



**Dansk Sammenslutning af Tamilske foreninger**  
**டென்மார்க் தமிழ் அமைப்புக்களின் ஒன்றியம்**  
**Danish Federation of Tamil Associations**

*To the ministry of foreign affairs of Denmark,*

*Copenhagen, Denmark 20.11.2015*

**Eelam-Tamil political prisoners hunger strike in prison in Sri Lanka**

In the Eelam-Tamil freedom fight, which has been lasting for the last 5 decades, Eelam – Tamils have taken hunger strike and other forms of non-violent struggle repeatedly against the Sri Lankan regime. In 1987, Lt. Col. Thileepan from the political wing of the freedom movement Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, given his life after 12 days of hunger strike, because the Sri Lankan government did not fulfill his demand. As he wished Thileepan's body was donated to the medical faculty of Jaffna University for the purpose of medical studies.

Likewise, on 7 th of November 2015 about 230 Tamil political prisoners undertook the campaign hunger strike until death demanding speedier action to release them either through rehabilitation or general amnesty. They had suspended the request from members of parliament of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), who had urged them to give the government more time to respond to their demand for freedom.

The prisoners have been held in custody for several years without charge or any trials in court under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which allows the security forces to detain people for up to 18 months without bringing them before a court; but some have been jailed since 1997. A recent report by U.N. human-rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussain said only 54 of the 258 people held by the government under terrorism legislation had been convicted, while 144 cases remain pending.

Mr. C.V. Vigneswaran, chief minister of the Northern Provincial Council, met Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, president of Sri Lanka, on 11th of November 2015 to request a general amnesty for prisoners of war and political prisoners, but the president has rejected this request.

In support of this nonviolent campaign, institutions and businesses of Eelam-Tamils observed hartal (general strike) on the 13th of November 2015, which was called by the two big Eelam-Tamil parties in Sri Lanka (Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the Tamil National People's Front (TNPF)) to demand "the immediate release of all prisoners of war and political prisoners involved in the Tamil war of independence".

The government has attempted to create division within the prisoners by offering to release some on bail, while keeping the second in prison and handing a third group over to the army for "rehabilitation". The prisoners are demanding that they all be released.

The regime change in January 2015 was largely welcomed by the international community with the hope of Eelam-Tamil national question will be answered fairly and quickly, and this was sold to the Eelam-Tamil nation. By meeting the demands of the political prisoners, the new regime has an opportunity to show the Eelam-Tamils that they are trying to resolve their struggle. We, therefore urge you to negotiate with the Government of Sri Lanka to release the political prisoners as soon as possible.

On 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, after the 9 days of hunger strike, the Tamil political prisoners decided temporarily to call off until 15th of December 2015, following a promise from the Government that they will be released through rehabilitation program.

We, the Eelam-Tamil Community in Denmark and Eelam-Tamils in diaspora in general, urge you to put a pressure in the Sri Lankan government to keep their promise to release those affected. The government of Sri Lanka, not keeping their promise, will further divide that Eelam-Tamil nation from the Sinhalese nation. Furthermore, this will make it extremely difficult for the Eelam-Tamils to trust the current president.

On behalf of Danish Tamils,  
Danish Federation of Tamil Association (DSTF),  
Sugunenthiran Markandu

**Relevant sources:**

- <http://tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=37999>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0t8Zg9kMf8>

- <http://lee-rhiannon.greensmps.org.au/content/speeches-parliament/speec-tamil-political-prisoners-and-prevention-terrorism-act>

- <http://time.com/4070927/sri-lanka-tamil-prisoners-hunger-strike/> - <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/tamil-prisoners-end-hunger-strike-in-sri-lanka-1233422>