

COMMITTEE FOR THE FORMATION OF A
Provisional
Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

நாடு கடந்த தமிழீழ அரசு அமைப்பதற்கான செயற்குழு

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15 September 2009

For immediate release

A Booklet on the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

Many of our people have important questions about the formation of a Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

We now publish answers to many of these questions that may be of concern to our people in a Question and Answer format. For the time being, the Booklet is being published electronically.

It is observed that, after the announcement regarding the formation of the TGTE, there is an exchange of views and debates taking place at various levels. This is a good sign. It will help us in taking the next step. Healthy debates do not cause confusion. On the contrary, they will help to throw more light on the current situation and the required action.

The Booklet now released is only the first stage in informing our people about the TGTE. We will continue to publish additional information and explanation. We believe this Booklet will help to generate a further exchange of views on the TGTE.

Matters dealt with in this booklet are those that are current today. We understand the practical difficulties present therein. Therefore, before implementation of the TGTE we will make necessary changes taking into consideration all feedback from people's organizations and individuals. We expect to receive further input and suggestions for practical implementation in future as well.

Those who wish to have a copy of the Booklet, please contact us by email - info@govtamileelam.org



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September 15, 2009

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1. What is meant by a Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam?

The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a political formation to win the freedom of the Tamil people on the basis of their fundamental political principles of Nationhood, Homeland and Right of self-determination. The TGTE is a novel concept both for the Tamil people and the rest of the world.

At present the Tamil people have absolutely no prospect of articulating their political aspirations or of exercising their fundamental rights in their homeland itself. The Sri Lankan government, through legal impediments, military occupation and murder is strangling the Tamil people's aspirations and their political rights.

In this context, the Tamil Diaspora, an integral part of the nation of Tamil Eelam, utilizing democratic means in their respective countries, will establish the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) as the highest political entity to campaign for the realization of the Tamils' right to self-determination. Since it is impractical for political leaders and people in Tamil Eelam to participate in the TGTE, only those Tamils in the Diaspora will be elected to the TGTE through democratic elections. The TGTE will work hand-in-hand with anyone working for the well-being of the Tamil people in the island of Sri Lanka, including the political and social leaders of the people in Eelam.

2. Why a Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam? What is the necessity for such a government?

The social existence of the Tamil people depends on the preservation of their distinct political, economic and cultural way of life. The Tamils must have the ability to coexist and be co-partners with other communities around the world. To achieve these goals and to control factors that pose threats to their existence, there is a need for a strong and self-governing political entity. These aims were given shape in 1976 through the Vaddukkodai Resolution and reinforced by the mandate given by the people in the 1977 general elections. The 1985 Thimpu Principles and the 2003 Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) proposals gave added weight to these aims.

In the island of Sri Lanka, the political structure has been militarized for more than 60 years. The constitution enacted by Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony and the laws enacted thereunder have denied the fundamental rights and well-being of other peoples on the island. The constitution and the current political structure have become stumbling blocks to the political identity, social existence and cultural advancement of the Tamil people, as well as other non- Sinhalese-Buddhist nations.

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Furthermore, internal conditions in island of Sri Lanka have become oppressive and grave threats to the Tamil people prevent them from freely expressing their aspirations and engaging in political discourse and activism to protect their rights or advance the interests of their separate identity.

Tamils have been compelled to live in open prisons leading lives of slavery. At the same time, Sinhala government leaders, policy formulators, diplomats and army commanders are indulging at the national and international levels in false propaganda claiming there are no problems for the Tamils and that there is no need for any political solution.

The responsibility has now fallen into the hands of the Tamils living in the Diaspora to confront these problems and adopt different approaches to realize the Tamil people's political right to self-determination. It has now become necessary to constitute a coordinated and democratic polity to advance these objectives. This polity is the proposed Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

3. Are there differences between a Transnational Government and a Government in Exile? Or are they the same?

Though there are common features, the two governments are different in theory.

A government in exile is a temporary government shifted to or formed in a foreign country by exiles who hope to return to their home country when it is liberated. For this, at least the approval and acceptance by one host country is required. A government in exile needs no Diaspora.

The concept of a Transnational Government has received the attention of social scientists for more than two decades. It is associated with the transnational life of people and their involvement with transnational politics.

People in Diaspora maintain relationships among themselves, as well as with people in their homeland and with their Diaspora in other countries. Their lifestyle is not confined to the borders of their host country. They have established themselves as a transnational society. While complying with the laws of the host country, the transnational social space is the factor that largely decides their political, social and economic interests. This is the life style of Eelam Tamil expatriates as well. Their family units are split and members live in different states of the world, yet, they interact among themselves through a variety of means. Outside the family unit, in cultural and social life also, these interactions transcend the boundaries of states. One purpose of the Transnational Government is to promote these interactions. The TGTE will have the additional purpose of creating a mechanism for the political unity and the pursuit of the political desires of this transnational community, while respecting the laws of the states which this transnational community inhabits. It is in the distinct transnational space within which

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these cross-border relationships take place that the Transnational Government seeks to operate by facilitating the promotion of interactions and forging a common political program.

The Tamil Diaspora, along with those in our homeland, seek to preserve this transnational relationship. Thus the people of Tamil Eelam, too, are part of the transnational social space. Their politics is not confined to the Northeast region, but extends to transnational politics as well. Tamil nationalism is one that is diversified, socially beneficial and based on democratic principles.

The TGTE proposed to be established in the transnational space by Tamils is meant to realize the political aspirations of Tamils in our Homeland. It will also engage in promoting the social, economic and cultural development of Tamils in the Diaspora.

Since the TGTE is formed and sustained by the people, the consent of the states in which the transnational community exists is not a pre-requisite, as all these states are democratic states which promote and protect the right to association provided the associations pursue democratic purposes. Community-based organizations among the Tamil people should serve as the pillars of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). The Transnational Government (TGTE) will lobby for the support of the international community and its people to find a political solution to the Tamil national question on the basis of Nationhood, Homeland and the Right to Self-determination. It will campaign through political and diplomatic channels.

4. Has the Transnational Government been constituted? If not, how will the Transnational Government be constituted?

The TGTE has not been established yet. For the purpose of establishing the TGTE an Executive Committee is in the process of being formed. For the present, only the name of Visvanathan Rudrakumaran has been announced. He will function as the Coordinator.

Activities in regard to the establishment of Working Groups on a country-wise basis are now in progress. We are incorporating individuals who are willing to join and work in these Groups. Soon details of the Working Groups of each country will be published. The Advisory Committee previously announced will provide advice to the Executive Committees.

The Working Groups formed globally will engage in policy discussions with Tamil organizations and Tamil people to garner support for the TGTE. The country-wise Working Groups not only will seek support among Tamils, but also will canvass support from the Civil Society in their respective states for the formation of the TGTE. The Groups will also engage in soliciting support of political leaders and governments. The Advisory Committee will be expanded by incorporating Muslims and Indian intellectuals.

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Steps will be taken to prepare electoral registers with the help of people's organizations with the assistance of an accredited firm. On the basis of such electoral registers, an independent Election Commission conforming to international standards will hold elections to elect representatives to the TGTE. Those representatives will constitute themselves as a Constituent Assembly and draft the constitution for the TGTE with the help of legal experts and suggestions from people's organizations.

5. Why should the Tamil Diaspora promote efforts to form the Transnational Government? What is their contribution towards the political liberation of the Tamil People?

In today's context, only the Tamil Diaspora is in a position to advance the political aspirations of our people. Approximately one third of the Eelam Tamil population lives in the Diaspora, so they are not an inconsequential part of the community. Since the political space to pursue Tamil rights has been totally suppressed in Sri Lanka, the struggle to establish these rights has to be moved out of the island into the international space that the Tamil people of Eelam occupy. This is a factor that adds strength to Eelam Tamils. The 21st century political reality is increasingly getting evolved as Transnational Governance.

Irish people who emigrated to America and Canada gave staunch and open support to the Northern Ireland struggle. Likewise, the Jewish Diaspora until today supports the state of Israel politically and financially. On another plane, the Diaspora of countries like Italy, El Salvador, Eritrea, Croatia and Moldova have become an integral part of the politics of their respective countries. Four representatives are elected from the Italian Diaspora to the Italian parliament. In Haiti, a separate electoral riding has been allocated for Haitians living in Diaspora. Further, more than half the countries in the world have recognized dual citizenship. All this evidence points to the importance given to transnational politics in the 21st century. The efforts by the Tamil Diaspora to form a TGTE should be viewed in this perspective.

Because of the continued state terrorism unleashed against the Tamil people, a million have been compelled to migrate to foreign countries as refugees, where they have grown and flourished. Another set of people have become internally displaced permanently outside the Northeast of the island. The remainder, ravaged by war, have become economic orphans, political slaves and prisoners.

It is the right and the duty of the Tamil Diaspora to actively campaign to realize the right of self-determination of Eelam Tamils.

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6. Where will the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam be based? What is the nature of such a government? What are its priorities?

The TGTE will not have a territorial base like traditional governments. Enforcement of sovereignty by enacting laws, defense of territory and taxation like traditional governments is not applicable to the TGTE.

The primary goals of the TGTE will be the security of the people in our Homeland, full and early realization of their right to self-determination and their social, economic and cultural well-being and development. Further, the Tamil Diaspora, conforming to the laws of their respective countries, will build a strong base and utilize the resulting social, economic and political advancement as a propellant to win the liberation of our homeland.

Although the TGTE has no defined territory, it will create active, enthusiastic members' groups and executive offices worldwide to achieve its objectives.

7. Will the international community recognize the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam? Is it possible to carry forward TGTE's plans without such recognition?

As stated above, the concept of a TGTE is an innovative exercise. There is no precedence for such an exercise. The nationalities that fought for their political independence from outside in previous years created Governments in Exile (GE) that functioned outside their countries.

For a GE to function it is not necessary to have a strong Diaspora community. However, the proposed TGTE has a strong Diaspora community as along with well-defined political goals. Further, the continued insistence by the international community and friendly forces for the necessity of the Eelam Tamils to abhor armed struggle and carry forward the struggle politically are factors favorable to us.

8. The concept of the formation of a Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam was first proposed by Mr. Selvarasa Pathmanathan, head of the LTTE International Relations Department. If this is so, could the TGTE be considered as a plan of the LTTE?

The mode of struggle for the right of self-determination of Eelam Tamils has spanned many decades taking different profiles at different stages. During this period, the profile of political demands has been moved forward with clarity and certainty. Likewise, the method of struggle and the leadership also underwent changes. The Eelam people's struggle is a dynamic one that changes based on changed opportunities. The present situation has to be viewed as the continuation of that same dynamism.

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In the latter part of 2000s' the liberation struggle spearheaded by the unified command of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was weakened by Sri Lanka and its allies through the military domination and sophistication of the army. What was weakened was a particular form of the struggle, but not the liberation struggle itself. After the 9/11 tragedy, Sri Lanka cynically exploited the concept of America's "War on Terror" to describe its murderous war against Eelam Tamils and their homeland, in total contravention of all humanitarian laws governing the conduct of war. This way Sri Lanka's rulers successfully executed the worst genocide of the 21st century.

In these circumstances, the historical task of taking forward the next stage of the war of liberation of Eelam Tamils has been entrusted by the LTTE to the Tamil people. This important task was proposed by Selvarasa Pathmanathan at the appropriate stage. It has already been announced that the military phase of this struggle is over and that the struggle will move forward through non-violent means.

In today's context, taking cognizance of the new world order – a geo-political web of the international community - it has become necessary to adopt apposite and innovative methods to take the struggle forward. Eelam Tamils' liberation of their Homeland and the realization of their right to self-determination will be achieved through peaceful means by the Transnational Government.

By proposing the concept of the TGTE and entrusting the same to the Tamil Diaspora, the LTTE has done their historical duty. Once the TGTE is formed through the exercise of the political will of the people of Tamil Eelam in the diaspora, it will act in accordance with the standards of democratic governance. The TGTE will act as the unifying force of all Eelam Tamils. This will not be a polity imposed from above. It will be completely a democratic polity built bottom upwards.

The TGTE will be designed with an emphasis on transparency and accountability. Transparency will encourage accountability and information about Government activities will be provided to citizens openly. The TGTE will be administered by representatives duly elected by the Tamil Diaspora. . We will provide further details about the TGTE system very soon.

9. How will the Sri Lankan government and Sinhala – Buddhist chauvinists view the Trans National Government of Tamil Eelam?

Both the Sri Lankan government and its racist rulers view the proposed "Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam" with a sense of apprehension and danger. The reason for such fear is that the hegemony imposed on Eelam Tamils and the Tamil Homeland at present is not a real victory. Neither is it permanent. What they have achieved is military supremacy in the balance of power. This is beneficial only within the island of Sri Lanka. Further, this military supremacy is useful only to counter armed struggles and cannot counter the diplomatic approach. In this context, the Tamil people's struggle for

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the realization of their right to self-determination by unarmed methods carried out in the international arena is viewed with alarm by Sri Lanka's rulers as one they cannot confront.

Sri Lanka's rulers, therefore, consider that the proposed TGTE project by Eelam Tamils will become a formidable battlefield which they cannot defeat. Sri Lanka and its allied forces have today reached the peak of their power. They are left with no options other than to apply the same old military approaches. Sri Lanka is trying to restrict the mode of struggle of Eelam Tamils to a battlefield that it can win. It is also trying to keep to itself control over setting the rules of the battles to come.

The proposed TGTE is a new playing field opened by Eelam Tamils. Sri Lanka cannot decide the rules here. Its military domination and territorial control are of no use in this field of play.

10. Is the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam similar to the various organizations of Diaspora Eelam Tamils that are functioning at present? Or is it unique? If unique, how will it coordinate with the existing organizations and structures?

Various social and voluntary organizations have been formed by the Eelam Tamil Diaspora and are functioning at present. There are similarities and differences among these organizations based on their activities and membership. The importance of the activities they perform and their efficiency is praiseworthy. Yet, the need for a higher organization has been felt to encounter the challenges currently confronting the Tamil community both nationally and internationally.

Since the membership of the TGTE will be chosen through direct election, democratic credentials will endow the TGTE with legitimacy to be that body articulating the political aspirations of the Tamil people. It will function in coordination with the people's organizations among the Tamil Diaspora. We are now engaged in holding discussions regarding the nature of this coordination.

11. What impact will the activities of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam have on people living in the island of Sri Lanka on matters relating to their political, social, economic, security, rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement affairs?

The primary objective of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam is to realize the right to self-determination of the Eelam Tamils.

Simultaneously, the TGTE will take action on two other fronts. They are:

(1) To take necessary diplomatic steps at international level to end the injustices, discrimination and acts of revenge perpetrated on the Tamils by the Sri Lankan government.

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(2) To garner the expertise and resources of Tamil Diaspora to halt the plundering and exploitation of the resources of our Homeland by the Sinhala – Buddhist genocidal forces.

The TGTE will explore suitable alternative structures and create and manage sub-organizations in order to successfully fulfill the above stated objectives and to guarantee the security of the Tamils living in the island of Sri Lanka while protecting their rights to local resources. Alternatively, it will appropriately utilize the resources of already existing organizations.

When necessary the TGTE will establish cordial rapport and secure the assistance of international donor organizations, aid agencies, and bilateral or multilateral development organizations and work for the resettlement, development and investment, human resources development and environmental health. It will also provide appropriate inputs to the organizations within the island of Sri Lanka that have politically identified with the objectives of Tamil nationals.

12. What kind of leadership would the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam offer to the Tamil Diaspora? Do they need the leadership of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam? Is their current social and economic achievement inadequate?

Compared to the various other Diaspora communities in Western Europe, North America and Australia, the Eelam Tamil Diaspora is considered one of the most successful Diaspora communities. Their hard work, education, enterprise, dedication, obedience, austerity, ownership of property, extended family system and the love and devotion to their brethren are traits that are praiseworthy. But, for a community that has been devastated and displaced by war and racial violence and above all one that is fighting for its freedom, these traits alone are not sufficient.

The Tamil community which has been continuously felled due to racial violence and economic discrimination for over half a century was able sprout over and over again due to its inherent perseverance. Yet, it is observed that this community has restricted its growth within narrow limits. The community which has comparatively achieved high scores in the field of education has lagged far behind in its share of positions at higher level decision-making bodies. Similarly, the Eelam Tamil community which is highly thrifty has lagged behind in creating capital for industrial investment. Even with its extraordinary industrial skills, the community has been indifferent in industrial entrepreneurship and job creation.

The Eelam Tamils who have courageously faced and survived the threat to life and dangers due to racial violence are averse in coming forward to confront the open market economy. Further, instead of taking their own initiative to rapidly rebuild lost opportunities due to the war, such as banking, human resource development institutions, technical training institutes and service centers, they are seen as a community dependent on the existing structures. This state of affairs has to be changed.

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The entrepreneurship of the Eelam Tamils should extend internationally to all spheres of activity. The share of involvement of the Eelam Tamils in the creation of investment capital and industrial power should escalate to the extent of wielding influence in the economy of their host countries.

The knowledge and technical know-how of Eelam Tamils should be broadened to become indispensable in the highest decision-making centers of each organization in which they work. It is through these means that the march for the liberation of the Eelam Tamils will be expanded and expedited. The TGTE will attempt to provide the necessary ideological and strategic leadership for this process of success.

13. What is the progress made with respect to the formation of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam? Is final consensus reached on the form and other related matters of the government? Aren't the intended time frames too long considering the humanitarian crisis in our homeland?

The “Transnational Tamil Eelam Government” project is a pioneering effort. Hence, adequate consultations and debate among the public and professionals on the subject is very essential. While recognizing the need for expeditious action due to the prevailing humanitarian disaster in our homeland, the need to devote adequate time to the formation of the supreme body of the Diaspora for the national liberation of Eelam Tamils also has to be recognized.

The efforts taken so far have been discussions regarding the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam. These discussions have resulted in some valuable proposals. The committee for the formation of the TGTE and the committee of experts will take into consideration these proposals in formulating the project details and place them before the public.

The activities of the proposed TGTE are expected to be implemented in several phases. These phases are given below:

Phase 1: Concept formulation

Phase 2: Formation of Advisory Committee of Experts

Phase 3: Organizing broadly based country-wise discussions, and selection of country-wise committees for the formation of the TGTE.

Phase 4: Defining the basic structure of the proposed TGTE, drafting the election procedure for electing the representatives and conducting the elections.

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Phase 5: Convening the Constituent Assembly with the elected representatives as members, drafting and approving a Constitution and inaugurating the political structure for its implementation.

Phase 6: The TGTE becomes functional.

At present we are working on Phase 3.

14. When will the elections for the Transnational Government be held?

It has been planned to hold the elections in every country where Tamil Diaspora live before April 2010. We will soon provide further information on this subject.

15. What are the qualifications required to join and serve in the committee formed for the establishment of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam? How does one join the committee?

Those desirous to join the committee should be over 18 years of age. They should have subscribed to the political commitment that a solution to the national question of the Eelam Tamil people in the Island of Sri Lanka shall be based on the principles of Tamil Nationhood, Tamil Homeland and their Right to Self-Determination.

We will soon provide the details of the names and the contact details of the persons who will head the group for each country. You could contact these persons and join the group. You also can join the group by contacting us by email.

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