar temple to report on the lack of progress in fulfilling a court order to remove CCTV cameras.

In October 2020, he was attacked alongside another reporter by timber smugglers while investigating illegal logging. Kumanan sustained head and nose injuries.

In February 2021, he was threatened by Sri Lankan Forest Department officials, as he went to report on a Tamil landowner dispute in Thannimurippu, Mullaitivu.

In June 2022, Kumanan was physically blockaded and threatened while covering a protest against forced land acquisition by the Navy in Vattuvakkal. He repeatedly asked officers, "why are you laying your hands on me?"

In November 2022, uniformed soldiers questioned Kumanan at Mullaitivu Press Club, claiming that a new commanding officer was seeking the information of all commercial establishments in Mullaitivu.

In December 2022, he was summoned to the Mullaitivu office of the Assistant Superintendent of Police to give a statement on the harassment he faced by Sri Lankan navy and police officers.

Last October 2024, while Kumanan was abroad attending an international course, officers from the Terrorism Investigation Division visited his home and allegedly accused his elderly father of providing information to the international community regarding incidents in the North, such as land grabbing and enforced disappearances.

Kumanan, who serves as Chairman of the Mullaitivu Media Association, has earned global recognition for his work exposing human rights violations, crimes, and corruption in the war-affected North through powerful photography and documentation. His photograph was featured in the report "Legacy of Enforced Disappearances Haunts Sri Lanka" published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 21 May 2024.

The Counter Terrorism and Investigation Division (CTID) has summoned internationally acclaimed Vanni journalist and human rights defender Kanapathipillai Kumanan for questioning.

According to an official notice, the Officer-in-Charge of the Mullaitivu Sub-Unit of the CTID has instructed Kumanan to appear before the Alampil Sub-Unit on 17 August 2025 at 10:00 a.m. to record a statement in connection with an ongoing investigation. However, the summons did not specify the nature of the investigation.

Over the years, his images—focusing on the lives of war-affected Tamil communities and events such as the Goalpace struggle—have been published in major international outlets, including The Daily Telegraph, Vice World News, Evening Standard, The Guardian, Al Jazeera, BBC, and others.

Kumanan has long reported on the Vanni region, often covering sensitive stories involving the war-affected population. His work has made him a target for intimidation; three years ago, he and fellow journalist Shanmugam Thawaseela were brutally attacked after exposing a timber smuggling racket.

Kumanan's recent work includes widely circulated photographs documenting the Chemmani and Kokkuthodvai mass grave excavations—issues that have drawn significant international attention, including from the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

International rights organisations, including Front Line Defenders and Reporters Without Borders, have raised concerns over the surveillance and harassment of Tamil journalists like Kumanan.

The repeated targeting of media workers and human rights activists reflects the broader climate of repression faced by Tamil media workers in the heavily militarised North-East.

The news that respected Tamil journalist and human rights defender Kanapathipillai Kumanan has once again been summoned by Sri Lankan security forces is neither surprising nor new. It follows a depressingly familiar pattern of repression that has persisted for decades and lays bare the stark reality of life for Tamils under Sri Lanka's so-called new regime. Despite the promises of a new era under Anura Kumara Disanayake's administration, little has changed on the ground. For Tamils, the surveillance, harassment, and intimidation persists.

And Kumanan is not alone. This pattern of intimidation is systematic in the North-East, which remains one of the most heavily militarised regions in the world. In no other part of the island is daily life so closely monitored. It is in this militarised context that Tamil journalists, civil society organisations, activists, families of the disappeared, and former combatants continue to face interrogations, visits and threats.

The reasons are as familiar as they are farcical: from social media posts, to attending memorial events, to engagement with international institutions, and even receiving funding from abroad - all are painted as threats to the state. The list is long and the logic is clear. For the Sri Lanka, Tamil civic life is to be monitored, questioned, and suppressed. In many ways, this is a continuation of the state's long-standing project of securitisation and ethnonationalist policing in the North-East.

Kumanan's summons is clearly not an isolated incident. It is part of a continued and systematic assault on Tamil civil and political life. The international community must stop pretending otherwise. It must stop indulging Sri Lanka's empty rhetoric of reform and start listening to those who live under its rule. Enough warnings have been given.

This is not an isolated summons. It's part of a long running campaign of harassment, late-night calls, unannounced home visits, surveillance, all aimed at breaking his resolve. Agencies like the CTID, TID, and military intelligence have been used as tools to intimidate journalists, activists, and minority voices into silence. In 2025,

warned that Kumanan's story is not unique. Civil society groups, former combatants, and families of the disappeared face the same machinery of fear. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) with its history of fabricated terrorism allegations has become the blunt instrument of choice to crush dissent.

Recommendations

To the HRC members to

1. Recognize the genocide resolution passed unanimously in the Northern Provincial Council of Sri Lanka on 10th February, 2015.
2. Refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court.
3. Have a new Resolution under Agenda 4 of the Human Rights Council to appoint a country specific special Rapporteur.
4. Renew the mandate of OHCHR and its Sri Lanka Accountability Project.
5. Referral and the establishment of an Independent International Investigative Mechanism (IIIM).

To the OHCHR, Special rapporteurs and treaty bodies experts.

6. Please help us to ensure to protect Tamil human rights defenders in Sri Lanka to carry out their legitimate work.
7. OHCHR successive reports don't mention "Tamils" who are the victims of genocide in Sri Lanka, we therefor request you to investigate this omission and to mention the appropriate word of "TAMILS" wherever it's needful.
8. Ask the Government of Sri Lanka to reduce the military presence and cease surveillance of Eelam Tamils by the military and military-run businesses.
9. Monitor carefully the resettlement process of Eelam Tamils and ensure the presence of members of the international community in the Vanni.
10. Support resettling of Tamil families in Tamils Homeland, in developing their traditional livelihoods.
11. Support the Eelam Tamils in ensuring an adequate standard of living for displaced and resettling Tamils families, particularly female-headed households.

To UN Special-Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Professor Virginia Gamba and on R2P Mme Mô Bleeker

12. Issue a public statement that unequivocally recognizes the genocidal nature of Sri Lanka's actions in Vanni.
13. Advocate for and support independent, international investigations into atrocity crimes committed against the Eelam Tamils.
14. To recognize the failure of United Nations to prevent Tamils from genocide and now take the Responsibility to propose appropriate measures to protect Eelam Tamils from ongoing genocide.

To the European Union and Multilateral Donors

15. To stop being complicit in the ongoing genocide against Eelam Tamils and to suspend all aid and benefits such as the GSP+ granted to Sri Lanka.
16. Provide support and assistance to Tamil activists, Tamil human rights defenders, Tamil victims and Tamil survivors.
17. Do not provide trade concessions to Sri Lanka until the occupied land has been released and the human rights situation has significantly improved.

Association Internationale Contre les Disparitions forcées, Global Tamil Movement INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) Advocates for Peace and Human Rights CENTRE DE PROTECTION DE TAMIL EELAM, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.