

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USTPAC Calls for Autonomous NorthEast Region for Tamils within Sri Lanka

Genuine efforts on Confidence-Building Measures and Constitution-Making offer best chance for peace in Sri Lanka

Washington, DC January 24, 2017: US Tamil Political Action Council (USTPAC) calls on the Sri Lankan government to meaningfully implement [UNHRC Resolution 30/1](#), move the transitional justice process forward, and solve the debilitating ethnic crisis through political reform.

The new constitution that is being created provides an opportunity to resolve the decades old ethnic conflict in the island that must not be squandered as many such opportunities have been in the past. The constitution must recognize the right of Tamils to self-governance, including in areas of education, land, police, taxation and foreign direct investments. The recognition of the North and East of the island as historically the homeland of the Tamils must be preserved, as denoted in the 1987 [Indo-Lanka Accord](#).

USTPAC supports the position of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) that a solution to the ethnic conflict must be found through adoption of a new constitution, rejecting marginal reforms through constitutional amendments. We also echo the expression and mandate given to the TNA by the Tamils in the North and East to seek a political solution providing for self-governance in a unified NorthEast.

As a cosponsor and signatory to UN Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1, we call upon the government of Sri Lanka to implement the following Confidence-Building Measures without further delay:

- Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act immediately. Abolish torture at detention facilities. Release all detainees held under PTA.
- Release all land appropriated by the military in the former war zones to civilians. Provide resettlement and rehabilitation assistance through civilian authorities.
- Withdraw the mono-ethnic Sinhala military, which is accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, out of the Tamil areas. The strength of the military must be decreased to that in the other areas of the country for peacetime. The practice of the military engaging in civilian activities in the Tamil areas must cease.
- Create without delay the Transitional Justice mechanisms detailed in HRC/30/1 and following the [recommendations](#) of the Consultation Task Force. The justice mechanisms for war crimes and crimes against humanity must consist of a hybrid structure with international judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators.

The Tamil Diaspora came into existence as a direct result of violence against the Tamils often carried out with the complicity of the Sri Lankan state. USTPAC affirms that the Tamil Diaspora is a stakeholder in finding a lasting solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. USTPAC looks forward to contributing to a just and lasting peace in the island where all communities can live with equality, dignity and justice.

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ABOUT USTPAC:

US Tamil Political Action Council is a grass root advocacy organization of Tamil Americans. We are committed to use all democratic, non-violent and lawful means available in the United States, and international laws towards achieving a peaceful political solution to the conflict between the Sinhala and the Tamil speaking peoples living in the island of Sri Lanka, that recognizes the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

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