



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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 ABC Tamil Oli, 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 May 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



## **Achieving Equality and The Empowerment Of Tamil Women Under Military Occupation**

It has been 13 years since the end of the genocide war in Sri Lanka but justice is still not done for the Eelam Tamils who were brutally killed and disappeared en masse in the north and east part of Sri Lanka. Tamil Elderly mothers, Tamil mothers of children, Tamil young children and vulnerable women are facing various unspeakable sufferings. They face day to day interrogations and detentions by the government intelligence officers.

Numerous studies have shown that war-torn countries around the world often find that after the end of the war drug use is implicitly imposed on the community, forcing young people to become addicted to drugs without allowing them to think positively. Such activities are being carried out in the North East with the support of the Government of Sri Lanka.

“As a result, 88,000 female-headed households in the Tamil homeland have been severely affected,” said Vasuki, a social worker. Before the war, women who were somehow dependent on men were forced to lose their working fathers, husbands and brothers. On the other hand, women with disabilities without a male partner are left to seek help even for basic necessities without any government assistance. Women led joint families are forced into a continuing dilemma of working beyond their means for basic needs such as education and food in an environment where they are enduring all this and focusing on a good life for their descendants.

Drugs are being smuggled in indirectly by the Sri Lankan government among university students and youth. The military and police are heavily involved in drug trafficking. The women who take care of all the work for the family have no time to save their children from drug addictions, no money, no security and no help at all. That is why female-led families in the North East are living in almost absolute poverty. They have been living in a state of struggle since the war.

Data shows that more and more men living in a housing scheme in the village of Navarkuli in Jaffna are addicted to drugs. Coping with the affected men and their families is a huge challenge for women.

There was a young female-led family at the very poverty line affected by the war. The woman's husband is a drug addict who is always at the police station because of his addiction. He was addicted to heroin and had no money to buy the drugs.

He tied his two children with rope and dropped them in a well in order to get money for his wife to buy drugs. He didn't know what he was doing because of extreme intoxication. In another situation, a young man who lived on his elderly mother's pension (which was their only income) drank acid instead of alcohol. This was because he was so overly addicted - he didn't have enough money at the time - that he wanted to take an alternative, drinking acid, in spite of it being highly dangerous. Sadly, he soon died. Women have no choice whether to work for basic needs or help their men to overcome their drug addiction or to bail them out of the police station. They have no choice but to live with extreme depression of being forced to beg for their daily expenses. Women are yet despite trying to reform their family men in the area, the men are still unable to get out of that addiction without any government and not much assistance. There are only a few rehabilitation centres in the North-East.

A boy who has been using drugs since the age of nine is now 12 and has been completely addicted to using it continuously for three years. He was chained together to avoid escaping and prevent from committing suicide in a female-led rehabilitation centre. The boy escaped and went back to where he got the drugs. The woman who manages the charity finds it difficult to rehabilitate hundreds of youngsters like that boy without proper help and support.

Women in leadership positions like her face the great challenge of continuing their service without any financial assistance as the government does not regard Tamils as its own nationals. A member of the Jaffna Nallur Municipal Council, a teacher and a leader of the women wing of a political party, a social worker, said that only with sufficient financial resources would it be possible to rescue the young generation trapped in such a planned cultural genocide and rehabilitate the drug-addicted community.

It is noteworthy here that the government, which has set up drug control centres and special administrators for them in areas where the majority sinhala population lives and has not made any arrangements in the Tamil homeland, as drug supply and its usage are very high in north and east part of country overall, despite that fact, Tamil families in the North East do not want to send their family members to Sinhala areas to rehabilitate them due to racism.

The charity organisations are only able to provide limited care without adequate care facilities, safety equipment and technical facilities for the affected families and treatment for drug-addicted children and adolescents. So women who work in public office and NGO's like Vasuki could do more to the society if they get substantial financial help.

Recently, the Governor of the Northern Province, Jeevan Thiyakarajah, made a highly reprehensible remark about the female-headed families living in the suburbs of Jaffna peninsula. He said that women are engaging in illegal activities to overcome from poverty of their family. There was huge backlash in the northern medias over his comment. The tragedies caused by the war and the recent corona epidemic have completely devastated the lives of many women, widows and women-led families who are economically and educationally behind for their livelihoods, in the war torn Northeast. Sharing such opinions in the media by a senior government official who does not take any actions to solve these kind of problems will fuel further harassment on women. This is just an example of how the Sri Lankan government treats Tamils as lower class citizens.

The courage and determination of the women who are protesting every day demanding justice and release of kidnapped their parents, children should be spoken of here. Many women have lost their lives while struggling to find their loved ones amidst threats from Sri Lankan intelligent officers. Their fight against the Sri Lankan government and the paramilitary's enforced disappearances continue without any financial support from anyone to manage their family lives and the fight for justice. Women are at the forefront of fight against enforced disappearances in eight districts in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. In the midst of the intervention of the military, police and military intelligence officers to bring justice to themselves and their community by standing for them. In the North and East, there are very few public voluntary organisations to help such people. Therefore, research should be done to identify those who are economically struggling and to help them directly by providing them with permanent income earning career opportunities to strengthen their morals.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the government decided to make all studies virtual. Not every family had a device or even internet connection or could not afford to buy the devices. This meant that not all children received an equal education. Because of this some students are behind in studies after and during the pandemic. Unfortunately, most of the inadequate studies were in places where people are in poverty. The government did not take any action despite knowing about the situation. Even if there are enough technical equipment, there are also voluntary teachers who want to step forward to come to teach the students through online learning in rural areas. Any seminars or educational courses such as life skills and women empowerment are only available in the cities. If we are able to bring the learning and education into rural areas like villages small towns, we can empower many girls and women who are thought not to be significant in society.

We call upon the UNHRC members, other affiliated UN agencies and member of states to:

- a. Recognize the genocide resolution passed unanimously in the Northern Provincial Council of Sri Lanka on 10th February in 2015.
- b. Direct appropriate measures at the International Criminal Court outlining that the affected Tamil Nation have no faith in any domestic commission or inquiry.
- c. 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 Nation.
- d. conducting an internationally monitored Referendum.

To the 4th committee members of General Assembly

- To recognize that Tamil Territories are not Governing by Tamils

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Centre Bishop Rayappu Joseph pour la Justice et la paix, Gouvernement en Exil du Tamil Eelam, Association des Journalistes en Exil, GLOBAL TAMIL MOUVEMENT, Association Internationale Contre les Disparitions forcées, Association des Droits de l'Homme de Nevers, ASSOCIATION DES ANONYMES ET PERSÉCUTES DU GÉNOCIDE TAMOULE, NIÈVRE ACTION DROIT DE L'HOMME, AGARAM TRANSLATION SERVICES (AGARAM TS), AGARAM, Alliance internationale pour la liberté de Tamil Eelam, International Alliance Against Genocide, Alliance internationale contre le génocide, TAMIL RIGHTS ACTION FORUM, Association Free Tamil Eelam, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.