

Empires are crumbling - Tamils' submissive mentality isn't

European hegemonies began to crumble with the emergence of the 20th century. The disintegration commenced despite the major role Europe had established in shaping the world through global order. An example is the British Empire which at one point controlled over a quarter of the Earth. However, such imperial structures began to crumble with the First World War, where European powers fought amongst themselves. Furthermore, the end of WWII saw the degradation of European power dynamics where many imperial European powers lost most of their colonies. It simultaneously saw the rise of the US empire, thus shaping global order for the following decades, through its rivalry with the Soviet Union.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the US empire was the sole superpower which shaped the world as an empire never seen before in history. However, in the 21st century, we are now witnessing the probable disintegration of this empire and the possible rise of a Chinese empire.

In the last two centuries, the dynamics of empires have changed or are evolving. As a result, the catalyst for the Tamil struggle was created and shaped. The British Empire laid the foundation of the genocidal state of Sri Lanka, which caused the nonviolent Tamil struggle and the subsequent armed struggle. However, it was in fact the US empire which played a major role in the process of crushing the armed resistance and continues its role in strengthening the status quo.

The US was known to have provided secret training operations for Sri Lanka's forces as far back as the 90s. However, during Eelam War IV, the US imperial power significantly aided the genocidal destruction of the Tamils' armed struggle through the provision of; military aid, technological assistance and political endorsement for the Sri Lankan state's

genocidal intentions. Even if their voices say that the US has stopped their supply of military aid to Sri Lanka due to human rights concerns, it is far from the blatant truth. The document titled, "**Brief Introduction into US Complicity**" is a must read to gain a more comprehensive insight into the US' role in Sri Lanka during that specific period. This document is available on the *Peoples' Tribunal on Sri Lanka's* website,

However, this US policy has not changed. On 14.02.2020, the US Department of State had declared a travel ban on Shavendra Silva based on, "credible information of his involvement, through command responsibility, in gross violations of human rights." However, in that same statement it was further mentioned that, "The United States remains committed to strengthening the bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka and helping reshape its security forces to tackle current and emerging threats."

It is upon that basis that the Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha 1333 of the US Army (primary fighting force of the Green Berets) had engaged in a training

exercise with the Sri Lankan navy. This four-week training operation focused on a multitude of areas including:

- Human rights
- Law of armed conflict
- **Small unit tactics**
- **Military operations in urban environment**
- Tactical combat casualty care
- **Combat marksmanship**
- **Close quarter battle**
- Mission planning
- Maritime operations

It is also noteworthy that the Green Berets had trained the genocidal Sri Lankan forces during the 90s thus evident that the US tendency towards Sri Lanka and the Tamil struggle had not changed much. On the other hand, the Tamils' tendency towards the US and Europe has changed in the aftermath of 2009.

The Tamils' revolutionary spirit of resistance has degraded into a submissive position. This may be as a result of the emergence of a Tamil generation who were born and raised in the West whose influence has poisoned the Tamil struggle for liberation.

Failing to be critical of our host countries and attempting to manoeuvre around the obstacles imposed by them, will not allow the Tamil struggle to proceed. It is disappointing to see the failure of many Tamil activists to identify the shortcomings of the UN Human Rights Council. The renewed attempts of these activists to reimplement another such failure within these structures is further problematic. Therefore, a question that we must all turn to ask ourselves is,

“How much more do we have to lose to set the course of the Tamil struggle on the right path again?”

Nitharsan

International News

03.03.2020: **UN** - According to Sunday Times LK, the SL government had rejected allegations made in the report compiled by UN Special Rapporteur (SR) regarding the SL security forces' role on restricting freedom of religion, as incorrectly referenced.

03.03.2020: **Lasantha murder case** - Ahimsa Wickramatunge's request to the US' Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has been accepted by the said court thus allowing future litigation against Gotabaya, reports Colombo Gazette. It was reported that she had requested the dismissal of her case against Gotabaya until he was no longer eligible for presidential impunity

03.03.2020: **UK** - According to Colombo Gazette, the High Commissioner-designate of Sri Lanka to the UK, Saroja Sirisena had assumed her duties at the SL High Commission in the UK.

03.03.2020: **HRW** - In a published statement, HRW condemned the Sri Lankan security forces' role in destructing civic spaces and urged blocs such as the EU to reconsider GSP+

concessions which were provided to Sri Lanka.

05.03.2020: **BIMSTEC** - The Secretary General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC) had held a discussion with Dinesh Gunawardena on 04.03.2020. Whilst

commending the progress made by member states, discussions also focussed upon the upcoming summit that is to be hosted by Sri Lanka, reports Colombo Gazette.

According to PMD News, Sri Lanka is scheduled to host the next BIMSTEC summit in early September of this year. Sri Lanka will be the lead country for the sector of science, technology and innovation.

05.03.2020: **India** - According to Daily Mirror, India had reportedly granted Indian citizenship to almost 19,000 people from five neighbouring countries including 113 Sri Lankan citizens.

09.03.2020: **UN** - According to Colombo Gazette, the UN Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka, Singer, had mentioned that more women should be elected into SL's parliament.

09.03.2020: **UK** - According to Daily Mirror, Sri Lankan officials, including Shavendra Silva, are at risk of being designated under a new British sanctions regime which is to be implemented for the purpose of establishing an autonomous UK Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky-style') program.

11.03.2020: **Vietnam** - The Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee in Vietnam has pledged to facilitate the operation of foreign businesses - including Sri Lankan businesses - during a reception which was hosted for Sri Lanka's Ambassador, Sampath Prasanna Walpita Gamage on 10.03.2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

12.03.2020: **US** - According to Colombo Gazette, the Annual US Human Rights Report on Sri Lanka for 2019 had outlined many significant human rights issues violations.

21.03.2020: **China** - According to Daily Mirror, the China Daily had reported that Chinese health officials and their counterparts from 19 countries (including Sri Lanka) had held an online video conference to

discuss the prevention and control of COVID-19 on 21.03.2020.

22.03.2020: **Pakistan**- According to Daily Mirror, Pakistani Foreign Minister, Qureshi had contacted his counterparts from Sri Lanka and Nepal to propose the hosting of a SAARC health ministers conference to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, in a published statement from Pakistan's Foreign Office.

22.03.2020: **Entry ban**: The PMD office released a statement, declaring the imposition of a ban against the entry of all ships and flights into Sri Lanka.

23.03.2020: **Diaspora** - Multiple Tamil diaspora organisations condemned the use of militarisation to combat the COVID-19 crisis in a published statement and encouraged the international community to implement an international justice mechanism similar to the one recently utilised in Myanmar (IIM). Signatories of the statement include; USTAG, Irish Tamil

Forum (ITF), the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC), British Tamil Forum (BTF) and the Australian Tamil Congress (ATC).

27.03.2020: **Justice** - In a published statement, Human Rights Watch expressed the need for the implementation of an international justice mechanism to ensure that justice was delivered for victims following the release of Mirusivil genocidaire, Ratnayake.

27.03.2020: **UN** - The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has condemned Sri Lanka's release of Ratnayake, reports Colombo Gazette.

28.03.2020: **COVID-19** - HRCSL has been reported to have contacted SL's Director of Prisons to ensure that measures were implemented to protect prisoners from the spread of COVID-19, reports Colombo Page.

29.03.2020: **China** - According to Colombo Gazette, China's first batch of donations

including 30,000 surgical masks and 1,000 COVID-19 test kits were handed over to SL's Health Ministry at the Chinese Embassy in Colombo, following clearance from SL customs.

30.03.2020: **Singapore** - The SL High Commission in Singapore will be closed for a fortnight following a diagnosis that an individual who was on the premises had contracted COVID-19, reports Colombo Page.

31.03.2020: **UAE** - According to Colombo Page, Mahindha had contacted the Crowned Prince of Abu Dhabi and the Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE armed forces, Sheik Al Nahyan, to discuss the strengthening of bilateral relations in a phone call on 30.03.2020. The Sheik was reported to have expressed his interest to assist Sri Lanka to combat the current COVID-19 crisis and had commended SL for integrating their sectors to coordinate the country's crisis management.

Misdirected goal - a flock's confusion

Through the Vaddukoddai Resolution of 1976, the Eelam Tamils' collectively established their democratic mandate for an independent and sovereign Tamil Eelam. This was a goal which was sustainably pursued and established by the LTTE as a political solution to the systematic genocide that the Tamils were continually subject to by Sri Lanka and their multiple allies.

However, in a post-2009 Mullivakkal genocide context, many Tamil parties have drastically converted their vision to advocate the establishment of justice and accountability for Tamils, through various platforms. However as evident through the history of the struggle, a solution within the framework of a Sinhala chauvinist Sri Lanka, is unviable and detrimental to the struggle. Nonetheless, the Tamils' endeavour had primarily focused upon gaining justice and accountability from the western apparatus, the UN. Following the introduction of the UN Resolution 30/1 in 2015, advocacy for transitional justice was pursued as an avenue for accountability by many Tamil organisations. As many Tamil representatives hung onto the Sirisena administration's broken promises for justice, the subsequent setbacks for the Tamil struggle for liberation have been multifold.

Yet, with the return of the Rajapakse brothers, a tendency to pursue "alternative pathways to justice" has emerged amongst such Tamil organisations. These pathways are supposedly pursued with the belief that they would function as an independent mechanism.

A failure of Tamils to expressly convey their ideal for justice, will in turn have a cyclical effect of misinterpretation. A lack of specificity will lead towards the implementation of mechanisms which would deepen the plight of Tamils and often strip them of their ability to gain genocide recognition and any subsequent substantial measure of justice. One such mechanism is the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) which was introduced in 2011 to investigate crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. This measure was later implemented in Myanmar to investigate the Rohingya genocide in 2018. In both instances, the mechanism had deepened the plight of the victims. A comparative study of the effect of the IIIM upon victims will be explored in a subsequent editorial through the case studies of Syria and Myanmar.

Similarly, the Tamils' tendency to loosely identify solutions for our plight, often creates a vacuum which allows external parties to exploit the space. This void allows a window for mechanisms such as the IIIM to be imposed upon the Eelam Tamils. In the absence of the Tamils' leadership, the current uncertainty in ascertaining a concrete political demand for the establishment of justice and accountability for the continuing Tamil genocide, will further deteriorate the struggle for justice, autonomy and liberation for Tamils. A frantic flurry to seek any sliver of justice as hope, further undermines the Tamils' unwavering disposition and ultimately reels back the progress of the struggle down a rabbit hole and into a diminished beggar-esque state - but until then, who's to say otherwise?

Senchudar Gemini

Military News

02.03.2020: **US** - The Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Balance Style 2020/01 between the SL navy and US army has been reported to have commenced in Trincomalee to share knowledge and skills regarding land warfare and law enforcement. This four-week exercise focuses on;

- Human rights
- Law of armed conflict
- Small unit tactics
- Military operations in an urban environment
- Tactical combat casualty care
- Combat marksmanship
- Close quarter battle
- Mission planning
- Maritime operations

03.03.2020: **Bangladesh** - The Bangladeshi naval ship, "Shadhinota" was reported to have arrived at Colombo port on a goodwill visit, reports navy.lk.

03.03.2020: **India** - According to the SL navy's homepage, the 9th staff deliberation between the SL and Indian navies had concluded following discussions regarding bilateral defence relations. Smuggling activities in the Indian Ocean also played a crucial role in this discussion.

04.03.2020: **US** - The US Embassy in Colombo congratulated the SL navy for their success in combating drug use in the island and emphasised their commitment to securing SL's sovereignty.

04.03.2020: **Saudi Arabia** - According to SL's army and navy websites, the Saudi Military Attaché for New Delhi and Colombo was reported to have visited SL's Naval HQ and army commander on the same day.

07.03.2020: **Russia** - According to the SL navy homepage, the Russian naval ship, 'Admiral Vinogradov' had arrived at Colombo port for a goodwill visit.

07.03.2020: **Australia** - The Royal Australian Naval ship, HMAS Parramatta had arrived at the port of Colombo to participate in a wide range of events and programs, reports navy.lk.

04.03.2020: **Russia** - According to the SL navy's website, two Russian naval ships, 'Yaroslav Mudry' and 'Victor Konetsky', were reported to have arrived at the port of Colombo on a three-day goodwill visit.

09.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Daily Mirror, hundreds of personnel at the Security Force HQ-East had updated the requirements for the Punani and Kadakadu quarantine centres over the past 48 hours according to directions from Shavendra Silva. The centres are reported to quarantine all those who arrive from; Iran, Italy and South Korea as an initial phase.

11.03.2020: **Pakistan** - According to army.lk, the new Pakistani High commissioner had met the SL army commander. The topics of discussion included existing bilateral relations encompassing; training opportunities and exchange programs for the tri-service personnel.

11.03.2020: **Maldives** - According to navy.lk, the ambassador of the Maldives had visited the SL Naval HQ.

12.03.2020: **Pakistan** - The Pakistani High commissioner was reported to have visited the SL Naval HQ to discuss bilateral cooperation, reports navy.lk.

12.03.2020: **Afghanistan** - The Afghan ambassador had visited the SL navy's

Northern Naval HQ, reports navy.lk.

14.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to NewsFirst LK, SL army Spokesperson, Brigadier Chandana Wickremesinghe had mentioned that another quarantine centre had been established in Bambaimadu, Vavuniya in addition to existing centres established in; Diyatalawa, Batticaloa Campus, Punani and Kandakaadu. These quarantine centres are reported to currently accommodate 1,720 individuals.

17.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to PMD News, Shavendra Silva will head SL's National Operation Center for Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak, under the directives of Gotabaya.

17.03.2020: **COVID-19** - The US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Teplitz, had announced that they had donated personal protective gear to the staff

of Bandaranaike International Airport to assist airport personnel to combat COVID-19.

20.03.2020: **Australia** - Australian High Commissioner, David Holly was reported to have met the SL army commander to discuss preventative measures to combat COVID-19, reports army.lk.

24.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Ada Derana, SL's navy has engaged in sterilisation programs across the island with most of its initiatives centred in the Northern Naval Area. It is noteworthy that temples and various other sites were sterilised across Jaffna.

25.03.2020: **Britain** - According to army.lk, the British High Commissioner had met the SL Army commander to discuss measures to combat COVID-19.

29.03.2020: **SL Navy** - According to Colombo Gazette, a SL navy base

officer had shot and killed a sailor and injured 2 others at the Mohottuwarama Navy base in Kalpitiya.

30.03.2020: **SL Navy** - According to the SL police, a UNP member who had prevented SL navy personnel from enforcing quarantine regulations had been arrested in Arachchikattuwa, reports Colombo Page.

30.03.2020: **US** - The JCET program which was conducted between the US army and SL navy had concluded with an award ceremony in Trincomalee, reports Colombo Page.

31.03.2020: **SL army** - According to a statement made by genocidaire Shavendra Silva, the SL army would be transporting pensioners to banks in a secure manner during the pension period of 01.04.2020-02.04.2020 to allow them to safely receive their pension payments, reports Colombo Page.

Domestic News

01.03.2020: **SL Parliament** - According to News First LK, Gotabaya will be vested with the powers to dissolve the parliament after midnight on 01.03.2020.

02.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Sunday Times LK, a published Gazette notification had declared that nominations for SL's upcoming parliamentary elections would be received between 12.03.2020 - 19.03.2020. The elections are reportedly scheduled to occur on 25.04.2020 with SL's new parliament scheduled to deliberate on 14.05.2020.

03.03.2020: **Speaker** - The Speaker of SL Parliament, Karu Jayasuriya's term came to an end following Gotabaya's dissolution of parliament, reports Colombo Gazette.

05.03.2020: **HRCSL** - In a statement submitted to the UNHRC, HRCSL had outlined the deterioration of the 19th Amendment in Sri Lanka's constitution and its role in impacting the rule of law on the island, reports Colombo Gazette. The statement was reported to have included demands to instate protection for

human rights defenders and journalists.

08.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Daily Mirror, Douglas Devananda had announced that they would be participating in SL's upcoming elections across the Tamil homeland under the 'veena symbol'. It is reported that deliberations are underway to establish a coalition amongst other parties which oppose the TNA.

08.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - In a published statement, Ambika Satkunanathan expressed that she had submitted her resignation from her position as the Commissioner of the HRCSL on 26.02.2020 to be effective from 07.03.2020.

08.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Pathivu Media, Ambika Satkunanathan and Sasikala Raviraj were invited to a Women's Day event that was held in Thenmarachchi to introduce them as upcoming election candidates in SL's parliamentary elections.

12.03.2020: **Schools** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Ministry of Education had announced that all government schools would be closed from 13.03.2020 - 20.03.2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19.

13.03.2020: **Universities** - According to Azzam Ameen, all universities would be closed for two weeks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

13.03.2020: **Weather** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Department of Meteorology had announced that the heat index would increase to "Extreme Caution" conditions from 14.03.2020.

14.03.2020: **Consular services** - SL limits the consular services provided in 11 foreign countries to prevent the spread of COVID-19, reports Colombo Gazette.

15.03.2020: **Airport** - The SL government and CAA announce that Jaffna International Airport would be closed for 2 weeks to contain COVID-19, reports Colombo Gazette.

15.03.2020: **Event ban** - According to newswire.lk, all events in Sri Lanka are banned.

16.03.2020: **Museum ban** - According to SL's Ministry of Buddhasasana, Cultural and Religious Affairs, 11 SL national museums would be closed to contain the spread of COVID-19, reports Colombo Gazette.

16.03.2020: **Exams** - SL's Department of examinations has postponed all exams that were scheduled to occur in March 2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

18.03.2020: **HRCSL** - According to the HRCSL, all investigations scheduled between 20.03.2020 - 10.04.2020 have been rescheduled until further notice due to the COVID-19 crisis, reports Colombo Gazette.

18.03.2020: **Labour** - The Commissioner of SL's Labour Department announces the termination of essential services until 31.03.2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

19.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Azzam Ameen, the chairman of SLEC had announced that SL's general elections would be postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

19.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Pathivu Media, a renowned surgeon, Seetha Arambepola, had resigned

from her position as the councillor for the Western Province as she had been nominated as an SLPP candidate.

19.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Colombo Gazette, SLEC had denied the Sinhala Extremist Party, Bodu Bala Sena's Gnanasero Thero's application to contest as a candidate in SL's parliamentary elections. It was reported that the Thero had appealed the decision.

19.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Colombo Gazette, Ambiga Satkunanathan had mentioned in a media statement that she had withdrawn from participating in SL's parliamentary elections as TNA's candidate due to personal reasons and denied allegations that the TNA had withdrawn the offer due to the media's vilification of her.

19.03.2020: **Ethanol** - SL's Department of Excise will be transferring seized ethanol to the Department of Health to combat the spread of COVID-19, reports Colombo Gazette.

19.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - The UNP had released their list of 29 candidates who were to participate in

SL's upcoming parliamentary elections as party representatives, reports Pathivu Media.

20.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Sunday Times LK, in addition to the first quarantine centre constructed by the SL air force in Vanni which houses 206 individuals, three more were under construction in; Palaly, Iranaimadu and Mullaitivu.

21.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - In a published Extraordinary Gazette notification, Sri Lanka's Electoral Commission had announced that the polls scheduled to occur on 25.04.2020 could not occur due to the COVID-19 outbreak and had mentioned that a decision would be made 2 weeks from 30.04.2020.

21.03.2020: **Church** - According to Colombo Gazette, it was requested that all those who had attended a service at a church in Jaffna, were requested to quarantine themselves to prevent the spread of COVID-19 after a pastor was found to have been tested positive for COVID-19.

22.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to PMD news, the curfew imposed for five districts in the North - namely Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu,

Kilinochchi and Jaffna - had been extended until 6 am on 24.03.2020 for the supposed wellbeing of the citizens, reports Daily Mirror.

22.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Colombo Gazette, a travel ban had been imposed against the residents of the Northern Province from travelling across the island.

24.03.2020: **Appointment** - SL's former air force commander, Goonetilleke, assumed duties as the Councillor of SL's Western Province before Gotabaya, reports Colombo Gazette.

26.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to DailyMirror, the Special Representative of the President, Basil Rajapaksa, had been appointed as the Chairman of the Presidential Task Force established to combat COVID - 19.

26.03.2020: **Portal** - SL's Ministry of Foreign Relations and the Information & Communication

Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) have jointly launched an online portal to support the Sri Lankan Diaspora, reports Colombo Page.

26.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Daily Mirror, SL's PMD had announced that an ongoing police curfew in the Jaffna district would continue to be enforced until further notice due to the current situation. Curfews in the Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Jaffna districts were scheduled to be temporarily lifted at 6.00 am on 27.03.2020.

28.03.2020: **Customs** - According to Colombo Page, SL's Customs Department had made arrangements to immediately release essential commodities from port premises in a secure manner.

29.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - Sajith has been reported to have mentioned that his election policy would centre around the 13th Amendment of SL's

constitution, reports Colombo Gazette.

29.03.2020: **Easter Sunday Attacks** - According to a statement made by the SL Police Media Spokesperson, SP Jaliya Senaratne at a press conference, the main suspect who had planned and executed the suicide bomb attack on Zion Church in Batticaloa had been arrested and detained by SL's CID following investigations, reports Colombo Page.

30.03.2020: **Curfew** - According to PMD News, the curfew imposed upon the 6 districts of; Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Puttalam, Kandy and Jaffna had been reimposed on 30.03.2020 to be in force until 01.04.2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

31.03.2020: **UNP** - Former UNP MPs are scheduled to meet with Gotabaya on 01.04.2020 at SL's Presidential Secretariat to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic, reports Colombo Page.

Economic News

06.03.2020: **Scam** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Fort Magistrate's Court had issued the arrest of 10 suspects including Ravi Karunanayake, regarding SL's Central Bank Treasury Bond Scam from 2016.

09.03.2020: **Solar energy** - The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) has issued tenders for 150 MW of solar power, reports PV magazine.

10.03.2020: **Stock market** - Colombo's Stock Market's All Share Price Index fell to its 2nd historic low, reports Colombo Gazette. It was further reported that the Colombo's Stock Exchange (CSE) was temporarily halted following a fall in the S & P SL20 by 5%.

15.03.2020: **Wages** - According to Colombo Gazette, plantation companies had denied the implementation of a wage of LKR 1000 for their workers.

17.03.2020: **Business** - According to Azzam Ameen, Gotabaya had ordered banks and financial institutions from collecting loan repayments for the next 6 months.

18.03.2020: **Travel ban** - Arrivals at the Bandaranaike International airport are reported to be suspended until 31.03.2020 whilst departures and transits will continue to operate, reports newswire.lk.

18.03.2020: **China** - According to TamilNet, China's Development Bank had extended a syndicated-loan for Sri Lanka by USD 500 million in a 10-year-tenure upon SL's request for assistance to combat COVID-19.

19.03.2020: **Fuel** - SL Cabinet spokesman, Bandula Gunawardena had announced that the SL government would maintain fuel prices at a flat rate, reports Colombo Gazette.

19.03.2020: **SL Central Bank** - To counter the economic pressures caused by the COVID-19 crisis, SL's Central Bank had announced several actions, reports newswire.lk. The measures were reported to include the suspension of the purchase of; non-essential goods, motor vehicles and Sri Lanka International Sovereign Bonds by licensed banks in Sri Lanka, for the next three months.

19.03.2020: **SL President** - According to newswire.lk, Gotabaya has taken the following decisions on behalf of SL's Cabinet, to counter the issues caused by the COVID-19 crisis:

- Releasing LKR 10 billion for settling the bills procured medicine in arrears.
- Releasing LKR 500 million for Corona eradication activities.
- Releasing LKR 3 billion for settling the procurement bills of fertilizer.
- Releasing LKR 5 billion for settling bills of small and medium scale construction contractors.
- Allocation of LKR 46 billion for the interest applicable for the senior citizens' deposits that had not been paid for two years.
- Supplying LKR 8 billion required for SL's General Election 2020.

20.03.2020: **Currency** - According to Colombo Gazette, the LKR had continued to depreciate in value against the USD for the 4th consecutive day.

22.03.2020: **China** - Following reports made by a SL cabinet minister to the Daily Mirror, it has been reported that SL is due to receive additional concessionary loans from China to fund sectors such

as infrastructure. TamilNet notes that the reports made to Daily Mirror had indicated that the loans are expected to be credited in May, 2020.

23.03.2020: Economic measures: According to Azzam Ameen, the deadlines for; VAT, income tax, driving licence renewal, wat/electricity bills below LKR 15,000, would be extended.

25.03.2020: Treasury - According to Economy Next, SL's treasury bill had fallen 82 basis points within a week to the lowest rate that it has been at since 2016 due to the COVID-19 crisis.

25.03.2020: IMF and World Bank - According to Economy Next, IMF and World Bank had instructed their creditor countries to suspend debt repayments from 76 IDA countries - including SL - to allow them to concentrate their efforts to their respective economies in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

26.03.2020: Rubber - According to Economy Next, SL Association of Manufacturers and Exporters of Rubber Products's Director General, Rohan Masakorala had

mentioned on 24.03.2020, that the government had not consulted with SL's rubber industry in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis and that they require the government's assistance to allow them to manufacture plastic gloves for officials who required them.

26.03.2020: HSBC SL - According to Daily FT, HSBC SL had expressed in a statement that they would assist personal and corporate customers during the COVID-19 crisis through relief measures.

28.03.2020: Food - According to Colombo Page, Mahindha had contacted SL's agricultural authorities to prepare for an impending global food crisis due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

28.03.2020: US - The US Department of State and USAID are reported to fund SL with USD 1.3 million as emergency health and humanitarian assistance to combat COVID-19, reports Colombo Page.

28.03.2020: SL Central Bank - According to newswire.lk, SL's Central Bank had announced the allocation of LKR 50 billion, to establish a 6-

month refinancing facility to support COVID19-hit businesses including the self employed and other individuals.

29.03.2020: Stock Market - After being closed between 23.03.2020 - 27.03.2020 due to curfew restrictions, CSE had announced that the market would be closed on 30.03.2020 as a market holiday due to the extension of the curfew, reports Colombo Page.

30.03.2020: Nestlé - According to Colombo Page, Nestlé had donated LKR 15 million worth of products to SL's National Operations Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 to assist SL's frontline workers who were combatting COVID-19.

30.03.2020: Deficit - According to SL's Central Bank, SL's trade deficit had deepened following a fall in exports and increase in imports, reports Colombo Page.

31.03.2020: Inflation - According to SL's Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo's Consumer Price Index (CCPI) had declined from 6.2% in February 2020 to 5.4% in March 2020, reports Colombo Page.

News about Oppression & Resistance

02.03.2020: **Remand** - The Mawanella Magistrates' Court has announced that the 32 individuals arrested for the alleged desecration of Buddha statues across Mawanella would be further remanded until 16.03.2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

03.03.2020: **TID** - According to TamilNet, the TID had arrested 4 Tamil youth in Pooneryn for the alleged possession of explosives in Vadamarachchi, without any independent verification or complaint lodged to the local Human Rights Commission.

04.03.2020: **TID** - According to TamilNet, S. Uthayasivam from Valikaamam East was known to have been arrested and detained by the TID for alleged links to the 4 youth from Pooneryn who were arrested for the alleged possession of explosives.

05.03.2020: **Militarisation** - According to Colombo Gazette, Gotabaya had defended the appointment of former SL military officers into the SL state's institutions in a press conference, as the officers were supposedly universally trained in such fields.

06.03.2020: **Solidarity** - The Tamil Youth People's Movement expressed their support towards a protest that is to be organised by the families of forcibly disappeared persons on 08.03.2020 in Mullaitivu. In a published statement in Tamil, the youth further expressed solidarity for these families who had been protesting for over 3 years.

07.03.2020: **EPDP** - According to their sources from Colombo, Douglas Devananda had been granted permission to retrieve his exiled EPDP assassins to Jaffna, reports TamilNet.

07.03.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Health Director General, Dr. Jasinghe had notified a private university in Batticaloa, that the campus would be acquired until further notice to function as a COVID-19 quarantine centre.

08.03.2020: **Protest** - The families of forcibly disappeared persons held a mass protest in Mullaitivu to raise awareness regarding their relatives' plight and demand accountability.

08.03.2020: **Impunity** - According to Colombo Gazette, Amnesty

International had indicated in a statement which established that impunity for sexual and gender-based violence in Sri Lanka was high. They further mentioned that consecutive SL governments had failed to uphold their assurances to address the issue.

10.03.2020: **Hartal** - Kattankudy Urban Council and Business Association have announced that a hartal would be staged on 11.03.2020 in opposition to the establishment of a quarantine centre at Batticaloa campus, reports Colombo Gazette.

10.03.2020: **TID** - According to TamilNet, Uthayasivam had been arrested by the TID due to his involvement in resisting the occupational SL navy and army's sand mining and the occupational SL police's logging in the area.

19.03.2020: **SL Parliamentary elections** - According to Colombo Gazette, a former spokesman of the SL army, Maj. Gen. Sumith Alapattu would be contesting in SL's upcoming parliamentary elections under Sajith's party from the Kurunegala district.

21.03.2020: **Prison** - Inmates from Anuradhapura prison held a protest demanding secure conditions due to a fear of the spread of COVID-19. The STF was involved in controlling the protest which resulted in a shootout where 3 inmates sustained injuries and 1 was reported as deceased, reports Colombo Gazette.

24.03.2020: **Buddhism** - During the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress'

annual convention which was held on 02.03.2020, Mahindha mentioned that the conversion of Buddhists to other religions was a threat and an "anti-conversion bill" may be introduced to counter this following SL's upcoming parliamentary elections, reports Barnabus Fund.

26.03.2020: **Prison** - According to Daily Mirror, the former staff

sergeant of the SL army, R.M. Sunil Ratnayake, who was sentenced to death over the murder of eight Tamil civilians in Mirusuvil, Jaffna in 2000, had received a presidential pardon from his offences and was subsequently released from Welikada Prison.

One excuse, several liberations

Sri Lanka's former Army Staff sergeant, Sunil Ratnayake, was sentenced to death in June 2015 for the murder of eight Tamil civilians in the Mirusuvil massacre of the year, 2000. Following a 13-year trial, a Sri Lankan court had convicted him of murdering eight members from the Eelam Tamil community, including a five-year-old and three teenagers.

On the other hand, the Sri Lankan government had made the decision to ease congestion in prisons by releasing prisoners. This decision was supposedly made to avoid the spread of COVID-19. It was allegedly announced that amongst others, released criminals would be those who had committed petty crimes or were unable to meet bail conditions. It is within this context that a mass-murderer, Sunil Ratnayake, had been acquitted of his crimes through a presidential pardon.

To further contextualise this release, it is crucial that we examine Gotabaya

Rajapakse's presidential campaign from October of 2019. Then presidential hopeful, Gotabaya Rajapakse, had pledged that once in power, he would acquit and release 'war heroes' who were being held on 'baseless' charges. He further promised that he would free military personnel jailed for a string of offenses under the governance of previous SL government administrations.

Is this merely an excuse to deliver their accomplices from accountability? Is COVID-19 an opportunity to unleash criminals convicted of monstrous crimes?

This acquittal of genocidaire, Ratnayake has reminded us once again that regardless of the intensity of any crisis situation, the Sri Lankan government will never neglect its primary concern of maintaining their supremacist agendas. Especially that of preserving the heroic nature of their "war heroes."

Kayalvizhi

Signs of Structural Genocide

05.03.2020:
Sinhalicisation and Militarisation - According to a statement made by C.V. Wigneswaran, the Gotabaya regime had furthered the Sirisena regime's initiatives of employing Sinhalese youth into job vacancies within occupied Tamil Eelam. This was supposedly achieved through the appointment of Sinhalese youth into leading positions in civil administration thus depriving the local Tamils of the opportunity, reports TamilNet.

05.03.2020:
Environmental degradation - Despite complaints lodged to Gotabaya regarding the significant impact on marine-life near a Chinese-funded coal plant in Norochcholai, the CEB was reported to have notified journalists that the plant was not a threat to the environment, reports Colombo Gazette. The denial of the environmental impact aligns with the disruption of the Tamils' territorial integrity through the destruction of the occupied lands' marine and land capacities.

11.03.2020:
Sinhalicisation - According to TamilNet, the LTTE's Thooyavan College of Political Science which had been allocated to the administration of Jaffna University, had received instructions from SL's Ministry of Higher Education, to enrol Sinhalese students into the college. TamilNet reports that the Sinhalicisation of the educational institutions of Tamils constitutes as cultural genocide.

11.03.2020:
Buddhisation - A grand Buddhist Vihara, "Sarasavi Viharya", which was funded by the SL government, was opened within the premises of Jaffna university's Kilinochchi campus on 07.03.2020, reports TamilNet. It is notable that Sinhala Buddhist national group members had attended the opening ceremony from SL's Southern provinces.

Phoenix-The Next Generation



Donation for Tamil Eelam (COVID-19)

The Corona crisis has now reached the island of Sri Lanka and people living in Tamil area have been come in a very big dilemma. The curfew imposed by the government has affected many people working as a day-laborer. They're reliant on help now. On behalf of Phoenix TNG, we would like to contribute to support our brothers and sisters in Tamil Eelam.

Donation income:

From Phoenix TNG members	500 CHF
Part payment from Phoenix cash	100 CHF
Total	600 CHF

Donation transfer:

The total revenue was executed through 3 international channels. For safety reason these channels remain anonymous. The responsible associations provide residents with food packages and other support for basic needs.

The transfers were made on 07.04.2020/ 08.04.2020 via TEF.

வெல்வது உறுதி !

Phoenix TNG