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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**

Written statement* submitted by Association caritative étudiante pour la jeunesse, 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.

[23 August 2023]

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



Thirty-third Anniversary of Veeramunai Massacre Commemorated in Amparai, Sri Lanka, and All Around the World

Tamils gathered in Amparai this week to mark 33 years since at least 55 Tamils were killed by the Sri Lankan military and Muslim home guards, part of a series of killings that left hundreds dead in just weeks. Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP Thavarasa Kalaiarasan was amongst those gathered in Amparai, as mourners lit a flame of remembrance before a monument that had been constructed in memory of those killed.

The Veeramunai massacre saw 55 Tamils including men, women and children by Muslim home guards on 12 August 1990. The home guards forcibly entered the Sinthayaathirai Pillaiyaar Kovil and Ramakrishna Mission Tamil Vithiyaalayam, and attacked Tamils from the villages of Veeramunai, Malvaththu, Mallikaittheevu, Samaanthurai and Veerachcholai who had sought refuge there.

The massacre was the latest in a spate of killings in the Eastern district, which saw more than 200 people either killed or disappeared from Veeramunai and the adjacent villages as well as more than 2,000 homes destroyed.

The North-East Secretariat On Human Rights (NESOHR) detailed some of the atrocities that took place in the region at the time, as well as survivor testimony and the names of those killed.

Veeramunai is a village in the Amparai district. It is a traditional Tamil village. Sammanthurai is the adjacent Muslim village where the Muslim people who were chased away from the coastal areas by the Portuguese colonizers have settled. The Muslims and Tamils have historically lived side by side and together have built a prosperous and peaceful community.

On the 20.06.1990, Sri Lankan military rounded up the Veeramunai village and ordered the people to go to the Veeramunai Pillaiyar temple. Everyone who stayed at home without going to the temple was shot dead. Later on that day the military arrived at the temple in large numbers. There were more than 1000 people who had gone to the temple on orders from the military. The military selected every male over the age of 15 from the temple. 69 young men, all civilian youths, were arrested in front of their relatives. The arrested men were taken to the Sammanthurai Marjan School where they were tortured. 50 men died and their bodies were taken to the forest nearby and burnt.

The military again took several more people from the temple on 29.06.1990 and all of them have disappeared. Following these two incidents people displaced from the temple to the Karaithivu Mahavidhyalayam School.

On 03.07.1990, the military again rounded up this school and took 11 young men. They too have disappeared.

Again on 05.07.1990, the military took away a further 13 men. All of them were tortured and killed and their bodies were burnt with tires. People who went in search of those who were arrested were attacked by the military. Following this people displaced again to a refugee camp near Veeramunai.

On 10.07.1990, the military arrested another 15 young men from this Veeramunai refugee camp and took them to the military camp. There they were tortured and killed and their bodies were burnt.

On 16.07.1990, eight women who went from the refugee camp to check their homes were arrested at the Malwaththa checkpoint. They were gang raped by more than 30 SLA men and killed. Their bodies were burnt.

On 26.07.1990, the military again arrested 32 young men. 23 of them were school children. All of them have disappeared.

On 29.07.1990, eight school teachers who were travelling with their family were arrested. All of them have disappeared.

On 01.08.1990, 18 civilians who were passing through the Savalakkadai road were arrested by the military and the home guards operated by it. Among them were four women and a baby. They were all killed using sharp weapons and their bodies were put inside the Savalakkadai temple and burnt.

On 12.08.1990, Muslim groups that entered the Veeramunai refugee camp began attacking the people. Ten civilians were killed. Many more were injured. Among the dead are the temple manager Thambimuthu Sinnathurai and two babies. Those injured in the Muslim attack were taken to the Sammanthurai hospital where they were refused treatment. They were then taken to the Amparai hospital. The military came to the hospital and abducted three of the seven victims who were admitted to the hospital. The other four escaped back to Veeramunai.

In Veeramunai 600 houses were set alight. A further 1352 houses were set alight in the villages of Malwaththa, Mallihaithivu, Newtown, Kanapathypuram, Valaththapiddy, and Sammanthurai.

Between 20.06.1990 and 15.08.1990 more than 200 people were either killed or disappeared from Veeramunai and the adjacent villages. More [than] 2000 houses were burnt.

Some accounts of witnesses to these incidents follows.

A resident of Ganapathipuram, who was a witness said:

“When the army entered the limits of Malwaththa, the soldiers shot people at sight, while houses were looted and burnt. We, on hearing gunshot and seeing flames rising from burning homes, fled with our family to save the women and children. We reached the Veeramunai Temple on foot and found people from other villages had arrived at the Temple earlier. Subsequently, people from Amparai, Mallihaithivu and Sammanthurai Tamil division joined us.”

A resident from Veeramunai said:

“We found the soldiers were creating a climate of terror. People were picked up from their homes, the road and the paddy fields. To escape from possible arrest and death, we went to the Temple that was made a refugee camp. I am aware that persons in the employment of the government on their way to work were seized and killed and burnt at a place called Aandhi junction.”

The women went before the soldiers and asked them what they were trying to do. One of the officers said they were being taken for questioning and would be released after interrogation. The women pleaded with the soldiers stating that their children were never associated with any form of terrorism and that every one of those picked up by the army was an innocent youth. The soldiers ignored the tears of the women and started to leave the temple premises with the youths. We fell in front of the vehicles and worshiped the soldiers to leave our boys. The officer who led the raid spoke harshly to us wailing women that he would order his men to shoot every man and women who were obstructing the vehicle. The women fearing the worst retreated and the army carried away our children. A few returned later battered and bruised, following severe torture”.

A youth who escaped from sure death after arrest, made the following statement:

“I was one among those arrested on 20th June from the Veeramunai temple. The soldiers having picked up a number of young men, who were refugees at the Temple, took us to the Sammanthurai AI-Matjan Muslim School where we were beaten severely without any reason.

The testimony of Madasamy Kathirkamamoorthy:

“I was living in Veeramunai, a village in Amparai. On the way to get my mother, five hundred meters before her house – an army truck had stopped. No one was in uniform. They were all in civil, but they were carrying weapons. I was living in a small village, with about ten or fifteen families. When I saw this truck I immediately felt scared. I stopped my bike and went into a relative’s house. These armed men started hitting people – they spoke in Sinhala and told me to get into the truck. There were 9 of us that were hit and made to get onto the truck. Some of the nine had blood dripping down them.

Two of us were young, the rest were married men with children. When the wives came to stop them – they hit the wives and children that got in the way.

Recommendation

- a. Take immediate measures to demilitarize North and East Sri Lanka
- b. Endorse the Tamil genocide resolution of 2015 passed by the Northern Provincial Council in February 2015.
- c. Refer Sri Lanka to The ICC,
- d. Perpetrators of war crimes, crimes of Genocides and crimes against humanity must be investigated and brought to international justice process.
- e. Council Members to have a new Resolution under Agenda 4 to appoint a special Rapporteur to monitor and investigate ongoing human rights violations and repression against the Tamil people.
- f. To the 4th committee members of General Assembly: To recognize that Tamil Territories are not Governing by Tamils
- g. Conducting an internationally monitored Referendum.
- h. We call on the European Commission to stop being complicit in the Genocide against the Tamil people and to suspend all aid and benefits such as the Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) granted to Sri Lanka.
- i. OHCHR’s 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.

Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Vavuniya district, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Mannar district, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Trincomalee district, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Kilinochchi district, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Mullaitivu district, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Jaffna, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Batticaloa district, Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance Amaparai district, Alliance internationale contre le génocide, ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE CONTRE LE GENOCIDE DES TAMOULS, Alliance Internationale de Défense des Droits Humains, ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES JOURNALISTES, Association Internationale Contre les Disparitions forcées, GLOBAL TAMIL MOUVEMENT, Gouvernement en Exil du Tamil Eelam, INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.