



Tamil Genocide Memorial Mémorial du génocide tamoul

தமிழர் அழிப்பு நினைவுகூர்

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Not for Profit Organization: 999053-4

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# **Destruction of Tamil Heroes' Cemeteries in Tamil Eelam and Denial of the Right of Remembrance**

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**About Tamil Genocide Memorial:** The Tamil Genocide Memorial (TGM) is formed to preserve the history of Tamil Eelam and the Tamil Genocide. TGM is a registered not-for-profit organization in Canada. Most of the Tamil identities, values, artifacts, monuments, and Tamil heroes' cemeteries were destroyed by genocidal Sri Lanka in the past decade. The Tamil diaspora has a duty to preserve the memories of Eelam Tamils. After 2 years of development, TGM created a digital archive and social platform [tamilgenocide.com](http://tamilgenocide.com) in 2022.



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தமிழர் சிறப்பியல்புகள் நினைவுச்சாலை

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1. In Tamil Eelam, between 1989 and 2009, there were 27 Tamil heroes' cemeteries and six cemeteries were built during 2008/2009 genocidal war. From the total of 33 cemeteries, many pictures and details still can be found in the digital space, but those physical cemeteries were destroyed by the Sri Lankan government<sup>1</sup>. The Tamil heroes' (Maaveerar Thuyilum Illam) resting places can be located all over Tamil Eelam (the North and East part of the island of Sri Lanka formerly known as Ceylon, and historically known as Eelam).
2. The destruction of Tamil heroes' cemeteries are intentional and planned actions by the Sri Lankan government, as part of the Sri Lanka's genocide against Tamils. Those cemeteries are not only resting places of over 40 thousand Tamil heroes, but they are also located in the traditional homeland of Tamils, as remembrances of the dead.<sup>2</sup> The Tamil heroes' cemeteries are part of Tamil identities. On November 27, every year, Tamils all over the world continue to remember their heroes who fought against Sri Lanka's genocide against Tamils, protected Tamils and safeguarded their freedom. <sup>3</sup>
3. In 2018, at the 2nd International Conference on Tamil homeland and Genocide in Sri Lanka, Dr. Camilla Orjuela, Ph.D mentioned that "The lack of possibilities in Sri Lanka to mourn and remember those who died in the struggle – both civilians and fighters – has made the Tamil diaspora countries a main space for remembrance. Great Heroes' Day or Maaveerar Naal in November traditionally draws large numbers of Tamils in diaspora, and holds the position of the main event which bring people together to respect for those who fought for the homeland. The fact that the LTTE cemeteries were demolished in Sri Lanka and that honoring of LTTE fighters there were outlawed, made the commemorations in the diaspora particularly important." <sup>4</sup>
4. Followings are the list of cemeteries that were destroyed and those cemeteries located in Amparai, Batticaloa, Trinco, Mannar, Vannai, Mullaitivu and Jaffna districts.
  - 4.1. Aalangulam - Trinco district - ஶ்ரீலங்கைப் போரில் சிங்களப் படைகளால் அழிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் வீரர்களின் நினைவுச்சாலை
  - 4.2. Weliyakulam - Trinco district - ஶ்ரீலங்கைப் போரில் சிங்களப் படைகளால் அழிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் வீரர்களின் நினைவுச்சாலை\*
  - 4.3. Thiyagavanam - Trinco district - ஶ்ரீலங்கைப் போரில் சிங்களப் படைகளால் அழிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் வீரர்களின் நினைவுச்சாலை
  - 4.4. Upparu - Trinco district - ஶ்ரீலங்கைப் போரில் சிங்களப் படைகளால் அழிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் வீரர்களின் நினைவுச்சாலை\*

<sup>1</sup> ஶ்ரீலங்கைப் போரில் சிங்களப் படைகளால் அழிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் வீரர்களின் நினைவுச்சாலை - ஶ்ரீலங்கைப் போரில் சிங்களப் படைகளால் அழிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் வீரர்களின் நினைவுச்சாலை <https://telibrary.com/thuyilum-illam/>

<sup>2</sup> Cemeteries of Tamil war heroes have been destroyed and commemoration events are impeded. [https://www.einnews.com/pr\\_news/572884513/tamil-genocide-remembrance-day-may-18-commemoration-in-ottawa](https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/572884513/tamil-genocide-remembrance-day-may-18-commemoration-in-ottawa)

<sup>3</sup> Liberation Struggle for Tamil Self-determination: 20 Years After [https://www.prweb.com/releases/liberation\\_struggle\\_for\\_tamil\\_self\\_determination\\_20\\_years\\_after\\_tgm\\_press\\_release/prweb18179367.htm](https://www.prweb.com/releases/liberation_struggle_for_tamil_self_determination_20_years_after_tgm_press_release/prweb18179367.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Tamil Nationhood and Genocide in Sri Lanka, Camilla Orjuela, Ph.D, page 94. <https://tamilconferences.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/second-itc-book-of-proceedings.pdf>







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which will draft a constitution for the State of Tamil Eelam and to establish the independence of the Tamil Eelam by bringing that constitution into operation either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle.”<sup>8</sup> The democratic mandate by the Tamil people enabled the Tamil youth to fight for freedom based on the right of self-determination.

9. All peoples remember, honour and mourn their war dead. The 11th of November is Remembrance Day for the countries of the British Commonwealth such as Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa as well as for some European countries such as France and Belgium. The Cenotaph (meaning Empty Tomb) in London carries the simple inscription "The Glorious Dead" and it is here that a Remembrance service is held each year at 11 am on the Sunday nearest 11 November. For the people of Tamil Eelam and for Tamils living in many lands and across distant seas, the 27th of November is the day on which they remember, honour and mourn those who have given their lives in the Tamil Eelam struggle for freedom from alien Sinhala rule. It is the day marked by the death of Shankar in 1982 - the first death of a cadre of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Since then, more than 17,900 have given their lives so that their brothers and sisters may live with self respect and in freedom - in Tamil we say thanmaanam - னாழ்வாரம்.<sup>9</sup>

### Post 2009 Cultural genocide of Tamils by Sri Lanka

10. A former MP, MK Shivajilingam, said he was shocked because there were about 2,000 bodies of Tiger fighters on the site and there had been twice that number of memorial stones<sup>10</sup>. The final stage of genocide is the destruction of memory, the denial of wrongdoing, and the burial of evidence.
11. “The occupying SL military destroyed Tamil War Heroes Cemetery (Maaveerar Thuyilum Illam) at Kanakapuram in Ki’linochchi in January 2009, desecrating the buried bodies of Tamil fighters in an inhumane manner and bulldozing all the tombstones. Hundreds of destroyed tombstones were used as stones for SL military driveways in the occupied Ki’linochchi. In 2013, as the people started to resettle, the elected Divisional Council of Karaichchi division resolved to transform the destroyed Heroes Cemetery into a park as the 10-acres land was originally a property of the civic body. Within a few days of the declaration, the SL military fenced off the lands to block the move and deployed the area

<sup>8</sup> Tamil United Liberation Front General Election Manifesto, July 1977 Translation from the Tamil <https://tamilnation.org/selfdetermination/tamileelam/7707tulfmanifesto.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Maaveerar னாழ்வாரம் - னாழ்வாரம் னாழ்வாரம் Nadesan Satyendra, 27 November 2006 <https://tamilnation.org/tamileelam/maveerar/index.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Sri Lanka builds army HQ on Tamil Tiger cemetery <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12668613>



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for military use”<sup>11</sup> TamilNet reported.

12. “Earlier this year, for another important day of remembrance for the Tamil population on May 18th, police actively stopped a memorial for those who died during the last phase of the conflict and even obtained a court order to that effect. In response, Sri Lanka’s own Human Rights Commission reminded the President of the right to memorialise one’s loved ones, ‘irrespective of political beliefs’, but the court case continues to date. That sentiment was echoed in a July report by the International Crisis Group.”<sup>12</sup>
13. In 2020, Tamils in the homeland braved Sri Lankan military intimidation and court orders to join others around the world and mark Maaveerar Naal on November 27, to remember and pay tribute to the Maaveerar who sacrificed their lives in the Tamil struggle for liberation. Following a series of court ordered bans on public commemorations, Tamils across the North-East braved Sri Lankan military intimidation and held private memorials in their homes to pay their respects to the fallen. In their attempt to thwart Tamils from marking the day, Sri Lanka’s security forces increased their deployment across the North-East, blocked access to thuyilum illams, carried out raids on homes where private commemorations were held and made some arrests. Maaveerar Naal - or Great Heroes Day - remembers those who sacrificed their lives in the Tamil struggle for freedom, and is marked on November 27, in memory of the first death of a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam cadre, Lt Col. Shankar who died in combat on November 27, 1982. <sup>13</sup>
14. In 2021, a heavy Sri Lankan military presence blocked mourners across the North, with security forces arresting at least one prominent activist and assaulting a journalist, as a crackdown was launched today whilst Tamils attempted to mark Maaveerar Naal. Despite a flurry of court orders across the North that rejected appeals from the Sri Lankan security forces to block remembrance events, the Sri Lankan military presence was out in full force across the North-East. In several locations, troops were deployed to block mourners from planned commemorative events, causing massive upset and anger from the crowds that gathered. <sup>14</sup>
15. While the international community continues to delay and deny justice for mass atrocity crimes and acts of genocide committed by the Sri Lankan state it continues to silence and suppress Tamil diaspora voices through a criminal counter-terrorism lens by

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<sup>11</sup> Coombo’s desecration of Tamil Heroes Cemetery comes to light as SLA vacates Kanakapuram. <https://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?artid=38414&catid=13>

<sup>12</sup> Rebuilding resting places: the continued struggle for remembrance.

<https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/rebuilding-resting-places-continued-struggle-remembrance>

<sup>13</sup> Tamil nation marks Maaveerar Naal 2020 <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/tamil-nation-marks-maaveerar-naal-2020>

<sup>14</sup> Sri Lanka launches crackdown on Maaveerar Naal <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lanka-launches-crackdown-maaveerar-naal>



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extending the listing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a terrorist organization. This continuous listing, one that persists for over a decade since the end of the war in 2009, undermines and infringes upon the fundamental civil liberties of Tamils in diaspora communities. Delisting the LTTE as a terrorist organization is key to protecting Tamil civil liberties including the right to advocate for Eelam Tamils' right to self-determination.<sup>15</sup>

16. In 2012, the UN. Secretary-General's; Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka, conducted by Charles Petrie, mentioned that "The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, who also has an international human rights and humanitarian law mandate, raised concern with the Government and the Secretary-General over the situation but favoured quiet diplomacy and told the Government he would 'not speak out.'" <sup>16</sup>
17. The destruction of the cemeteries is cultural genocide, as it not only prevents Tamils from remembering their loved ones but also intentionally eliminate Tamil identities in Tamil traditional homeland Tamil Eelam. We urge the United Nations to take steps to rebuild all the Tamil heroes cemeteries with their original form at the same location where they were previously existed.

Thank you.

Tamil Genocide Memorial, a federally registered non-profit organization in Canada

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<sup>15</sup> Tamils Demand Political Solution and a Guarantee of Justice for Crimes of Genocide  
[https://www.einnews.com/pr\\_news/569803773/tamils-demand-political-solution-and-a-guarantee-of-justice-for-crimes-of-genocide](https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/569803773/tamils-demand-political-solution-and-a-guarantee-of-justice-for-crimes-of-genocide)

<sup>16</sup> report of the secretary-general's internal review panel on united nations action in sri lanka <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/737299?ln=en>