

# Sri Lankan workers' inquiry meeting to announce findings on garbage disaster

The Independent Workers Inquiry Committee  
17 March 2018

The Independent Workers' Inquiry Committee (IWIC) will hold a meeting at Colombo Public Library auditorium on April 1 at 2 p.m. to release the findings of its investigation into last year's garbage disaster at Meethotamulla. The huge garbage dump, which is located on the outskirts of Colombo, collapsed on April 14, killing at least 32 people, partially or completely destroying 146 houses, and affecting more almost 200 poor families.

The IWIC was established last May on the initiative of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) to investigate the causes of this social crime. The garbage heap in Meethotamulla began about a decade ago when waste, mainly from the Colombo municipal region, began being dumped in the area.

Local residents opposed and protested against the dump from the outset, warning about the health risks and other dangers posed. Successive Sri Lankan governments not only ignored these appeals, but mobilised the police to attack protesting residents.

Following last year's tragedy, President Maithripala Sirisena, in an attempt to dissipate widespread popular outrage, appointed a special commission to "investigate" the disaster. The commission report was presented to Sirisena last month but its findings have not been publicised.

The government is more concerned about covering up its criminal negligence. The media and commission report experts have largely ignored the fundamental social and political reasons for the disaster.

The Meethotamulla tragedy is one of the many social crimes against working people internationally.

Last March a garbage mountain collapsed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, killing 115 people, with another 80 people still missing.

Last June a fire ignited flammable cladding on the

outside of Grenfell flats in London killed at least 79 lives. The use of the dangerous cladding was a cost-cutting measure by the local council.

Likewise in Flint, Michigan in the United States, city authorities have compromised the health of tens of thousands of residents by using polluted river water in domestic water supplies.

Cost-cutting and indifference to the fate of working people and the poor produced these tragedies. Protests and appeals to governments will not change this situation.

The IWIC has conducted a thoroughgoing investigation into the Meethotamulla disaster. Its work has included gathering detailed information from survivors of the tragedy; examining reports on garbage in Colombo, as well as other environmental and health issues and related international developments; the responses of successive Sri Lanka governments; and why the ruling class is incapable of solving these basic problems.

The IWIC's April 1 meeting will involve a detailed presentation of its investigations and findings. This will be followed by an extended question and answer session. We invite workers, youth, students and all those concerned to attend the meeting and participate in this important discussion.

Venue: Colombo Public Library auditorium

Date: April 1, 2018

Time: 2.00 p.m.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**