

DISAPPEARANCES AND ARBITRARY DETENTION

- When the Sri Lankan army forces captured Jaffna peninsula in 1996 over 600 young Tamils disappeared, many of them were women who ended up being raped and murdered.
- In December 2007, mass arrests of nearly 2,200 ethnic Tamils including women and children were conducted by SL security forces to intimidate the masses
- Between January and Feb 15th 2009, 186 Tamils have disappeared and 304 were arrested



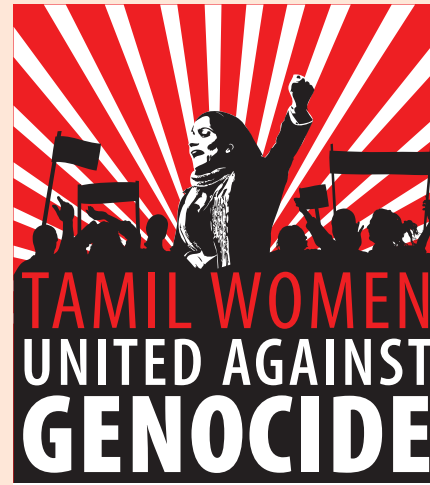
A TRADITION OF SYSTEMIC IMPUNITY

- *"The Sri Lankan security forces are using systematic rape and murder of Tamil women to subjugate the Tamil population... Impunity continues to reign as rape is used as a weapon of war in Sri Lanka."* Asian Human Rights Commission
- *"Sri Lankan soldiers have raped both women and young girls on a massive scale, and often with impunity, since reporting often leads to reprisals against the victims and their families..."* World Organization against Torture

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Write to Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canadian political party leaders, Ms. Navi Pillai, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Dr Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against Women calling on them to immediately:

- Condemn the atrocities being committed by the Sri Lanka military and Para-military forces against Tamil Women
- Urge Sri Lanka to allow the establishment of a UN monitoring mission with a mandate to report on all human rights violations
- Provide distressed and traumatized victims with proper counseling services
- Help promote peace, justice and freedom in Sri Lanka for all



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SRI LANKA

A WOMAN'S NIGHTMARE



"Make the Tamil Women the feast of our army, while letting the men's blood drip into a red sea"

Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary and the brother of President Mahinda Rajapakse, Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapakse addressing the Armed forces

SRI LANKA A WOMAN'S NIGHTMARE

BACKGROUND

- Sri Lanka has been torn apart in 61 years of conflict between the majority Sinhalese dominated government and the minority Tamils, fighting for their right to self-determination, since independence from Britain in 1948.
- Sinhalese pogroms have reduced the Tamil population to 30% of what it was in 1948
- More than 1.5 million Tamils have fled Sri Lanka and another one million have been internally displaced (United Nations Development Fund for Women)

MORE RECENTLY...

- Over 300,000 have been internally displaced in Northern Sri Lanka with no access to basic human necessities such as food, water, clothes and medicine due to government imposed embargos and ban on NGOs from conflict stricken areas
- Government declared safety zones are indiscriminately bombarded by the Sri Lankan Armed forces killing an average of 40 Tamils daily (since late 2008)
- More than 5000 thousand civilians have been severely wounded in the past 3 months alone.
- Gotabhaya Rajapakse, Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary and brother of the current president, claims that hospitals are legitimate targets for heavy bombardments by Sri Lankan Air force.

61 YEARS OF GENOCIDAL WAR ON TAMIL WOMEN HAS:

- Disproportionately affected them in the context of sexual, physical and psychological violence
- Inflicted untold sufferings and thousands of deaths
- Used rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon to demoralize, terrorize communities and break families
- caused the deterioration of essential health structures and has led to higher death counts of pregnant women
- Increased cases of forced abortions and sterilization
- Made millions of Tamils refugees, of whom 80 percent are women and children
- Made 40,000 women war widows who are mostly impoverished and economically vulnerable (United Nations Development Fund for Women)
- Continued amidst a culture of systemic impunity and has contributed to Sri Lanka being ranked the 3rd worst violator of women's rights according to South Asia Human Rights Violators Index 2008



TAMIL WOMEN'S BODIES... A BATTLEFIELD

- Recent news reports indicate that high ranking Sri Lankan military officials have ordered doctors in Vavuniya hospital to carry out forced abortions on women fleeing the war
- Reported cases of discrete government-run forced sterilization on upcountry Tamil women since 1997
- Hundreds of cases of reported rape, sexual assaults, disappearances and torture by Sri Lankan security forces and government backed paramilitaries groups. Such acts are used as weapons to demoralize, terrorize communities and break families
- "On average, a Tamil woman is raped by members of the Sri Lankan security forces every two weeks. The real number is inevitably higher since many cases are unreported. Every two months a Tamil woman is gang-raped and murdered by the Sri Lankan security forces." NGO, Women Against Rape
- Embargo on food and water has increased cases of malnutrition and deteriorating health conditions, especially among children and pregnant women
- Body checks performed at security checkpoints by Sri Lankan male security personnel where Tamil women end up disappearing, being sexually violated, embarrassed or publicly stripped
- Sri Lankan army videotaped their men violating and stripping bodies of fallen female LTTE fighters in contravention of articles 16 and 17 of First Geneva Convention which outlines the respectful treatment of dead bodies in the battlefield. Given the videos, the perpetrators can be easily prosecuted if the government wills, however no action is being taken.