

UNITED AUSTRALIANS OF SRI LANKAN ORGANISATIONS

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28 April 2019

SPUR - GSLF Media Release on the Easter Day 2019 Terror Attacks

The Society for Peace Unity and Human Rights for Sri Lanka (SPUR) organisations based in Victoria, New South Wales Queensland and Western Australia (WASPUR) as well as the Global Sri Lanka Forum (GSLF) Australia extend their profound sympathies to the families who lost their loved ones and those who sustained serious injuries due to the barbaric terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on the Easter Day of 2019.

In particular, we offer our heartfelt condolences to our Christian communities whose lives have been cruelly destroyed on their most sacred day, as well as to the overseas visitors who sustained irreparable damages to life and limb. We also pay tribute to the members of the Sri Lanka Police who paid the ultimate price in their attempt to safeguard the nation and its people. Among those seriously impacted are members of the Australian-Sri Lankan community including members of our own organisations.

While unreservedly condemning the acts of terror perpetrated on innocent civilians including a large number of children, we must also point out that this damage could have been prevented had Sri Lanka not made itself a 'soft-target' due to a series of commissions and omissions made by its dysfunctional rulers.

These included the hounding of intelligence operatives and military officers due to the co-sponsoring of UNHRC resolutions 30/1 & 40/1 to appease foreign powers, the relaxation of on-ground security measures, lax immigration controls and the appointment of incompetent officials to senior positions in the Police and Defence Ministry. The loss of focus on National Security was compounded by arms of the administration being used for a witch hunt against political opponents.

It is apparent that there has been a total lack of preparedness for an attack by Islamic extremists despite warning from many quarters over several years right through to the last hours before the Easter Day bombings. No action was taken after repeated exposures of extremist ideologies taking root in Sri Lanka that were issued by multiple sources including Muslim organisations. Even the recent discovery of arms and explosives at Wanathawilluwa and the vandalising of Buddha Statues were glossed over, the likely reasons being the patronage of a few Muslim politicians and the desire to appease foreign powers and their NGO cronies in the name of reconciliation.

In contrast, the Sri Lankan armed forces and police should be praised for acting professionally and decisively in countering the terrorist threat once the shackles placed on them by the political leadership were removed during the past few days.

Even at this late hour, our organisations urge the Government of Sri Lanka to act on the following priorities.

- Taking all legal steps to bring to justice those who planned, encouraged and executed these attacks, as well as the officials and politicians whose criminal negligence prevented them from being nipped in the bud.
- Appointing patriotic and competent officials to key positions in the armed services, police and the defence ministry and rebuilding a strong and cohesive intelligence service.
- Reinstating all officers of the intelligence services who are remanded or on bail without being charged
- To provide immediate assistance to rebuild the damaged property including the churches and houses and to extend all assistance to the civilians affected.
- Tightening immigration controls to prevent anti-national or radical elements entering the country and also deporting non-nationals who are illegally present.

- Banning foreign funded religious schools that preach a violent ideology.
- Implementing a common policy on the teaching of Sri Lankan history and national languages at all schools in the country.
- Banning dresses with full-face covering.
- Preventing or removing illegal settlements on state land sponsored by politicians.
- Protecting historical sites particularly in the North and East of the country.
- To appoint a high powered commission to investigate the issue of radicalization of the segments of the Muslim population and to take effective action within a short period.
- Ensuring that foreign powers do not use the current instability to infiltrate Sri Lanka for their own geopolitical objectives. This includes inter-country agreements that compromise the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, thereby turning it into a violent international battleground.

In conclusion we appeal to all Sri Lankans and their well-wishers to unite in the face of this latest adversity and support those who are in need. The terror unleashed on Easter Day is not merely an attack by one community or religion on another but a coordinated effort to socially and economically cripple the entire nation.

Sri Lanka was able to overcome a three-decade long campaign of terror and enjoy 10 years of peace and stability due to the vigilance and heroism of its security forces, determined political leadership and the resilience of her people. Let us all stand strong and united on behalf of mother Lanka and her people once again.

Signed :

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