



Justice for the Trinco 5 remains elusive

(Washington, D.C.; January 2, 2019) — Today, PEARL remembers the five Tamil students who were murdered by the Sri Lankan security forces [13 years ago](#) and urges the international community to ensure justice for massacres and hate crimes against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

On the 2nd of January, 2006, Sri Lanka's Special Task Force killed five Tamil students who had met on the beach in Trincomalee. The victims were all 20 years of age at the time of the killings:

Manoharan Ragihar (22.09.1985)

Yogarajah Hemachchandra (04.03.1985)

Logitharajah Rohan (07.04.1985)

Thangathurai Sivanantha (06.04.1985)

Shanmugarajah Gajendran (16.09.1985)

In one of the most emblematic cases in the long list of state massacres in Sri Lanka, the security forces brazenly killed the students in public by shooting them while they were on the ground. Today, 13 years to the date, the crime remains unpunished. Despite a commission of inquiry and two police investigations, the perpetrators are yet to be held accountable. The OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka determined “there are reasonable grounds to believe that security force personnel, including STF personnel, killed the five students”.

Internationally, the Trinco 5 massacre became one of the most well-known atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan state. Governments and NGOs continue to pressure Sri Lanka to act. In response to then-US [Ambassador Atul Keshap's tweet](#) marking the anniversary in 2018, Sri Lanka revealed that the case was progressing. However, one year on, no charges have been filed. Sri Lanka remains unwilling to arrest and prosecute perpetrators of the Trinco 5 massacre, despite witnesses, evidence and international attention. Much goodwill would be gained internationally and domestically if it prosecuted those responsible to the highest level.

We call on the countries that were willing to take punitive measures over the political crisis at the end of 2018 to apply the same pressure to push for justice for the many crimes committed. The US and the EU in particular, with the MCC compact and GSP+ respectively, have levers to apply pressure on Sri Lanka. Those responsible for crimes such as the Trinco 5 massacre and the atrocities of Mullivaikkal, the tenth anniversary of which is approaching this year, must be held accountable. The time for progress towards accountability is not unlimited, as hope for justice amongst the victim-survivor community has all but disappeared. Without justice and accountability, the difficult path to reconciliation and a sustainable peace will be an impossible one to tread.