

# **Inter Religious Peace March**

## **Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies-Jaffna**

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## **Pragmatic Proposals for Permanent peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka**

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka since Independence has paralysed the normal life of the people. From the beginning of the last two decades we are witnessing the untold hardship and worst human sufferings due to the renewed escalation of the armed conflict. We are haunted by the heinous effects of this deadly war which had destroyed the social and economic infrastructure of our community, besides disintegrated our esteemed cultural heredity. The Sri Lankans particularly in the North and East are now yearning for peace, normalcy and tranquillity, a feeling gathering more and more momentum than ever before. A ray of hope and confidence has dawned in the minds of the people both in the South and North, East and West with the advent of this new government, coming into power mainly with their cry for peace through mutual understating and talks. This cry for peace was profusely welcomed by every peace loving citizens of this country. The people of this country gave a clear and unambiguous mandate to achieve peace through talks, the need of the hour.



Commencement

Peace with honour and dignity acceptable to all sections of the people is the only alternative if we are to bring back the unity, trust, understanding and good will among all persons irrespective of race, religion, caste or creed. It will also bring back the pristine glory of our beautiful Island - The pearl of the Indian Ocean. The governing principles behind peace and normalcy are the recognition and acceptance of traditional homelands, right to self-determination traditional and cultural values of persons of all Ethnic Groups.

### **Normalcy is the tool to start Peace negotiations.**

Peace is the main panacea for the ill effects of this prolonged conflict. Creating a suitable, impartial and acceptable external forum and objective and congenial environment lay a solid foundation for a firm and meaningful peace talks. While welcoming the praiseworthy efforts of the peace makers in finalising the documentation on cessation of

conflict and cease-fire by both parties, we stress that this should be the ideal basis for peace talks. De-proscription of the LTTE as a terrorist group and accepting them as the sole representative of the Tamils before peace talks are the aspirations and expectations of peace loving Tamils.

### **Violence and denial of Fundamental Human Rights**

Thousands and thousands of precious human lives lost during the last two decades of civil war cannot be regained for ever. People cannot easily forget and forgive the forces which committed the most heinous crime of merciless killings, disappearance and arbitrary arrests of mostly youths under the pernicious prevention of terrorism Act and put behind bars without trials. No body can deny the human fundamental rights of fellow citizens, the right to live in their own homelands and free movement to any part of this Island without any restriction. Further imposing an economic blockade to a section of the population is an uncivilised medieval practice. Once these blocks are removed, a healthy and congenial environment is created.



### **State responsibility to rebuild.**

Numerous Internal displacements and packing them in restricted areas with limited resources both in camps and outside has reduced us to the level of beggars. We can not continue to be refugees forever and must be allowed to resettle in our own areas. We must be allowed to reconstruct our cherished homes, which were destroyed by constant bombings and arbitrary shelling. The stake must bear the responsibility of rebuilding these damaged houses, business premises, educational and other public buildings and places of worships.

### **Weak Democratic Governance**

A hybrid administration has replaced the civil administration during these two decades and as long as war and war-related activities prevail restoration of a civil administration will only be a dream. We cannot speak of democracy and civil administration is the presence of a hybrid administration. The main concern of the present governance is war and restriction of civilian activities, not the least concerned about the daily escalation of prices of almost all commodities. This leaves an untold burden on our people. War and Peace are opposite poles and nobody can make them to meet.

### **Understanding and realistic approach can ensure peace.**

The present political and economic realities of the country should be objectively perceived and rationally addressed by all politicians, religious leaders and social organisations. We condemn very strongly in unequivocal terms every force that tries to hide the truth in order to gain political supremacy. Possibility of Peace should not be doubted but on the contrary all politicians and leaders should work beyond the vested interest and benefits of self, Party, Group and Ethnicity. The members concerned should

work with purity of heart and mind, patience, responsibility right understanding and confidence.

It is not possible to find a solution over night to a Twenty-Year-old Ethnic problem. In the course of time, the Government and the LTTE should endeavour even under a difficult terrain to work for peace. An approach of this nature will be very noble and more dignified. A well-planned strategic move can work out a permanent solution which could gain the confidence of the people.



### **Inter-religious peace as a cry for permanent peace.**

As the people of Sri Lanka have unanimously expressed their desire and will, for peace in the country during the last general election, so do we, the members of the four major religions cry for peace with one voice and one accord. It is to emphasise such need that we determined to have this spiritual and democratic Peace March yesterday and today in the Jaffna peninsula. These peace lovers will definitely strengthen the hands of peacemakers. Our prayers, agitation, and devoted efforts will bring about Peace in our country once again.

*Let us all strengthen the hands of those who  
engaged themselves in this noble task.*

*Let us give them our supportive hands to overcome any difficulties and struggles on their  
long way for peace.*

*May our country and our people inherit everlasting peace and  
fullness of their earthly life.*

*May the Grace of God Almighty be upon our land and us  
and give us Peace and Happiness.*

*S. Paramanathan  
President*

*A.K.Sivasubramaniam  
Secretary*