

# EELAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

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The Director  
Sedec  
133 Kynsey Road  
Borella  
Colombo 8  
Sri Lanka

Dear Rev Father

We, the Tamils of Eelam who are living in London, U K have been rather perturbed at a particular information we received regarding the Tamil refugees who are in Holland. We have reliable information that the Dutch government has secretly decided to send all the Tamil refugees who are in Holland to Sri Lanka. We also understand that in this great inhuman act, Sedec also has become party by willing to organise "Rehabilitation" programmes in the Sinhalese Homelands for the refugees who will be forced to go to Sri Lanka. We are also reliably informed that Sedec is willing to "Rehabilitate" them out of funds the Dutch government is willing to give to Sedec. If all this information is true, we would like to bring to your kind attention, that in our view, Sedec is willingly becoming a party to the genocide that is being carried out by Sri Lanka government against the Tamils in the Island. We give the reasons below :-

1 These are Tamil refugees who fearing for their lives fled Sri Lanka and Eelam, due to the ongoing conflict in the Island which the government is unable or unwilling to bring to an amicable negotiated settlement. No one flees from their land of birth, unless faced with terrible fear.

2 We are also aware that many thousands of innocent Tamils have been killed in the pogroms of 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983 in the Sinhalese areas and are continuously being killed by Sri Lanka security forces and by mobs with the connivance of the government in the Tamil Homelands under various pretexts.

3 Amnesty International itself, because of the kind of insecurity the Tamil community is facing in the island, has taken a stand that no Tamil should be sent back to the island till a political solution emerges. It is very well aware of the indiscriminate killings, arbitrary arrests and horrible torture and disappearance of people that are taking place with regard to Tamils in the island.

4 The Tamil people, especially those who are living in Colombo and other towns of Sri Lanka are steadily moving out because of the condition of insecurity and intimidation that is prevalent in Colombo and other towns. Even those who are living in these areas are living there, because they are literally forced to live there to make a living.

They have no other alternative but to do so in view of the present Sri Lankan political and economical and even religious structures.

5 It should be noted that (i) most of the Tamils massacred in the many pogroms were in areas where Sinhalese people had been colonised; and (ii) even those Tamils who had been living in the midst of Sinhalese for over twenty years or been serving them in different professional fields were brutally murdered.

6 There is no guarantee whatever that Sedec and the Catholics in the Sinhalese areas can safeguard these "Rehabilitated" Tamils and that they will not be killed or harmed during any future pogroms though we are aware that many Tamils were saved by the heroism of many Sinhalese - Buddhists and Christians alike. If a pogrom similar to the 1977, 1981 and 1983 was organised again for the government's own reasons, we would like to know whether Sedec will be able to guarantee the lives and security of all these refugees who are forcibly repatriated with the help of Sedec. We know that in 1981 and 1983 pogroms, many Tamils lost their lives and property in predominantly Catholic areas of the Sinhalese Homeland.

7 Obviously it is not within the power of the Sedec to guarantee any security. Security is not available from the Sinhalese armed forces, for they are the real state sponsored terrorists. It is not available from the government since on one hand it has given its blessings to the savage behaviour of the forces and on the other it has proved totally incapable of controlling them. It is not available from the Sinhalese civilians as every holocaust against the Tamils in Sinhala areas would have shown.

We are indeed sad to note that a Church Organisation which should stand up for people's rights and security and well being of all people, is willing to be a party to an insensitive diabolical plot in which the refugees who fled from their land in fear are to be forced to go to the very land where they would be constantly living under greater threat.

Please remember :

1 The Youth <sup>you</sup> /are willing to rehabilitate are refugees forcibly being thrown out of Holland against their wish with the collusion of the Sinhala - Buddhist government and the "powerful" Sedec.

2 That the area you choose to rehabilitate them is an alien territory owned and governed by an alien Sinhala - Buddhist racist government. Hence, our youth will be virtually held hostage in a foreign territory, having to live with the nightmarish fear and dread for their life and limb day in and day out.

3 The much larger Sarvodaya itself has reservations about this so called "Rehabilitation" program.

4 Your participation in this program encourages the Dutch government in its inhuman and insensitive attitude towards all other refugees from other countries.

If you have already decided to be a party to this scheme of the Sri Lankan government and the Dutch government, we very vehemently protest about this and the repercussions of your decision will be serious indeed. I am sure that you do not want it to go down in history that the Catholic Church participated in the genocide perpetrated by the Sinhala Buddhist government and the Dutch government. If you have not decided, we plead with you that you do not embark on this venture whatever your intentions may be.

We hope that you will stand for the fundamental rights of all refugees - which rights have been embodied in the 1951 Geneva Convention, and shall be most grateful for an early reply.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

N SRI GANGATHARAN  
SECRETARY  
EELAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

CC

- 1 The Ambassador of The Netherlands in Sri Lanka
- 2 The Foreign Aid Office of The Netherlands
- 3 The Foreign Ministry of The Netherlands
- 4 The Justice Ministry of The Netherlands
- 5 Sri Lanka Work Group, Holland
- 6 Ambassador of The Netherlands in U K
- 7 Justice and Peace Commission, Holland
- 8 President, Bishops Conference, Holland
- 9 Archbishop - Rt Rev Dr Nicholas Marcus Fernando
- 10 Bishop of Chilaw - Rt Rev Marcus Fernando
- 11 Bishop of Kandy - Rt Rev Vianney Fernando
- 12 Bishop of Jaffna - Rt Rev B Deogupillai
- 13 Bishop of Mannar - Rt Rev T Saundra Nayagam
- 14 Bishop of Batticaloa - Rt Rev K Swampillai
- 15 Bishop of Badulla - Rt Rev Edmond Fernando
- 16 Bishop of Galle - Rt Rev Don Sylvester
- 17 Bishop of Anuradhapura - Rt Rev Joy Gunawardena