

MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES URGES
THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS OF THE
UNITED STATES TO TAKE UP THE CAUSE
OF THE TAMILS OF SRI LANKA



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-NINE.

RESOLUTIONS

MEMORIALIZING THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS TO PROTEST AND UTILIZE THE POWERS OF THEIR OFFICES TO RECTIFY THE GROSS INJUSTICES WHICH HAVE BEEN INHUMANELY INFLICTED ON THE TAMILS OF SRI LANKA.

Whereas, The Tamils of Eelam, who number three million Hindus, Christians and Moslems and occupy eight thousand square miles, live as an oppressed minority in Sri Lanka where the majority is composed of ten million Sinhalese, most of whom are Buddhists; and

Whereas, From ancient times two nations, the Sinhalese and the Tamils possessed distinct languages, religions, cultures and clearly demarcated geographic territories until the British, who were characteristically oblivious to the differences between these two separate nations, imposed one rule for the purpose of colonial administrative unification; and

Whereas, As was to be expected in 1948 when the British left the island and two unwilling nations were consequently left under a unitary governmental structure, the majority Sinhalese faction subverted democratic principles to become the new masters of the Tamil-speaking people; and

Whereas, One million Tamils on the tea and rubber

plantations, who prior to independence had enjoyed rights similar to those possessed by other Ceylonese, were disenfranchised and made stateless; and

Whereas, In 1956 the government passed the official language act which made the Sinhalese dialect the only official language throughout the island, thereby causing severe hardships to several thousand Tamil public servants and migration to foreign lands, and effectively excluding otherwise qualified Tamils from the public service; and

Whereas, Although the plantation Tamils were the descendants of Indians who were brought to Ceylon more than one hundred years ago by the seemingly ubiquitous British planters, and as such were mostly native Sri Lankans who possessed no relationship with the India from which their ancestors hailed, in 1964 the government inhumanely and callously determined to repatriate compulsorily these Tamils, ordering them to depart the land of their birth; and

Whereas, In 1975 foreign-owned estates were nationalised, compelling scores of evicted Tamil workers to become beggars; and

Whereas, Nationalising schools in 1960-61, the government directed its discriminatory policies against non-Buddhist education as well as the Tamils, for most of the educational institutions in Tamil areas were owned by the Roman Catholic Church and the missionaries of sundry protestant denominations; and

Whereas, Many Tamil medium schools in Sinhalese majority districts were closed and reopened as Sinhalese institutions, thereby forcing Tamils to study in the Sinhalese medium; and

Whereas, In 1971 a system of standardization of grades was introduced by the government to provide preferential treatment for Sinhalese students and to exclude Tamil medium scholars, a prejudicial scheme which was deliberately concocted to deny merit as the criterion for university admissions; and

Whereas, A new constitution, which reiterated that foremost place should be accorded to the Buddhist religion and the Sinhalese language, was unilaterally adopted without any cooperation or consultation with the majority of the Tamil representatives in parliament; and

Whereas, The Tamil people were again not party to the constitution of 1978, which replaced its predecessor of 1972; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Massachusetts House of Representatives hereby urges the President and the Congress of the United States to protest and to utilize the considerable influence and power of their offices to rectify the gross injustices which have been inhumanely inflicted on the Tamils of Sri Lanka; and be it further

Resolves, That copies of these resolutions be forwarded to the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of each branch of Congress, to the members thereof from the Commonwealth, to the Secretary of State, to the Director of the World Bank and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

House of Representatives, May 9, 1979

A D O P T E D

Wallace C. Mills

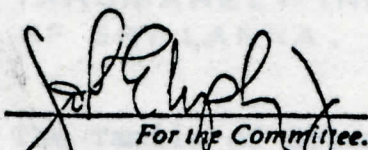
Wallace C. Mills, Clerk of the House

HOUSE, No. _____

RESOLUTIONS memorializing the President and the Congress to protest and to utilize the powers of their offices to rectify the gross injustices which have been inhumanely inflicted on the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

H. R., May 9, 1979.
(filed by Miss Marie E. Howe of Somerville)

*Referred, under Rule 85, to the committee on Rules.
Committee on Rules reports resolutions ought to be adopted.*


For the Committee.

Rule 41 suspended; and adopted.

Clerk.

Correctly drawn,

for B. T. R.

REPRODUCED AND ISSUED BY THAMILAR VIDUTHALAI PERANY,
15, HAINSWORTH MOOR CRESCENT, QUEENSBURY, BRADFORD,
WEST YORKSHIRE, BD13 2LZ FOR TAMIL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
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June 1979