



Tamil Memorial Foundation

தமிழர் நினைவு அறக்கட்டளை

Amplifying the Authentic Voices of Grassroots Eelam Tamils: Preserving Heritage, Empowering Futures

Nov 21, 2023

Town of Ajax and City of Brampton Proclaim Nov 21, 2023, as Tamil National Flag Day: A Historic Milestone

Toronto, ON – November 21, 2023 – The Tamil Memorial Foundation proudly announces the monumental proclamation by the Town of Ajax and City of Brampton, designating November 21st as Tamil National Flag Day. This remarkable recognition signifies a pivotal moment in Canadian history, celebrating the vibrant heritage and indelible contributions of the Canadian Tamil community.

The Town of Ajax and City of Brampton have exemplified exceptional leadership and inclusivity in acknowledging the profound impact of the Canadian Tamil community on the fabric of Canada. We extend our deepest gratitude to these municipalities for their unwavering support and embracing the significance of Tamil National Flag Day.

Our sincere gratitude to Hon. Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party, for your unwavering support to the Canadian Tamil Community and for recognizing Tamil National Flag Day.

We also express heartfelt appreciation to the City of Richmond Hill and the City of Whitby for their continuous recognition and unwavering support for the Tamil community. Their commitment to diversity and inclusivity enriches our societal tapestry.

Hon. Shaun Chen's steadfast support for the Tamil community has been invaluable, and we extend our deepest gratitude for his unwavering dedication. We also thank Hon. Ruby Sahota, Hon. Iqra Khalid, and Hon. Shaqit Ali for their warm greetings as the Tamil Diaspora worldwide celebrates Tamil National Flag Day.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Hon. Logan Kanapathi, MPP, for his inspiring leadership, setting an exemplary role for the next generation.

Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumar, Prime Minister of Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam, made a compelling statement, highlighting the historical significance of the Tamil National Flag. He emphasized, "Tamils did not have a flag during the nearly 4.5 centuries of colonial rule. It was Tamil National Leader Hon. Velupillai Prabhakaran who first conceived the idea of the Tamil National Flag, introduced on November 21st, 1990."

For further information or media inquiries, please contact Elamurukan at tamilmemorialfoundationcanada@gmail.com

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Tamil Memorial Foundation

The Tamil Memorial Foundation, a coalition of Canadian organizations, is dedicated to preserving and educating about the rich heritage of the Tamils from Sri Lanka. Working hand in hand with the Tamil community, we stand as a genuine advocate for grassroots Tamils, devoid of any political affiliations. Our mission is to support grassroots initiatives aiming to uphold Tamil culture, history, language, and timeless principles. We aim to shed light on the Tamil identity, particularly Tamils from Eelam, covering historical narratives, the struggle for self-determination, the challenges faced, including the issue of genocide, and our cherished national symbols. Our vision extends to seamlessly integrating future generations into diverse societies while instilling pride in their heritage, and preserving our language, arts, and ancestral wisdom. We aspire to create global citizens who, like our ancestors, prioritize discipline, respect, and environmental stewardship, and contribute to a peaceful world.

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Tamil National Flag

The Tamil National Flag is adorned with four colors - yellow, red, black, and white. Yellow signifies the moral foundation and righteousness of the liberation struggle, aligning the Tamil Eelam Nation with the cause of justice. Red embodies our political aspiration for revolutionary social transformation, aiming to establish social equality, socialism, and social justice by eradicating inequalities within Tamil Eelam society, including the resolution of caste and class contradictions and the abolition of female subjugation. Black signifies that the path to liberation is rugged, fraught with death, destruction, and unbearable suffering, requiring steadfast resolve, unwavering faith, and unyielding determination to overcome these trials and confront the post-freedom challenges and threats to build and safeguard the nation. White symbolizes the imperative for the liberation movement, its leaders, and the people to uphold purity and integrity.

Since the era of the Chola dynasty, the last prominent Tamil Empire in the Indian Subcontinent, Tamils have consistently identified with and embraced variations of the Tiger flag as their own. Additionally, Eelam Tamils, representing present-day Sri Lanka, officially adopted this flag on November 21st, 1990. During a special session on October 24, 2021, the Parliament of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam resolved and declared that the 21st of November each year would be recognized as Tamil National Flag Day. This flag, which unites Tamil nationals of Eelam (Sri Lanka) worldwide, symbolizes their sovereignty and right to self-determination. It serves as a poignant reminder of the immense sacrifices made by the Eelam Tamil community in their struggle for liberation and emancipation from foreign rule and Sinhala-Buddhist dominance.

Tamil Language

Tamil encompasses a wide array of disciplines dating back over 2000 years, including fields such as architecture, medicine, astronomy, astrology, music, dance, martial arts, warfare, international trade, international marine routes, mysticism, and culinary arts, among others. It is noteworthy to mention the various specialized branches within each discipline. Remarkably, Tamil remains the only classical language that meets all the qualifying criteria and continues to be studied and practiced today.

Tamils from Eelam (Sri Lanka)

The Tamils of the island are descendants of the Nagar and Iyakkar clans who predate the arrival of Vijayan and his 700 followers in the 5th century BCE, the ancestors of the Sinhalese on the island. Archaeological excavations by S.U. Deraniyagala (Iranaimadu Formation by S.U. Deraniyagala) have also uncovered evidence establishing that Eelam Tamils lived there around 500-700 BC, with palm leaf scriptures serving as corroborative evidence (as referenced in "Kantarodai Civilization of Ancient Jaffna" by Dr. Siva Thiagarajah). Notably, during Dutugamini's reign, Tamil kings were in power over the majority of regions in Sri Lanka, except the Ruhunu south governed by Dutugamini himself. The Mahavamsa also mentions thirty-two Demela kings who were defeated by Dutugamini on his way to reach Anuradhapura (as recorded in the Mahavamsa).

The statements of renowned historian Paul E. Peiris are relevant in this respect. In his work "Nagadipa and Buddhist remains in Jaffna" (1917 JRA Journal No. 70 P 12-18), he stated, "I suggest that the north of Ceylon was a flourishing settlement before Vijaya was born". He further noted, "Long before the arrival of Vijaya, there were in Lanka five recognized Iswarams of Siva, which claimed and received adoration of all India. These were Tiru Keteeswaram Munneswaram, Tondeswaram, Thirukoneswaram, and Naguleswaram".

The Tamil and Sinhala Kingdoms were amalgamated by the British into one unit for administrative purposes under the recommendation of the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission of 1833. In 1948, when the British granted independence to Ceylon, they made the significant error of not separating the two sovereign nations. This, in addition to the fact that Tamils constituted one-third of the island's population, led to the systematic oppression and genocide of Tamils in various dimensions, from parliamentary decisions to day-to-day survival. This resulted in the mass displacement of Tamils globally as political asylum seekers.



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Tamil Genocide

The Tamil genocide is a complex issue with multifaceted dimensions that encompasses various forms of violence and oppression that the Tamil people of Sri Lanka have faced for decades such as the State-sponsored atrocities, and anti-Tamil pogroms (1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983). The most notable form of genocide against Tamils has been the mass killings that took place during the final stages of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009, where more than 140,000 Tamil civilians were killed by the Sri Lankan military. However, the genocide is not limited to just these killings. It also includes forced disappearances, torture, sexual violence, land grabs, cultural and heritage genocide and the denial of education, political, employment and civil rights to Tamils.

The lack of accountability for past atrocities and the failure to address the underlying grievances of Tamils have also perpetuated the cycle of violence and oppression.

The multifaceted Tamil genocide is an ongoing and unchecked tragedy that needs more attention from the international community.

Mass Killings: During the final stages of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009, more than 140,000 Tamil civilians were killed by the Sri Lankan military.

Forced Disappearances: According to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Sri Lanka has the second-highest number of disappearances in the world, with Tamils being disproportionately affected.

Torture: Human rights organizations have documented numerous cases of Tamils being subjected to torture while in police or military custody in Sri Lanka. On April 20, 2023, a TGTE initiated Human Rights Committee proceedings resulted in a unanimous ruling by all 17 judges against Sri Lanka ordering it to Punish the Perpetrators & Pay Compensation for a Tamil Torture Victim

Sexual Violence: Tamils, particularly women, have been subjected to sexual violence by the Sri Lankan military and police. A peek at the British documentary "Sri Lanka's Killing Fields" on Channel 4 Media, one can witness the shocking sexual crimes that have taken place.

Land Grabs: The Sri Lankan government has seized Tamil lands in the North and East under the pretext of development, effectively displacing thousands of Tamil families from their ancestral lands.

Cultural and Heritage Genocide: The Sri Lankan government has systematically destroyed Tamil cultural and religious sites, literature, music, and language.

Education and Employment Rights: Sinhala Only Policy, the Official Language Act and the Standardization Act led to discrimination against Tamil students in education and employment.

Language Rights: Tamil language rights have been suppressed, with the government replacing Tamil names with Sinhalese ones.