



The Need for Change in Sri Lanka

In December 2007 the United States Congress passed an historic bill halting foreign military financing to the Government of Sri Lanka until human rights benchmarks are met. In September 2008, Congress further restricted military assistance and the sale of equipment to Sri Lanka due to their recruitment and use of child soldiers. Sadly, the war that has claimed over 124,000 lives has steadily worsened. Abductions, indiscriminate aerial attacks, enforced “disappearances,” arbitrary arrests and detentions, and the suppression of the media, mostly directed towards the Tamil community, have contributed to a culture of fear and insecurity. In the North, the historic heartland of Tamil culture, the humanitarian situation is especially grave, as the expulsion of humanitarian organizations and an embargo on basic food and medicine have left 300,000 IDPs without access to lifesaving assistance. Earlier this month the Genocide Prevention Project labeled Sri Lanka as a country on ‘red alert’ for currently experiencing genocide.

What is Needed in Sri Lanka

- 1. Preventing genocidal acts against the Tamil community**
- 2. Meeting the humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population**
The UN and INGOs should be given access to immediately address the needs of the 300,000 IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka.
- 3. Finding a political solution**
Pressure should be applied on the Government of Sri Lanka to implement a power-sharing package with the Tamils that allows autonomy for the Tamil homeland in the North and East. A referendum should be held in the North and East of Sri Lanka modeled after the UN mandate in East Timor.

Questions for Presidential Nominees: Hillary Clinton



Susan Rice

- What innovative steps will the United States be willing to take to stop the reported genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka and effectively engage both parties to find a political solution to the conflict?
- Will the US continue to withhold military assistance of all kinds to the island until the human rights of minority communities are respected?
- Can the rationale for self-determination as used in Southern Sudan, Kosovo and Timor Leste be applied to Sri Lanka? If not, why not?
- Will the United States support an UN-monitored referendum in the North East of Sri Lanka? If not, why not?