

# **AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION OF TAMIL ASSOCIATIONS INC.**

P.O.Box 215 Enfield NSW 2136  
Email:tamand@ozemail.com.au

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## **AFTA calls on the international community to recognise Tamil right to self-determination.**

The prospects for a negotiated political solution in the Island of Sri Lanka are bleak. The Cease-Fire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is under immense strain. Sinhala chauvinism is once again on the rise spearheaded by the JVP and tacitly supported by the other political parties.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the North East of the Island (the Tamil Homeland) remain displaced unable to return to their homes. Large tracts of the Homeland are deemed 'High Security Zones' and the people kept away from these zones. Most significantly, these 'zones' are all located in the most fertile farming lands and home to the farming communities. Tamil fishermen are similarly disadvantaged prevented from venturing beyond 2 km from the shore.

The Sri Lankan Government remains indifferent to the plight of the Tamil people battered by the war and the tsunami.

Except for the aid provided by the Tamil diaspora and limited assistance provided by some Non Governmental Organisations (NGOS), survivors of tsunami in the North East are forced to rely on their own resources. In the absence of funds, the infrastructure destroyed by the tsunami (roads, schools, health care faculties, fishing & agricultural related structures) remains in a state of disrepair.

In the East members of the LTTE and the public are being killed in areas in close proximity to army camps. Despite international pressure to disarm the paramilitary forces responsible for these atrocities, the killings continue.

**On 27th July 2005, the Tamil people drew the attention of the International Community to this state of affairs and appealed for their assistance in redressing the situation by recognising "our basic right to a life of freedom with peace on the basis of our traditional homeland, our nationhood, self rule and struggle for sovereignty" and called for the occupying Sinhala forces to vacate our land and seas with immediate effect"**

This historic proclamation was made at a large gathering where a cross section of the people including religious leaders, representative from civil society, educationalists and parliamentarians participated.

We fully endorse the sentiments and call upon the Governments of Australia and New Zealand in particular to recognise the right to self-determination of the Tamil people.

Contact: Ana Pararajasingham 0402 904 032  
Soma Somasundaram 0411 827 891