



**24 May 2009**

### **Mark of Respect for Our Supreme Leader**

#### **The Indestructible Flame of Freedom**

We announce today, with inexpressible sadness and heavy hearts that our incomparable leader and supreme commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam attained martyrdom fighting the military oppression of the Sri Lankan Government on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2009. We share the sorrow and despair of all the Tamils in Sri Lanka, The Diaspora and the Tamil speaking people of the world.

For over three decades, our leader was the heart and soul and the symbol of hope, pride and determination for the whole nation of people of Tamil Eelam. He conceptualized, created and conducted the most disciplined and incorruptible organization that ever represented a nation of people. He had the courage to take on all obstacles and adversity and engineered social change to go hand in hand with the awakening of his people. The LTTE grew into the most formidable force built on the unimaginable sacrifices of its freedom fighters. Our leader gave it the strategic foresight and military direction on land, sea and sea. Through his recognition and acknowledgement he created the women's wing and established the equality of their status and role in the community. His love for his people, the Diaspora and the Tamils world over was overwhelming and selfless.

Since the failure of the peace process and the escalation of the war forced upon the Tamil people, the LTTE was faced to confront the Sri Lankan military that was supported by the world powers. This deliberate bias and position taken by the international community severely weakened the military position of the LTTE. Our leader confronted this threat without any hesitation. He would not waver in his desire to be with his people and fight for his people till the end. In spite of the numerous pleas from his senior commanders, he refused to leave his people and along with his fellow freedom fighters perished in combat with the Sri Lankan forces. His final request was for the struggle to continue until we achieved the freedom for his people.

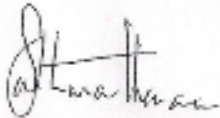
Our leader epitomized the freedom struggle of our people. He raised it to a level never before seen. He defined the Tamil spirit and was worshipped by his people. His sacrifices for his people are immense and incomparable. His legend and the historical status as the Greatest Tamil Leader ever are indestructible. He will forever remain the father of our nation. He leaves behind the flame of freedom and the spirit in each and every Tamil. It is our undivided duty to keep the flame burning until the freedom for the Tamils are achieved.

We have declared the week beginning Monday, 25 May 2009, as a week of official mourning paying tribute for the supreme sacrifice by our beloved leader. During this week let us celebrate his supreme sacrifice and his contribution to the betterment of the Tamil world. Let us also mark the sacrifices of all the commanders, freedom fighters and the civilians who also laid down their lives. We humbly request that the Tamil people world over to show utmost respect and restrain from harmful acts to themselves or anyone else in this hour of extreme grief.

As we mark the life of our beloved leader let us also resolve that we will re-affirm our commitment to the goals espoused by him – dignity, equality and the right to self-determination of our people.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selvarasa Pathmanathan', is written on a light-colored background.

Selvarasa Pathmanathan

Head of International Relations - LTTE