

People for Equality and Relief in Lanka

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION

To advocate for justice and self-determination for the Tamil people in the North-East of Sri Lanka.

OUR VISION

A Tamil nation that is inclusive, free from oppression, and able to determine its own future.

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In 2025, PEARL celebrated its twentieth anniversary. This is an impressive achievement for an organization that is primarily powered by volunteers. It is a testament to the commitment and resilience of all PEARL's people over the past two decades. I would like to take a moment to thank all of them, or all of you, for your work and support. PEARL's work has been crucial in keeping Tamil demands for justice and self-determination on the international agenda. This work could not have happened without the many hours of work and many forms of support that PEARL's volunteers and supporters have contributed over the years.

To mark this important anniversary, PEARL volunteers past and present, from the homeland and from the diaspora, met for a reunion in Kilinochchi. It was a powerful and motivating experience. We were able to reflect on the past two decades of work and strengthen our connections. We were also able to get a grounded sense of the importance of PEARL's ongoing advocacy, research, and legal work.

PEARL's advocacy and legal work continued apace in 2025. The advocacy team maintained a regular series of meetings and was able to address emerging issues – such as the harassment of journalists and the visit of the UN Human Rights Commissioner – in a timely manner. The legal team also advanced work on international accountability, through the Convention Against Torture, the ICC, and universal jurisdiction. This work takes time and patience and is only possible because of PEARL's long-standing and committed supporters.

Finally, in 2025, PEARL also launched a fundraising campaign to power our ongoing work in the coming years. The highlight was the PEARL *Unplugged* event, an evening of music from talented performers and discussion about PEARL's work. This campaign will continue over the coming months with more events and fundraising appeals to broaden our base of supporters.

Everyone who has worked with PEARL can look back with immense pride at the value and impact of the work. We can also look forward with confidence that PEARL will continue to grow and develop, to take forward its still vital mission of justice and accountability in a now changing and unpredictable world.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Madura Rasaratnam

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER



It is an incredible achievement to be celebrating 20 years of PEARL. 20 years of challenging Sri Lankan government narratives. 20 years of advancing Tamil rights. 20 years of strengthening Tamil voices in international fora, from country capitals to UN corridors to Eelam and back again.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to mark our 20th anniversary in Kilinochchi, which is where the seeds of PEARL were sown. It was a beautiful experience to come together as current and former PEARL members, with local partners and human rights defenders, and visit key sites in our homeland together. It was simultaneously heavy and uplifting to visit sites of mourning and share our reflections and perspectives together, and to solidify the foundation for our work in the place PEARL was rooted.

In 2004, myself and other young Tamil Americans spent time volunteering in Kilinochchi, witnessing firsthand the impacts of generations of conflict. We saw the schools and villages destroyed in government shelling, families separated, and development stymied. We returned to the U.S. committed to helping our community back home, and initially thought we would help rebuild the schools and hospitals we saw. When the December 2004 tsunami struck, however, and funds poured into the island from foreign countries and international institutions, and when these funds were diverted away from Tamil areas and towards Sinhala areas—many of which were not affected by the tsunami—it was clear that Sri Lanka's problems were political, not humanitarian. They required a political solution.

And so, PEARL was born.

PEARL learned from our parents, aunties, and uncles who had carried the Tamil struggle with them from Eelam to America. We walked the halls of Congress together, advocating for Tamil rights and for human rights-related restrictions on U.S. aid to Sri Lanka. We worked with non-Tamil advocacy organizations, to strengthen our strategies and refine our work. And we built a new generation of Tamil advocates committed to the Tamil cause. Our work has come a long way since PEARL's early days, when we would cram into my apartment in Washington, D.C. after an advocacy day on Capitol Hill, reflecting on our work and our path forward.

As we celebrate PEARL's 20th anniversary, it's incredible to witness PEARL's growth and professionalization. The amount of work we accomplish with just one full-time staff member remains astonishing. Our work has always been volunteer-driven and community-supported, and I want to thank each of you – our past and current staff, volunteers, donors, and supporters for making PEARL's work possible. We could not do it without you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tasha Manoranjan

2025: PEARL AT A GLANCE

WE ADVOCATED FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN:

- 20** Meetings with foreign service officials and key Congressional staff from the US
- 10** Meetings with foreign service officials and members of political parties from Canada
- 7** Meetings with foreign service officials and members of political parties from the UK
- 3** Meetings with foreign service officials from Switzerland
- 12** Meetings with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and diplomatic missions at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva
- 3** Meetings with Tamil policymakers in Sri Lanka

WE CONTRIBUTED TO:

- [H.Res.41](#) – Expressing support for the designation of the month of January as "Tamil Language and Heritage Month" – press release [here](#)
- Supporting the Tamil Families of the Disappeared at the inaugural World Congress on Enforced Disappearances (WCED) held in Geneva
- Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada on their UNHRC Item 2 Statement
- The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland's resolution calling for an international investigation into the Tamil genocide

WE MADE AN ORAL STATEMENT AT:

- The 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council as an ECOSOC-accredited organization – watch [here](#)



Advocacy Officer Hanishha Soosai delivering PEARL's statement at the 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

2025: PEARL AT A GLANCE

WE PUBLISHED:

- 5** Statements in response to: UK Sanctions (read [here](#)), Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day (read [here](#)), Black July (read [here](#)), UNHRC 60th Session (read [here](#)), Tamil Women's Day (read [here](#)), Maaveerar Naal (read [here](#))
- 2** Reports:
 - [Holding Sri Lanka Responsible for Torture Under the Convention Against Torture](#)
 - [State-sponsored Sinhalization in the North-East: The Anti-Development Machine](#)
- 50** News alerts with up to 800 readers a week, readership up from 8.7% since last year

WE WERE PUBLISHED/FEATURED IN:

- "Unfounded Faith in Sri Lanka's Government Risks Extending Impunity" – *Just Security*
- "From Visionary to Bystander: How ITAK has forgotten its historic roots" – *Tamil Guardian*
- "Die Straflosigkeit muss ein Ende finden" – *Woz die Wochenzeitung*
- Quoted in "Tamilische Diaspora kämpft für Gerechtigkeit" – *das Lamm*
- Featured in Tamil-language newspaper *Virakesari* on
 - [PEARL's UNHRC60 oral statement](#)
 - [Chemmani mass graves](#)
 - [PEARL's condemnation of the international community's failure to establish an international judicial mechanism](#)



A PEARL exhibition held in South Africa, organized by Advocacy Officers Krishika and Shravika Sureswaran and Jivithira Ratnam.

2025: PEARL AT A GLANCE

IN THE US, WE SPOKE AT:

- SWANA Region Radio show on Tamil Genocide Commemoration
- Closed briefing with Atlantic Council's Strategic Litigation Project, and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP
- Ilankai Tamil Sangam's Annual General Meeting

IN THE UK, WE SPOKE AT:

- 1 Mehdi Hasan's Head-to-Head session (hosted by Al Jazeera) titled "Who is to blame for Sri Lanka's crises", questioning former President Ranil Wickremesinghe
- 2 Mullivaikkal events alongside UK policymakers
- 2 Events with student societies/youth organizations (Phoenix TNG, UK universities collaborative event)

WE ORGANIZED:

- An exhibition on PEARL's work in South Africa, showcasing PEARL's work
- PEARL's 20th anniversary trip to Kilinochchi, bringing together current and former members, along with their families
- PEARL *Unplugged* – 20th anniversary edition

IN EUROPE, WE SPOKE AT:

- 2 Workshops in Switzerland with student societies/youth organizations (TaVS, Phoenix)
- 1 Presentation on justice, accountability, and the current human rights situation in Sri Lanka for the Swiss Social Democratic Party in Zurich
- 1 Panel event in Paris organized by Em Inam, Sorbonne pour l'Organisation des Nations Unies (SONU)

IN CANADA, WE SPOKE AT:

- 2 Community events about PEARL's work (TAPS, Thesiyam)
- 1 Virtual webinar with the Centre for India and South Asia Research at the University of British Columbia
- 2 Maaveerar Naal-themed workshops with student societies (UTSC TSU, CUTAM)
- 2 Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day-themed workshops with student societies (UTSC TSU, Tamil Canadian Center for Civic Action)

IN COLOMBO, WE SPOKE AT:

- 1 Workshop on land grabs hosted by the Swiss Embassy

20 YEARS OF PEARL

20TH ANNIVERSARY IN KILINOCCHI

In July 2025, PEARL marked the beginning of its 20th anniversary commemorations with a deeply meaningful visit to Kilinochchi in the Tamil homeland, bringing together current and former members of the organization, along with their families. The trip was both reflective and energizing, providing a rare opportunity for the PEARL collective to strengthen relationships across generations of members and reaffirm our shared commitment to justice, accountability, and Tamil self-determination.

20 YEARS OF PEARL

20TH ANNIVERSARY IN KILINOCHCHI

During the visit, participants travelled to sites of profound historical and political significance to the Tamil struggle, including Mullivaikkal, where we paid tribute to the victims of the Tamil genocide. Members also spent time with long-standing contacts on the ground, reinforcing relationships built over years of advocacy. Engagements with farming and fishing communities offered crucial insights into everyday realities in the North-East, including ongoing land grabs and economic marginalization. These encounters affirmed both the urgency of PEARL's work and the enduring resilience of the Tamil people.



Group visit to Kanagapuram Thuyilam Illam in Kilinochchi.

20 YEARS OF PEARL

PEARL UNPLUGGED: MUSIC, MAKKAL, AND MOVEMENT-MAKING EVENT

In October, over 70 people joined PEARL to celebrate our 20th anniversary and learn about our work and impact while enjoying an evening of performances by Toronto-based Tamil musicians and singers. All proceeds have been used to fund our work.

This was our second PEARL *Unplugged* event and we are excited to continue movement-building through events like this in 2026.



Advocacy Officer Ambihai Akilan delivering a speech on PEARL's work.



Performance by PEARL Volunteer and organizer of PEARL *Unplugged*, Sarika Navanathan.



PEARL *Unplugged* performers: Yathavan Ravichandran, Suren Thavabalasingam, Anusan Balachandran, Thibisan Balachandran, Sathyadev Ravichandradeva, Magisha Baheerathan, Sarika Navanathan (organizer), Dharrini Santhabavan, and Sofia Rahul.



PEARL team and PEARL *Unplugged* volunteers.

20 YEARS OF PEARL

20 FOR 20 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

To mark PEARL's 20th anniversary, we launched the "20 for 20" social media campaign, encouraging supporters to become monthly donors by giving \$20 a month in solidarity with our work. The campaign was amplified through dedicated posts and a "20 Achievements in 20 Years" Instagram-stories series, which highlighted PEARL's impact over two decades and helped drive sustained donor support.

THE STORY OF PEARL

PEARL created a short video about our evolution, from our founding in 2005 to our 20th anniversary in 2025. We showed it at PEARL Unplugged to increase awareness about our work among Tamil Canadians.

The Story of PEARL is an evergreen video that we will continue sharing and using in 2026 and beyond. ([English](#) and [Tamil](#) version available on Youtube).

20 GREATEST HITS OVER 20 YEARS BOOKLET

We published a booklet recounting PEARL's [20 Greatest Hits Over 20 Years](#) in advancing Tamil perspectives and priorities. It shares 20 of our key achievements in:

- Campaigning for sustainable peace during the final years of the war;
- Increasing our advocacy capacity and influence in several countries and the UN;
- Researching and reporting on [Sinhализation](#);
- Advancing Tamil perspectives in the media and legal blogs;
- Proving [genocide](#) and pushing for genocide recognition;
- Researching and reporting on domestic impunity, including for the [Kumarapuram massacre](#) and [conflict-related sexual violence](#);
- Holding the Sri Lankan state responsible for [torture](#); and
- Supporting universal jurisdiction and sanctions efforts concerning alleged perpetrators.

The booklet also profiles some of our founding, former, and current staff and volunteers.

OUR WORK

In 2025, PEARL advanced justice, accountability, and the right to self-determination for Eelam Tamils through sustained international advocacy and close engagement with Tamil communities. We consistently challenged the Sri Lankan government's narrative of "reconciliation," exposing how it obscures entrenched impunity while human rights violations against Tamils continue.

PEARL's focus this year continued to be on the lack of justice and accountability for Sri Lanka's war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against Eelam Tamils. In addition, PEARL also exposed the state's Sinhalization attempts in the North-East, carried out under the guise of development, archaeology, and security, alongside the continued use and rebranding of draconian legislation such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Through targeted interventions, especially around cases of military brutality and the harassment of Tamil journalists and human rights defenders, such as Kumanan Kanapathippillai, PEARL ensured these abuses remained firmly on the international agenda.

PEARL engaged extensively with policymakers and diplomatic missions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Europe, and at the UN. This included high-level meetings with foreign ministries, embassies, and legislators; briefings ahead of UNHRC sessions; and coordination with international and Tamil civil society partners. We also continued to invest our efforts into public education and diaspora engagement. Through these efforts, PEARL reinforced the urgent need for international accountability mechanisms and meaningful political solutions rooted in Tamil self-determination.



PEARL workshop with CUTAM hosted by Advocacy Officer Jivithira Ratnam.

ADVOCACY

UNITED STATES

In 2025, PEARL engaged with the U.S. State Department and members of Congress to ensure sustained attention to ongoing human rights violations against Eelam Tamils. PEARL held multiple high-level meetings with State Department officials, briefing them on developments on the ground and pushing for stronger international accountability measures.

PEARL also raised urgent cases of concern with U.S. officials, including the harassment of Tamil journalist Kumanan Kanapathippillai by Sri Lanka's Counter Terrorism and Investigation Division (CTID), as well as ongoing military brutality in the North-East, highlighted by the death of Ethirmanasingham Kapilraj. PEARL also appeared on the SWANA Region Radio show in Southern California as part of a Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day segment, where we discussed PEARL's advocacy for justice and accountability, ongoing land grabs and militarization, entrenched impunity for mass atrocities, and Tamil demands for genocide recognition, ICC referral, and a political solution rooted in self-determination.

PEARL also presented at the Ilankai Tamil Sangam's Annual General Meeting on our current work and future plans.

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This past year, both the U.S. and the broader human rights landscape have changed significantly, but PEARL has continued to persevere, adapting where necessary and engaging wherever possible, to ensure that Eelam Tamil demands for justice, accountability, and self-determination remain firmly on the international agenda.

Ahrabi Rajkumar
Advocacy Director



UNITED KINGDOM

PEARL continued its regular and sustained engagement with policymakers in the United Kingdom, including multiple meetings with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), ensuring UK officials remained informed of Tamil demands and current developments in the North-East. We also engaged as part of the UK Civil Society Atrocity Prevention Working Group, highlighting Sri Lanka as a case study of how impunity thrives in the absence of justice and exploring policy solutions to prevent mass atrocities. PEARL continued its advocacy through parliamentary engagement and public commemorations, advancing justice and accountability for Eelam Tamils.

PEARL's advocacy has contributed to concrete international action. In March 2025, the UK sanctioned four individuals responsible for serious human rights abuses during the Sri Lankan war, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and sexual violence. These sanctions, covering senior military figures and paramilitary leaders, represent a step toward dismantling impunity and affirming Tamil victims' demands for justice. PEARL continues to press for sustained international accountability to ensure the Sri Lankan state faces meaningful consequences for its war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Eelam Tamil people.

PEARL participated in a parliamentary commemoration of Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day alongside Members of Parliament and other Tamil groups, and spoke about accountability and the need for international mechanisms, as well as genocide recognition and referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC). PEARL also gave a public address at Trafalgar Square in Central London on Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day, calling on the UK government to reject Sri Lanka's false narratives of "reconciliation" and support a long-term political solution rooted in Tamil self-determination.



Advocacy Officer Shivaahnee Raveenthiran delivering a speech in parliament for Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day.



Advocacy Director Ahrabi Rajkumar delivering a speech at Trafalgar Square for Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day.

UNITED KINGDOM

PEARL's Executive Director, Dr. Madura Rasaratnam, also appeared as an expert panelist on Al Jazeera's *Head to Head with Mehdi Hasan* to question former President Ranil Wickremesinghe. Dr. Rasaratnam drew parallels between Mullivaikkal and Gaza, highlighting systemic crimes committed against Tamils, and referencing PEARL's legal briefing, *Justice for Genocide: Sri Lanka's Responsibility for Genocide against the Tamil People in 2009*. Widely shared on social media, the discussion reinforced how Sri Lanka's playbook for genocide is now being used to commit other genocides due to Sri Lanka's impunity, as well as the ongoing relevance of PEARL's advocacy. Dr. Rasaratnam also spoke at a panel event on Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day hosted by Phoenix TNG, following a screening of the *No Fire Zone* documentary, reflecting on the devastation of May 2009 and the resilience of the Tamil struggle. PEARL also participated in a joint Maaveerar Naal event hosted by Tamil Students' Initiative (TSI) and UK universities, including King's College London, LSE, and Queen Mary's University.



(Top and bottom) Dr. Madura Rasaratnam as a panelist on *Head to Head with Mehdi Hasan*.



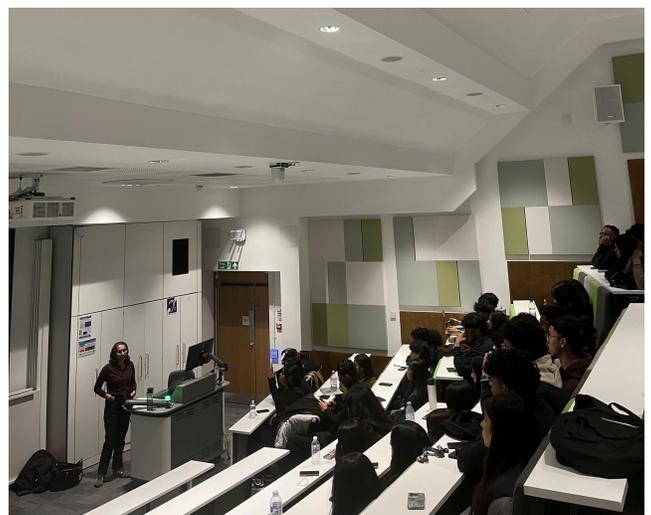
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This year underscored how essential community engagement is to PEARL's work. By continuing to engage with students and emerging organisers, we are strengthening our work, building momentum, and ensuring that Tamil demands for justice, accountability, and self-determination is collective and has long-term vision.

Shivaahnee Raveenthiran
Advocacy Officer



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Dr. Madura Rasaratnam speaking at a joint Maaveerar Naal event hosted by TSI and UK universities.

CANADA

PEARL met with Global Affairs Canada and Members of Parliament throughout 2025, helping to keep Eelam Tamil demands firmly on Canada's foreign policy agenda. PEARL advocated on specific cases, including the Sri Lankan CID's targeting of Tamil journalist Kumanan Kanapathippilai and broader patterns of military brutality in the North-East, as well as initial conversations related to PEARL's work around the Convention Against Torture. PEARL also advocated for Canada's support for a stronger resolution on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council and the inclusion of an international accountability mechanism.

PEARL engaged extensively with the Tamil diaspora, academic institutions, and youth communities to raise awareness about the Tamil genocide, ongoing human rights violations in Sri Lanka, and the importance of justice and accountability. In Toronto, PEARL participated in the Tamils in Public Service (TiPS) Tamil New Year event, hosting a booth to share its advocacy work, connect with the community, and strengthen ties with diaspora members. PEARL also partnered with academic institutions, delivering webinars and workshops such as "The Tamil Question in Post-Crisis Sri Lanka" with the University of British Columbia and genocide education sessions at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Tamil Student Union (UTSC) and the Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action, emphasizing the importance of documentation and advocacy in pursuit of accountability.

“Speaking with the students gave us the chance to comprehensively break down existing barriers to justice, accountability, and self-determination and demonstrate the value that PEARL adds in its mission of empowering the Eelam Tamil narrative at the highest policy and decision-making levels.

Ambihai Akilan
Advocacy Officer



PEARL workshop with UoT Scarborough Tamil Students' Union hosted by Advocacy Officer Ambihai Akilan.



PEARL booth at TiPS Tamil New Year event, managed by former Executive Director and volunteer Archana Ravichandradeva.

CANADA

PEARL facilitated community screenings and discussions, including a No Fire Zone session in partnership with the University of Toronto Students' Union as part of the "Xpression Against Oppression" campaign. PEARL led interactive discussions with Black, Palestinian, and Tamil students on themes of liberation, state-sponsored oppression, and cross-movement solidarity, helping break down barriers to justice and self-determination and highlighting PEARL's role in elevating the Eelam Tamil narrative in policy and advocacy spaces.

PEARL also hosted a Maaveerar Naal remembrance at Concordia University with Concordia University Tamil Mantram (CUTAM). This event educated students on the root causes of the armed conflict and ongoing repression of Tamil communities, while reinforcing the importance of remembrance and resistance.

In 2025, PEARL expanded its advocacy capacity by supporting two Advocacy Officers through the Canada Summer Jobs scheme. This support enabled PEARL to strengthen its research and policy engagement work, while also providing meaningful employment and professional development opportunities for young people committed to human rights and social justice.



PEARL workshop with CUTAM hosted by Advocacy Officer Jivithira Ratnam.



PEARL workshop with UTSC hosted by Advocacy Officer Jivithira Ratnam.

“Collaborating on student-led commemorative events helped participants better understand the root causes of the injustices faced by Tamils in Sri Lanka, while also providing a safe space to share experiences related to the Tamil struggle and emphasize the importance of empowering the Tamil narrative on the international political stage.

Jivithira Ratnam
Advocacy Officer



UNITED NATIONS

Engagement with the United Nations remained a core pillar of PEARL's advocacy in 2025. PEARL engaged with the UN Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to challenge the retreat from international accountability in favor of discredited domestic mechanisms. We engaged with the OHCHR Sri Lanka Accountability Project (OSLap) and amplified the voices of Tamil victims, Tamil families of the disappeared, and civil society actors calling for independent international investigations, while highlighting Sri Lanka's continued non-cooperation with UN mechanisms and intimidation of victims' families and human rights defenders.

During the visit of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, PEARL advocated for meaningful engagement with Tamil victim communities and urged visits to symbolic and historic sites, such as Mullivaikkal and the Chemmani mass graves.

PEARL continued its international advocacy by participating in key global forums focused on accountability and enforced disappearances. PEARL attended the inaugural World Congress on Enforced Disappearances in Geneva, supporting Tamil Families of the Disappeared through direct assistance and interpretation services to ensure their testimonies were heard by the international community.

PEARL also took part in the 58th and 60th sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, where we engaged with state missions, international organizations, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to raise ongoing concerns affecting Eelam Tamils, including post-election developments, the ongoing need for justice and accountability, and the continued inclusion of Sri Lanka on the Council's agenda. PEARL also stressed the need to strengthen existing resolutions. At the 60th session, PEARL delivered an oral statement emphasizing that only international accountability can break Sri Lanka's entrenched cycle of impunity, reiterating that Sri Lanka has made no meaningful progress on accountability or legal reform, and urged the recognition of genocide and Tamil self-determination as essential to resolving the island's ongoing crisis.



PEARL at the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

“Our engagement with the United Nations reaffirmed that international accountability remains the only credible path to justice for Eelam Tamils. By centering the voices of victims, families of the disappeared, and civil society actors, PEARL challenged Sri Lanka's persistent impunity and ensured that Eelam Tamils' demands, including the right to self-determination, remained firmly on the international agenda.”

Hanishha Soosai
Advocacy Officer



EUROPE

In Europe, PEARL strengthened its advocacy through engagements with European diplomats, international NGOs, and Tamil diaspora groups. PEARL participated in a panel event in Paris titled “Naming to Remember: The Tamil Genocide in Light of International Crimes and Memory”, organized by Em Inam, a France-based Tamil diaspora group, and Sorbonne pour l’Organisation des Nations Unies (SONU). The event explored legal mechanisms for the recognition of international crimes, including genocide, against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and reflected on the importance of remembrance and justice. The event was opened by French MP Carlos Martens Bilongo and drew a large audience at the historic Amphithéâtre Richelieu. The following day, PEARL also participated in a workshop with Em Inam to discuss advocacy strategies and ways to engage French policymakers on Tamil issues.

In Switzerland, PEARL led a workshop for members of Tamilischer Verein der Studierenden (TaVS) and Phoenix, two youth-led Swiss-Tamil organizations, focusing on Tamil identity, genocide, resistance, and diaspora activism. We also spoke at a Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day event at the University of Zurich, following a screening of *No Fire Zone*, addressing ongoing human rights violations in the North-East, Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism, and the unitary structure of the Sri Lankan state, while emphasizing youth engagement in the struggle for justice and self-determination.

In a significant political development, the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland unanimously passed a resolution at its October 2025 congress calling for an international investigation into the Tamil genocide. The resolution condemned systematic violence and mass killings against Eelam Tamils and cited PEARL’s legal briefing released in 2024, *Justice for Genocide: Sri Lanka’s Responsibility for Genocide against the Tamil People in 2009*, highlighting PEARL’s growing impact on international advocacy and policy discourse.



Advocacy Director Ahrabi Rajkumar speaking at the Amphithéâtre Richelieu de la Sorbonne.



Advocacy Advisor Sagi Thilipkumar leading a workshop for TaVS.

“As global dynamics shift, it is critical that we deepen our engagement with Tamil communities in non-English-speaking countries while expanding our work with policymakers in these regions. PEARL’s strength lies in its transnational approach and its ability to translate Tamil demands and narratives into coordinated international action.”

Sagi Thilipkumar
Advocacy Advisor



INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE EFFORTS

STATE RESPONSIBILITY

In May, PEARL, the Atlantic Council's Strategic Litigation Project, and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP co-hosted a closed briefing on why and how State(s) should hold Sri Lanka accountable for torture under the Convention Against Torture, including potentially before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Our Legal Director and an Advocacy Officer were among the panelists. Delegates from several States' UN missions and civil society actors attended.

PEARL and the Atlantic Council's Strategic Litigation Project published a [joint briefing paper](#) with background on Sri Lanka's torture and unresolved enforced disappearances of Tamils with impunity, the challenges to holding individuals responsible in and outside the island, and potential torture claims that could be brought against the Sri Lankan state. It also explains the value of holding Sri Lanka responsible under the Convention Against Torture, especially before the ICJ, and the urgent need for a State Party or States Parties to the Convention to bring torture claims now. We will continue using the briefing paper in our advocacy and events in 2026.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE

PEARL continued exploring international criminal justice options. PEARL and Global Rights Compliance updated our joint communication, drafted pursuant to Article 15 of the Rome Statute of the ICC. Relying on the Bangladesh/Myanmar precedent, we argue that the ICC has jurisdiction over alleged crimes against humanity against Tamil children that began in Sri Lanka and continued into Australia. We will submit this joint communication to the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor in 2026.

PEARL also laid the foundation for advocacy in 2026 to urge an ICC State Party to refer the situation in Sri Lanka to the ICC, pursuant to Article 14 and the Bangladesh/Myanmar precedent.

Finally, PEARL continued supporting universal jurisdiction efforts concerning alleged perpetrators.

RESEARCH

In 2025, PEARL launched its new Sinhalization report, marking an important milestone in our research and advocacy work.

The report forms part of PEARL's Sinhalization series and builds on its 2022 publication *State-Sponsored Sinhalization in the North-East*. It documents how Tamil livelihoods, resources, and sacred sites are appropriated and re-inscribed as Sinhala-Buddhist property, arguing that Sinhalization functions as a form of ethno-national conquest historically intertwined with ethnic cleansing and repeatedly used by successive governments to obstruct Tamil demands for self-determination. Rejecting official claims that frame these policies as "development," we find that Sinhalization operates as an anti-development project, destroying existing economic systems, preventing new ones from emerging, entrenching poverty in Tamil-speaking regions, and wasting public resources without generating sustainable returns.

These dynamics are illustrated in the accompanying case study on Mayilaththamadu-Madhavanai, where Tamil dairy farmers have been violently displaced from productive agricultural land. The report details how Sinhala settlers, supported by state officials, security forces, and Buddhist clergy, have acted with near-total impunity, resulting in the loss of cattle, the collapse of milk supply chains, and the destruction of livelihoods, causing severe economic harm to local communities. We highlight that the destruction of valuable livestock in a debt-stricken and resource-scarce country is economically irrational and exacerbates Sri Lanka's broader economic crisis. These findings highlight the urgent necessity of Tamil self-determination, arguing that only genuine Tamil control over land, resources, and political decision-making can protect communities from coercive state-led domination. We call on the international community to recognise Sinhalization as a systematic state policy, halt state-sponsored land grabs, and advance meaningful international accountability mechanisms.

The draft report and case study on the Mayilaththamadu-Madhavanai Tamil farmers' protest were presented at a briefing attended by policymakers from multiple diplomatic missions, and Sri Lankan civil society organizations. Following the presentation, PEARL engaged in a substantive discussion on the report's findings, land grabs, and their impact on Eelam Tamils. The event provided a valuable platform to test and refine the report's analysis, advocate with policymakers, and further position PEARL's research at the centre of international advocacy efforts. The report and case study have now been publicly released.



SHAPING THE NARRATIVE

In 2025, PEARL was featured in the press through op-eds, quotes, interviews, and features. Publications included Just Security, Tamil Guardian, Woz die Wochenzeitung, das Lamm, and Virakesari.



The international community's continued belief that any government of Sri Lanka is genuinely willing to break from systemic impunity ignores, and even fuels, ongoing human rights violations against Tamils, including unresolved enforced disappearances, torture, sexual violence, and reprisals. Human rights and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka—where every administration since the island's independence has promoted Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism, an ideology that drove the armed conflict and still drives ongoing ethnic conflict—requires accountability. However, accountability in Sri Lanka has fallen off the international community's radar amid more recent wars. Fortunately, States still have legal options to hold Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan perpetrators accountable before international courts. They should use them.

Anji Manivannan, Legal Director, in *Just Security*, "Unfounded Faith in Sri Lanka's Government Risks Extending Impunity" (co-written by Alyssa Yamamoto)

If ITAK continues to align with Colombo and dodge its responsibilities, it will be remembered not as a challenger but as a betrayer of the Tamil struggle. On the other hand, the Tamil people in general, in the occupied homeland and in the diaspora, have shown that the fight for justice and self-determination is far from over. It is time for Tamil nationalist parties to rise above their differences, embrace their historic mission, and stand united for the Tamil cause.

The Tamil nation deserves new leaders who are courageous, principled, and committed to the liberation struggle. Anything less is a betrayal of the struggle's sacrifices and a disservice to the future of the Tamil people.



Sagi Thilipkumar, Advocacy Advisor, in *Tamil Guardian*, "From Visionary to Bystander: How ITAK has forgotten its historic roots"

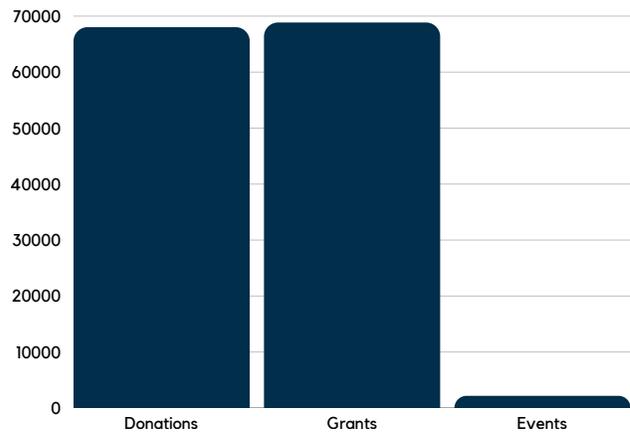
FINANCIALS

In 2025, PEARL received another year of the organizational-level grant from the Open Society Foundations. PEARL also received financial support from the Government of Canada through the Canada Summer Jobs program.



INCOME

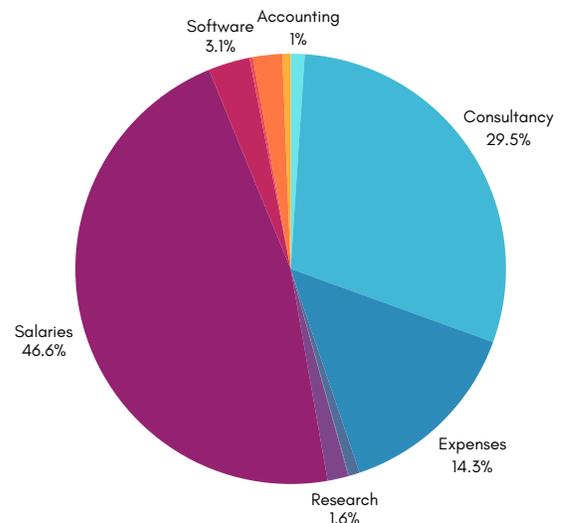
In 2025, our total income was **\$141,567**. This includes **\$68,865** from the Open Society Foundations and other grants, **\$70,535** in donations, and **\$2,167** from events.



EXPENSES

In 2025, our total expenses were **\$144,905**. We incurred increased costs related to our legal work and our 20th anniversary activities. We were able to manage these higher expenses thanks to careful planning and savings from the previous year.

Accounting	\$ 1,520
Consultancy	\$ 42,719
Expenses	\$ 20,704
Events	\$ 1,165
Fees	\$ 81
Research	\$ 2,275
Salaries	\$ 67,465
Software	\$ 4,526
Translation	\$ 382
Travel	\$ 3,176
Rent	\$ 892
Total	\$ 144,905



POWER PEARL'S FUTURE

Entering our third decade, PEARL remains committed to Tamil rights and justice. Looking ahead, PEARL will continue to build on its core advocacy and research by amplifying its Sinhalization report and deepening international engagement. We will sustain and strengthen our work with Tamil civil society, victims' groups, international policymakers and diplomats, INGOs, and Tamil diaspora organizations to ensure Tamil demands for justice and self-determination remain at the forefront of global conversations. PEARL also plans to conduct further in-depth research, advance genocide recognition efforts, and pursue broader accountability initiatives to challenge impunity and support self-determination for Eelam Tamils.

Our mission is to advocate for justice and self-determination for Tamils in the North-East of Sri Lanka.

Our vision is for a Tamil nation that is inclusive, free from oppression, and able to determine its own future.

Just as the Tamil struggle continues, so does PEARL. But we need your support to increase our impact in human rights, legal, and political spaces.

Help advance Tamil rights and justice by donating to PEARL. Your gift will power our work to:

- Maintain dedicated staffing and operations;
- Research Sinhalization and its impacts;
- Advance genocide recognition and international justice efforts; and
- Fund advocacy at the UN and in global capitals.

<https://pearlaction.org/donate/>

