



PEOPLE FOR EQUALITY AND RELIEF IN LANKA

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Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day – Still No Justice, Still No Accountability

Washington, D.C.; May 18, 2025 – Today marks the 16th anniversary of the Mullivaikkal Genocide, commemorated annually as Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day. Around the world this week, Eelam Tamils will make and serve *kanji*, a thin watery rice porridge, in honor of the Tamils in Mullivaikkal who were trapped, denied food and medicine, and were forced to survive on this meal. On this day, PEARL stands with the victims and survivors of the Sri Lankan government's genocide against the Tamil people.

In September 2024, PEARL released its landmark legal briefing, *Justice for Genocide: Sri Lanka's Responsibility for Genocide against the Tamil People in 2009*, showing that the Sri Lankan government's military campaign in the Vanni, which ended on May 18, 2009, amounted to genocide. The campaign included the blockade of food and medicine, corralling civilians into so-called "No Fire Zones" which were then bombed, and targeting essential civilian infrastructure like hospitals and food distribution centers. Credible sources indicate that between 70,000 and 169,796 Tamils remain unaccounted for and are presumed dead. As acknowledged by the United Nations' own *Internal Review Panel* (Petrie Report), the international community and the UN system failed to protect the Tamil population during this period. The Sri Lankan state's tactics have gone unpunished and have since been repeated in other parts of the world, such as in Gaza, which is currently facing a blockade of food and aid, and mass civilian targeting amounting to genocide.

Today, the Sri Lankan government remains committed to denying their actions. Sri Lanka remains mired in ethnic repression, without accountability for its mass atrocity crimes. The current government, like its predecessors, rejects international accountability and clings to discredited domestic mechanisms like the Office on Missing Persons, which are rejected by victim communities like the Tamil families of the disappeared. The government continues Sri Lanka's state policy to disempower Tamils through heavy militarization, land-grab gazettes and further Sinhalization of the Tamil homeland in the North-East, all while claiming to prioritize "reconciliation". The root cause of the conflict remains Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism, which the JVP/NPP government continues to uphold through its unwavering commitment to the unitary state and its outright rejection of any meaningful constitutional reform that would recognize Tamil demands.

Today, PEARL renews its commitment to ensuring meaningful justice and accountability for Sri Lanka's war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide of the Tamils. Holding Sri Lankan perpetrators and the state accountable can help establish a global precedent for justice. We urge the international community to prioritize international justice and accountability options, including at the UN Human Rights Council, and to use all available mechanisms, such as universal jurisdiction, the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and to formally recognize the Tamil genocide. However, accountability must be accompanied by structural political change. Without a political solution that is acceptable to the Eelam Tamil people and addresses the root causes of the conflict, the cycle of impunity and repression will persist.