

# Tamil separatists lobby imperialist powers against Sri Lankan government at UN

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30 March 2012

During the 19th session of the UN Human Rights Council, which met in Geneva from February 27 to March 23, various remnant groups of the Tamil separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) surrounded UN offices.

They were appealing to US imperialism and the Western powers to conduct an international inquiry into war crimes carried out by the Sri Lankan government of President Mahinda Rajapakse in 2009, at the end of the civil war. Such appeals are completely futile from the standpoint of helping the Tamil workers and oppressed masses. They only serve to demonstrate these groups' loyalty to Washington and its allies—amid new imperialist wars and aggression in Libya, Syria and the broader Middle East.

The Tamil nationalist groups organized gatherings and sent delegates to Geneva and Oslo to make “diplomatic deals” with the “international community”. These are, in fact, the very powers that went all out to help the Rajapakse government in Colombo and played a central role in the LTTE's defeat.

The Transitional Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) and the Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC) organized the gatherings on February 27 and on March 5, respectively, in front of the UN office in the *Place des Nations*. The TCC held further protests at the US embassies in London and Paris, with a few hundred of its supporters participating.

On March 16, Global Tamil Forum (GTF) delegates met Norwegian Minister of Environment & International Development Erik Solheim and Conservative Opposition Party Leader Erna Solberg in Oslo. Solheim was the main facilitator of the 2002 talks between the LTTE and the former Sri Lankan United National Front (UNF) government, which handed over power to Rajapakse in 2006.

These groups all correspond to different factions of the expatriate Tamil bourgeoisie, several of which coalesced after the 2009 LTTE collapse. The TGTE formed in the US city of Philadelphia, while the GTF formed in the British Parliament with the blessings of the US and British political establishments. The TCC has worked in France and Germany since 1983.

GTF leaders who went to Geneva heartily welcomed the “Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission” (LLRC) report and its recommendations. The LLRC, appointed by President Mahinda Rajapakse, was set up to deflect international criticism of the atrocities carried out by the government forces in the final months of the war in 2009. It aims to cover up the killing of tens of thousands of Tamil civilians and gross abuses of democratic rights by the Rajapakse government and its military commanders.

TGTE and GTF delegates met with senior foreign ministry officials and UN ambassadors from various African countries in Geneva and Berne to rally support for a US-sponsored resolution. Finally, on March 22 the resolution was approved in the UNHRC with the support of 24 countries. The US draft resolution calls on the Rajapakse government to implement the recommendations of its own LLRC; this will do nothing to address the war crimes carried out against the Tamil masses by the military in the final days of the racist war.

To the disappointment of the TGTE, TCC and the GTF, US under Secretary of State Maria Otero on February 13 told Colombo journalists that the US will support a resolution calling for the government to implement its LLRC report.

She then boasted that the US had over the years supplied Colombo with \$2 billion, much of it in military assistance to fight the LTTE and prevent the

establishment of a separate Tamil nation: “The United States has long been a friend of Sri Lanka; we were one of the first countries to recognize the LTTE as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, in 1997,” she said.

Otero’s remarks highlight that the war crime charges leveled by US and European powers against the Sri Lankan government serve only one purpose: to exert pressure on Colombo to

reject “Chinese influence” and swing more into the orbit of Washington and its allies.

TGTE leader V. Uruttarakumaran has shown his readiness to work as a tool of the Western imperialist powers. He told the *Economic Times*: “However, we are confident, given the changes in the geopolitical dynamics in South Asia, the interests of India and the US and the Tamil interest will converge at one point.”

This amounts to promoting absurd and dangerous illusions that, amid rising tensions between the great powers, the Tamil population can advance its interests by siding with Washington and New Delhi. However, such an alliance—directed against China and its regional allies, such as Pakistan—would, in fact, bring the Indian subcontinent and the world closer to a devastating war between the major powers.

Tamil immigrant workers and youth broadly ignored the gatherings at the UN. Despite a month-long campaign by TGTE and TCC representatives in Europe, Canada and the United States in the run-up to the UN Human Rights Council meeting, only some 3,000 of their supporters attended the gatherings—although transportation to Geneva was organized from various European cities, including a TGV train from Paris.

Raising a “Walk for Justice” banner, some TGTE and TCC supporters holding the national flags of Britain, France, Switzerland, the US and the European Union marched from London and the European parliament to Geneva. They were seen proudly holding these imperialist flags at the Geneva gatherings, as well.

By comparison, in the final stage of the war in 2009, many thousands of diaspora Tamil workers and youth came onto the streets spontaneously to protest the war and save the innocent Tamil people trapped in war zone areas in Sri Lanka. At that time, LTTE members in the diaspora peddled the illusion that by pleading with the imperialist powers they could stop the war. In reality, these powers allowed Rajapakse to carry out a massacre

unhindered.

The low turnout also reflects a growing sense of the reactionary character of the broader foreign policy of US imperialism and its allies. They have inflicted massive casualties and destruction of social infrastructure, human rights violations, war crimes in neo-colonial wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. They now are preparing for war against Syria and Iran.

There is increasing disillusionment with Tamil bourgeois nationalism. Tamil workers and youth can only go forward with a programme of uniting with their class brothers and sisters in Europe and internationally to fight for a socialist internationalist perspective. Basic democratic rights can be won and sustained only on this basis.



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