



Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)

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An Open Letter to Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena

His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena

President

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Dear President Sirisena,

We, the members of the Asian Federation against Enforced Disappearances (AFAD), a federation of human rights organizations working directly on the issue of involuntary disappearances in Asia which envisions a world without *desaparecidos*, would like to appeal to you and your government to heed the call of the Kilinochchi women protesters. They have been in the streets for almost six months and are calling on your good government to make an initial pivotal move on transitional justice by releasing the names of all who surrendered or were detained during the war and its immediate aftermath.

We congratulate the Sri Lankan government in your efforts to stabilize the country and move towards the path of democracy and social justice. And we understand that you are facing the gigantic task of re-building after a 26-year internal conflict. But further urgent action is required in order to address the root causes of the ethnic conflict and the longstanding crisis of impunity.

We congratulate the Sri Lankan government for ratifying the International Conventional for the Protection of All Persons (ICPAPED) and for passing legislation to establish the Office of Missing Persons (OMP), a local mechanism to search for those who disappeared during and after the conflict.

Transitional justice is a necessary step for a society that is trying to rebuild itself. The call of the Kilinochchi women to look for their missing loved ones and kins because of the war is just and must be attended to by the government immediately. These protesters and everyone who lost their loved ones in the past war have the right to know about the whereabouts of their missing relatives. It is the obligation of the State to account for the systematic abuse and mass atrocities during the war. It is imperative to put the dignity of the victims first before genuine reconciliation can take place.

As such, may we appeal to Your Excellency to make these necessary actions:

1. Immediately release the names and list of all who surrendered or were detained during and after the war, and who continue to remain missing and/or detained ;
2. Ensure that the Committee in charge of this transitional justice process provides all the necessary legal and economic support to victims or families of victims of the disappeared including the process of locating their loved ones and releasing those who are still in detention;
3. Provide reparation for all the victims of enforced disappearances in your country in accordance with international law as provided for in the International Convention for the

Protection of All Persons against Enforced Disappearances (ICPAPED) to which you are a State Party;

4. Ensure that there will be a stop to all actions of enforced disappearances in your country by enacting laws and necessary transitional justice mechanisms;
5. Activate the Office of the Missing Persons (OMP) to focus on cases of enforced disappearances and prosecute the perpetrators in close consultation with the families of the victims.

Signed by,



KHURRAM PARVEZ
Chairperson



MARY AILEEN D. BACALSO
Secretary-General