



## **PEARL amplifies demands from the North-East; reiterates need for justice & accountability ahead of UNHRC46**

**Washington D.C.; February 15, 2021** – Last week the largest Tamil protest since the end of the armed conflict erupted across the North-East. The Pottuvil to Polikandy (P2P) march started on Sri Lanka’s independence day and marched through all 8 districts of the Tamil homeland, drawing together thousands of Tamils and Muslims. Their [demands](#) emphasized the need to protect the rights of Tamil and Muslim peoples on the island, in the face of Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism. Protestors called for an end to militarization and Sinhalization of the Tamil homeland and justice for Sri Lanka’s genocide against Tamils. PEARL stands in solidarity with the protesters and condemns the Sri Lankan state’s attempts to obstruct and suppress these peaceful marches.

The march echoes the need for decisive international action, which the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) called for in their recent [report](#) on Sri Lanka. The OHCHR report warns that Sri Lanka is proceeding on a trajectory that “carries the seeds of future violence and conflict.” PEARL welcomes the OHCHR reporting and recommendations, especially those which relate to the prosecution of alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

In light of the UN Human Rights Council session commencing next week, PEARL reiterates our requests to member states on the Council, which include:

- **Establish an independent evidence-gathering mechanism** to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyze evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Sri Lanka between 21 February 2002 until 15 November 2011. PEARL calls for the preparation of files to facilitate fair and independent criminal proceedings, in accordance with international law standards, in national, regional or international courts or tribunals that have or may in the future have jurisdiction over these crimes. This mechanism should build from prior investigations, such as the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka, to create dossiers on alleged perpetrators to advance criminal accountability.
- **Establish an international mechanism for accountability** in recognition of the fact that the Sri Lankan state is unwilling to prosecute atrocities that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide and the fact that the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established to help end impunity for such crimes where the State is unwilling or unable to carry out prosecutions. All paths to accountability should be explored, including a UN Security Council referral to the ICC, and action at the International Court of Justice.
- **Appoint a Special Rapporteur** to investigate and report on human rights in Sri Lanka, progress on accountability and the Government’s compliance with its obligations under international law.

PEARL calls on the international community to recognize the urgency of the P2P demands – as evidenced by the OHCHR report – and take a firm and principled stance for justice and accountability in Sri Lanka.