

9th January 2021

PRG Condemns the Wanton Destruction of the Tamil Memorial in Jaffna!

People's Rights Group (PRG), a rights based advocacy and lobbying group based in the UK particularly dealing with human rights violations in Sri Lanka, strongly condemns the abhorrent action of the Sri Lankan authorities, razing down a memorial located on the campus of the University of Jaffna varsity commemorating tens of thousands of Tamils killed in in the last leg of the country's civil war which ended in 2009. It is said that memorials offer a form of immortality for those who have died as well as the possibility of a continuing link between those who have gone and those who remain. It is thus an abhorrent act by the Sri Lankan authorities which will hurt the sentiments of the Tamils' long struggle for transitional justice after the end of the bloody war.

The dead have always held a place in the space of the living. Terrible events which have been brought about through human action or inaction deserve to be remembered partly as a sign of respect to the victims who perished or otherwise suffered in the past. Although deceased victims are no longer around to experience the reverberations of actions taken against them, such violations of their dignity can affect the human rights of their loved ones. PRG therefore views this development as a blatant attack on the Tamil community's right to memorialise their dead ones.

PRG is deeply concerned about the despicable politics being played in Sri Lanka over the dead and dead bodies. Presently, the cries and anguish of the Muslim and Christian communities asking for burial rights and to respect the dignity of their loved ones falling victims to the dreaded corona pandemic, are also being inhumanely trampled upon, through the unreasonable policy of 'forced cremation' of the Government of Sri Lanka.

PRG, therefore calls upon the authorities to respect the memory of the dead and stop forthwith this vicious cycle of erasure and annihilation of identities, experiences and history of communities in the island.

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