

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing
on
Accountability & Human Rights in Sri Lanka

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 – 3:30 p.m.
Virtual via Cisco WebEx

STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Submitted by:
Dr. Soma Ilangovan
Director
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Honorable Congresspersons and Members of the Respected Tom Lantos Human Rights Caucus.
I wish to bring to your attention the basics of the Human Rights problem in Sri Lanka.

Religion rules some countries and Sri Lanka is one of those. The majority, who mostly live in the South of the country, are Buddhists. The Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Myanmar is different from the Buddhism in other countries. The Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka have brainwashed the majority into thinking that Sri Lanka was created to be a special Buddhist Only country. The monks are so powerful that 1957 pact made between the Prime Minister and the Tamil leaders to provide substantial autonomy for the traditional Tamil areas was torn up in public by the Prime Minister under pressure from Buddhist monks. Monks continue to be at the forefront of efforts to eliminate non-Sinhalese Buddhist political, cultural, economic and territorial power.

Right now the current regime is enacting a scheme that has not been done in the last 70 years. They are systematically grabbing the lands of the Tamils in the North and East, the established homeland of the Tamils from times past, at a faster rate and over larger areas. They have government offices run only in Sinhalese in the Tamil areas, thereby forcing the Tamils to learn the Sinhalese language to engage with their own government. They are erecting Buddha Viharas in areas where there are no Buddhists living and people of the Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths live. They are implanting Sinhalese people from the South to make the Tamils to become a minority in the Tamil areas.

The Human Rights issues will not be solved by any kind of band-aid solutions because of the deep-rooted religious fanaticism in the national mindset. Even the Laws are completely ignored to fulfill the well-planned eradication of the Tamil identity, so making new Laws will not solve the problem.

I humbly request a re-evaluation of the situation taking into account the Buddhist Only mindset of the majority. I ask the United States to help the Tamils have self-determination of their own to decide their future so that the problem can be solved.

Thank you very much.