

## Item 5    **Organization: Le Pont**

**Name:** Thayeesan Thangarajah

Thank you chair,

There is a campaign of Tamil language and cultural genocide in the North and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. This campaign is systematic, and backed by the ministries and authorities of the government against Tamils because Singhala has long been preferenced as the official language of Sri Lanka – with a view to eradicate Tami heritage and historical sites in the North and East and replace them with Singhala Buddhist propaganda.

This includes false claims that these sites are Singhala in origin.

Tamil women suffer doubly from the effects of state oppression, caste and patriarchy. This was limited to Sri Lankas civil conflict – where rape was used as a weapon of war. This continues today.

The seizure of Tamil cultural landmarks such as the Kanniya Hot springs – a site historically considered a Hindu pilgrimage site, referenced in the Mahabharata and Ramayana - is another example of Tamil cultural abduction by state.

The demolition of a Hindu Temple with an erection of a Buddhist shrine in its place in May 2019 is another example of the Sri Lankan government attempting to eliminate Tamil Culture and history from the island.

I ask the UN Human Rights Council and OHCHR to protect the Tamil heritage and culture within Sri Lanka, finally investigate the mass genocide of Tamil bodies and language occurring in the North and East. The Sri Lankan government needs to be held accountable in the ICC for justice and recognition of our centuries old culture. .

We call on the Special Procedure Mandates holder to take all possible steps to:

- Protect our war widows and other vulnerable women
- Protect homeland Tamils from the genocide of our people and language
- Promote an independent investigation into Sri Lankas genocide against Eelam Tamils.
- Push a referendum to recognize the Tamils Right to self determination

Thank You