



### Remembering the Tamil Genocide, and Reaffirming the Vaddukoddai Resolution 50 years on

**Washington, D.C.; May 18, 2026** – On the 17th anniversary of the Mullivaikkal Genocide, commemorated globally as Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day, PEARL stands with the victims and survivors of the Sri Lankan government's genocide against the Eelam Tamil people. This month also marks the 50th anniversary of the Vaddukoddai Resolution, a 1976 declaration spearheaded by Tamil political leaders, elected by Eelam Tamils, to assert the Eelam Tamil people's right to self-determination and calling for the independent state of Tamil Eelam. These anniversaries are reminders that the struggles for justice and self-determination remain unresolved and as critical as ever.

In 2009, the Sri Lankan government carried out a military campaign in the Vanni that amounted to genocide, marked by the deliberate denial of food and medicine, the corralling of Tamil civilians into so-called "No Fire Zones" that were subsequently bombed, and the systematic targeting of hospitals and humanitarian sites. Credible sources indicate that between 70,000 and 169,796 Tamils remain unaccounted for and are presumed dead (see our report [Justice for Genocide: Sri Lanka's Responsibility for Genocide against the Tamil People in 2009](#)). Every year at memorial events, *kanji*, a thin watery rice porridge, is served to commemorate the scarcity of food during this time and the resilience of the Tamils in Mullivaikkal, who were forced to survive on this inadequate meal. Braving heavy intimidation, harassment, and surveillance by Sri Lankan security forces that persist to this day, it is through these traditions that the Eelam Tamil people remember the genocide and those taken by it.

Eelam Tamil resilience dates back well before the genocide in 2009, as they have long faced decades of violence and systemic discrimination. The Sri Lankan government's broken political promises for equality and the denial of Tamil political agency ultimately led to the adoption of the Vaddukoddai Resolution in 1976, which became a historic assertion of the Eelam Tamil people's right to self-determination. The Eelam Tamil nation became the primary bulwark against the rising Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarian state. On the 50th anniversary of the Vaddukoddai Resolution, we are reminded of this pivotal moment for Eelam Tamil nationhood. Based on the Vaddukoddai Resolution, generations of Tamils have worked to build and protect the Eelam Tamil nation and fought for international recognition of the Tamil Eelam state. Sri Lanka's denial of Eelam Tamil nationhood has fuelled decades of mass atrocities and culminated in the destruction of the de-facto state of Tamil Eelam. The Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarian government's intention was not only to destroy Tamil bodies, but to extinguish any thoughts of liberation and self-determination from the Tamil people's minds. It is clear that 17 years after the Mullivaikkal Genocide, and 50 years after the Vaddukoddai Resolution, Sri Lanka's plan has completely failed.

Today, Eelam Tamil resilience endures in the face of ongoing structural repression by the Sri Lankan government and the absence of accountability for mass atrocity crimes. Tamils continue to reject failed domestic mechanisms, such as the Office on Missing Persons, instead sustaining their own



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persistent demands for truth and justice for the genocide. This tenacity persists amid ongoing militarization of the North-East, the Sinhalization of Tamil lands and livelihoods, and surveillance and violence from security forces. The NPP government still promotes a narrative of reconciliation throughout all of this, while also sidelining Tamil demands and retaining the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, which continues to disproportionately target Tamils and Muslims. Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism is still the primary ideology and protects and upholds the unitary state structure on the island. The continued criminalization of Tamil political thought by the Sri Lankan state also continues today, as evidenced by the recent seizure of the writings of Theepachelvan, demonstrating that even peaceful expressions of Tamil political consciousness and historical memory remain subject to repression and censorship. In response, Eelam Tamils continue to assert their political identity and their enduring demand for recognition of their right to self-determination, keeping the Vaddukoddai Resolution as relevant as ever 50 years on.

PEARL continues its strong commitment to ensuring meaningful justice and accountability for Sri Lanka's war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide of the Tamil people. Sri Lanka has shown time and again that it has zero political will to achieve justice and accountability for Tamils at the domestic level. We urge the international community to prioritize international justice and accountability options, including at the UN Human Rights Council; to use mechanisms such as universal jurisdiction, the International Criminal Court, and the International Court of Justice; and to formally recognize the Tamil Genocide.

Structural political change is also fundamental to guaranteeing that the 2009 genocide is never repeated. As first articulated in the Vaddukoddai Resolution, any meaningful and lasting resolution requires unequivocal recognition of the Eelam Tamil nation's right to self-determination.