

Tamils mark 04 February 2023 as 75 years of national oppression in Sri Lanka - Australian Tamil Congress

Sydney, New South Wales Feb 17, 2023 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - On 4 February 2023, Sri Lanka will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the country's independence from British rule. This independence celebration is taking place in the background of Sri Lanka being declared as a country in economic crisis with a lack of rule of law and no end in sight for the ongoing planned, concerted, and consistent national oppression of the Tamil nation by the majority Sinhala nation.

As far as the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and the Tamil Diaspora are concerned, 4 February 1948 was a day when a colonial ruler handed political power to the Sinhala majority without any credible safeguards to ensure real independence, security, equality or economic prosperity for the Tamil people, who after all had lived as a sovereign people in their traditional homeland in the North-East parts of the island prior to the advent of colonial rule in the 16th century.

As a result of this poor foresight, Tamil people in Sri Lanka were subject to, blatant discrimination in all aspects of life, denial of parliamentary, constitutional, judicial, and non-violent avenues to seek justice, numerous state-orchestrated pogroms resulting in the killing of thousands of innocent Tamils and destruction of their properties and businesses. Peaceful protests by the Tamils were crushed brutally by the Sinhala security forces carrying out extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, extended detention, and torture including rape of women and disappearance, all leading to an armed conflict.

During the armed conflict from 1983 to 2009, brutal military offensives, war crimes, and crimes against humanity were committed by the State with the structural genocide against the Tamil nation continuing unabated. UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolutions condemned these gross human rights violations as serious violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity.

14 years after the end of the war in May 2009, Tamil areas on the North-East lands remain under heavy military occupation, Tamil activists continue to be targeted, Tamil economic life continues to be strangled and the attempts to colonise Tamils lands are ongoing with no political settlement to the Tamil national question in sight and no perpetrators tried for the well-documented war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Sri Lanka's refusal to comply with the past UNHRC resolutions on war crimes and crimes against humanity and its reluctance to implement genuine power-sharing arrangements with the Tamil people is appalling. In addition, Sri Lanka is still maintaining around 330,000 strong military personnel and associated security apparatus, drawing around 10% of the state budget (greater than the expenditure allocated to health or education), to primarily suppress Tamil people and lately against peaceful citizens in the south seeking to change the political system and demanding food, fuel, and essential supplies.

On 4 February, Tamils in Sri Lanka and around the globe will gather in mass, protesting against the celebration of Independence Day, marking it as a "Black Day for Tamils".

The Australian Tamil Congress calls on the Australian Government and the international community at large to stand by the Tamil people in their quest for freedom and peace with justice. *Justice delayed is justice denied.*

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