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GTF Hopes for Justice for the Tamils in Sri Lanka: Urges UN for International Independent Investigation

London – July 20, 2010 – The Global Tamil Forum welcomes the formation of the UN Advisory Panel that has been created by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to advise him on the issue of accountability related to the violation of the international human-right and humanitarian laws during the war between the government forces and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. GTF hopes that the setting up of the Advisory Panel is a first step towards the process of justice for all, especially the victimized Tamils in Sri Lanka, and calls upon the UN and the International Community to ensure that Tamil leaders are consulted during the process to uphold the interests of the victims.

Welcoming the creation of the three-member Advisory Panel that was announced last month by the UN, the President of GTF, Rev. Dr. S.J.Emmanuel said “this Panel could be the first step towards bringing justice to the Tamils in Sri Lanka. There is an overwhelming body of emerging evidence and too many unanswered questions that warrant proper independent investigation.” Thanking the UN for taking the first step, he added “Tamil people hope that the Panel will carefully study the past attempts at self-investigation and unfulfilled promises by the Sri Lankan government and conclude only an international war crime investigation can bring out the truth and justice to the Tamils.”

Noting the mounting evidence of war crimes in Sri Lanka that were recorded by the soldiers themselves using their cell phones and cameras, Vice-President of GTF and the President of the Canadian Tamil Congress Prof. Sri Ranjan said “this perhaps is the first war ever with such an alarming number of incidents of war crimes captured and saved by digital devices, and the civilized world is obliged to take tangible action.” He pointed to an article by former US Assistant Secretary of State Arthur Dewey who served in Sri Lanka as a member of the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons, observing Sri Lanka’s own investigation on human-right violations, where he wrote “The Sri Lankan government has proven time and again that it's unwilling to ensure accountability for serious violations... Secretary-General Ban should now take the initiative and establish a real independent international investigation.”

GTF calls upon the International Community to come up with a mechanism to safely gather evidence of war crimes in Sri Lanka. Thousands of Tamil people that witnessed the crimes live in fear under the same military that committed them. Unless those people are given protection and provided with a safe environment free of fear and intimidation, they can’t come forward to provide evidence. Even the Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka are unable to give their views due to the rampant intimidations and oppressive conditions. GTF hopes that the Advisory Panel will consider all these factors and make recommendations for an international independent investigation that can bring justice to the thousands of victims which can ultimately lead to reconciliation and genuine peace in the island.

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About GTF:

Global Tamil Forum is a consortium of Tamil organizations around the world. It harnesses the skills and the knowledge of the members of the Forum, well-wishers and others including mainstream decision makers in the international governments, institutions and organizations with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Tamil people in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self determination within a democratic framework under pinned by the international law, its covenants and conventions. The Forum was set-up in 2009 with the support of many International Tamil community organizations. For more information and our mission and vision statements please contact info@globaltamilforum.org and/or visit: www.globaltamilforum.org